

**PLANNING FOR THE EVALUATIONS OF THE 2010-2011 BIENNIUM;
DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE 2012-2013 BIENNIUM**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The UNECE, as a UN entity, works with a biennial programme and budget cycle. The current biennium is 2008-2009. At the end of the biennium, the results of the closing biennium have to be assessed and the planning documents prepared for the next biennia.

2. The planning and evaluation is carried out in the following phases:

(a) Preparation of biennial programmes about 3 years before the start of the biennium by defining a strategic framework. The strategic framework includes:

- the objective of the subprogramme;
- expected accomplishments;
- indicators of achievement; and
- strategy;

The document is approved in the first stage by the Sectoral Committee (the Conference of European Statisticians through its Bureau) and the Executive Committee of the UNECE.

(b) Specification of a schedule of outputs and resource requirements approximately 2 years before the biennium;

(c) Discussion of the strategic framework, outputs and resources by the 5th Committee of the UN General Assembly (GA) within one year before the biennium. **The strategic framework forms the basis for allocating a budget for the activities.** The documents are finally approved by the 5th Committee and the General Assembly;

(d) **An assessment of the work accomplished at the end of each biennium and contained in the Programme Performance Report (PPR), prepared by the secretariat, reviewed by the Bureau and submitted to the UN Headquarters.**

3. The UN biennial programmes present the planned activities in an aggregated way. In the case of the Statistics subprogramme, the detailed planning is undertaken through annual Statistical Programmes (SP).

4. In October 2006, the Bureau decided to harmonise the annual Statistical Programmes with the UN biennial planning. Since 2007, the UNECE Statistical Programmes have been prepared in such a way as to establish a direct link between the clusters of activities in the SP and the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement in the UN biennial budgeting and planning system.

5. The current status of planning and evaluations for the period 2008-2013 is explained in Table 1.

Table 1: Status of planning, implementation and assessment for the period 2008-2013

UN biennial programmes					
2008-2009		2010-2011		2012-2013	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved by the GA in 2007 Assessment of the work accomplished to be undertaken by December 2009 – January 2010 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic framework approved by the CES Bureau in October 2007 Approved by the UNECE Executive Committee in October 2008 Biennial evaluation at the end of 2011 (See Section II) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early drafting stage of the Strategic Framework (draft to be approved by the Bureau in October 2009 and completed in the beginning of 2010) (See Section III) 	
UNECE annual statistical programme					
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Evaluation done in February 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in progress Evaluation by the Bureau in Oct. 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion and approval by the CES Bureau in Oct. 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion and approval by the CES Bureau in Oct. 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval in Oct. 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval in Oct. 2012

II. PLANNING FOR THE BIENNIAL EVALUATION FOR 2010-2011

6. The UNECE member countries, being committed to the transparency and effectiveness of programme management, agreed at the Commission session in 2004 to place more emphasis on evaluation as a tool in managing the Commission's work. The 2005 UNECE reform further strengthened this approach. The Conference of European Statisticians, like other UNECE sectoral committees, is therefore requested by the Commission to conduct biennial evaluations of the Statistics subprogramme and to take into account the results of these evaluations in determining the future work programmes.

7. The Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau already have a well-established approach to planning for the UNECE annual statistical programmes and evaluating their implementation. In October 2006, the CES Bureau agreed on a procedure to make the two exercises compatible.

8. The UNECE Statistical Division streamlined the structure of the UNECE annual statistical programme with the UN biennial programme in order to allow for the evaluations undertaken on the basis of the UNECE annual statistical programmes to feed into the UN biennial evaluation process. This was achieved through structuring both exercises around the four main statistical work areas of the UNECE:

- (a) Coordination of international statistical activities;
- (b) Data work;

- (c) Methodological work; and
- (d) Technical assistance.

9. The expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each type of activity that will form the basis for the 2010-2011 biennial evaluation by the CES Bureau in 2011 are presented in Table 2 below. These expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement correspond to those specified in the UNECE Annual Statistical Programme for 2010 (see document ECE/CES/BUR/2009/OCT/7).

10. The expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement were defined in 2007. These can not be changed. **However, it is possible to revise the targets, or add explanatory text if the circumstances have changed and it is no longer possible (or relevant) to reach the target.** Suggestions for changing the targets are indicated in Table 2 in bold.

Table 2: Indicators of achievements and expected accomplishments for the 2010-2011 biennium

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2010-2011 (approved by the CES Bureau in October 2007 and UNECE EXCOM in October 2008)		
Overall objective of the work of the UNECE subprogramme on statistics: To improve the reliability of national official statistics and their comparability at the international level, and to ensure the coordination of international statistical activities undertaken in the region.		
Cluster	Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
1. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region	(a) Streamlined activity patterns of statistical work between international organizations through elimination of overlaps and gaps.	(i) The number of international organizations regularly reporting their activities in the Database on International Statistical Activities (DISA, formerly the "Integrated Presentation"). <i>Performance measures:</i> 2004-2005: 26 organizations 2006-2007: 27 organizations 2008-2009: 27 organizations (as of September 2009) Target 2010-2011: 26 organizations

2. Collection, processing and dissemination of statistics	(b) Increased timeliness, comparability, completeness and reliability of macroeconomic, social and demographic statistics, in particular about the less advanced countries of the region.	<p>(i) Increased percentage of available data of good quality in the overview tables (percentage of filled data cells to the total number of data cells)</p> <p><i>Performance measures:</i></p> <p>2004-2005: not available 2006-2007: 53 per cent 2008-2009: 68.3 per cent (as of September 2009)</p> <p>Target 2010-2011: 70 per cent</p> <p>(ii) Increased percentage of users that express, through user surveys, satisfaction with the quality, coverage and timeliness of data contained in the ECE database.</p> <p><i>Performance measures:</i></p> <p>2004-2005: 70 per cent of satisfied users 2006-2007: 81 per cent of satisfied users 2008-2009: 80.7 per cent of satisfied users (as of September 2009)</p> <p>Target 2010-2011: 87 per cent</p> <p>Note: The measure indicates the percentage of users who reply in the database user survey that they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the database. It is proposed to revise the target and set it at 80 per cent. During the 3 years when user satisfaction was regularly monitored, it stabilised at around 80%, while the quality and quantity of available data is being constantly improved. It is not realistic to significantly increase the percentage. Moreover, in similar databases maintained by other international organizations, the user satisfaction is around 50-70%.</p>
3. Methodological work	(c) Enhanced set of internationally recommended standards and practices to ensure comparable statistics.	<p>(i) Increased number of new and revised international standards and recommendations to which the UNECE has contributed in substance.</p> <p><i>Performance measures:</i></p> <p>2004-2005: 1 standard/recommendation 2006-2007: 4 standard/recommendation 2008-2009: 6 standards/recommendations (as of September 2009)</p> <p>Target 2010-2011: 4 standards/recommendations</p> <p>(ii) The number of statistical areas (according to the DISA classification) in which the UNECE undertakes substantive methodological work.</p> <p><i>Performance measures:</i></p>

		<p>2004-2005: 5 statistical areas (according to a different classification) 2006-2007: 21 statistical areas 2008-2009: 28 areas (as of September 2009, the target was 23 areas) Target 2010-2011: 23 areas</p> <p>Note: It is proposed to revise the target to 27 areas. Work in these areas is already planned within the 2010 Statistical Programme.</p>
4. Technical assistance to UNECE member countries	(d) Progress in implementation of international standards and good practices by statistical systems, particularly in less developed countries of the region.	<p>(i) Increased number of countries ensuring better compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics through revision of their national statistical legislation.</p> <p><i>Performance measures:</i> 2004-2005: 3 countries 2006-2007: 6 countries 2008-2009: 4 countries (as of September 2009) Target 2010-2011: 4 countries</p> <p>(ii) Increased number of UNECE recommendations implemented at the country level to improve national institutional frameworks for official statistics.</p> <p><i>Performance measures:</i> 2004-2005: 45 recommendations 2006-2007: 45 recommendations 2008-2009: 45 recommendations (as of September 2009) Target 2010-2011: 30 recommendations</p>

III. DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE 2012-2013 BIENNIUM

11. The outcomes of the 2005 reform of the UNECE confirmed that, in the medium term, the UNECE statistical work will continue to be organized around the four pillars: coordination of international statistical activities; data work; methodological work; and technical assistance. Therefore, the structure of the Strategic Framework 2012-2013 can follow a pattern similar to that in 2010-2011. Table 3 comprises the draft objective, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for the Strategic Framework for the 2012-2013 biennium. **These are presented according to the generic structure of annual statistical programmes.**

12. **The CES Bureau is invited to review the proposal for a strategic framework.** However, the Bureau should be aware that the final version adopted formally by the UN General

Assembly could be slightly different due to the complexity of the intergovernmental approval process.

Table 3: Strategic Framework for the 2012-2013 biennium

PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2012-2013		
Objective: to improve quality of official statistics at the national and international level, and to ensure the coordination of international statistical activities undertaken in the UNECE region.		
Cluster of activities	Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
1. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region	(a) Streamlined activity patterns of statistical work among international organizations through elimination of overlaps and gaps	(i) The number of international organizations regularly reporting on their activities to the Database of International Statistical Activities maintained by UNECE. (ii) The number of in-depth reviews of statistical areas carried out by the Bureau of CES to which UNECE contributed.
2. Collection, processing and dissemination of statistics	(b) Improved availability in the UNECE database of reliable, timely and comparable statistics for all countries in the UNECE region.	(i) Increased number of statistical data time series available in the UNECE database. (ii) High percentage of users that express, through user surveys, satisfaction with the quality, coverage and timeliness of data contained in the UNECE database.
3. Methodological work	(c) Updated and newly developed standards, methodologies and practices recommended for ensuring internationally comparable statistics.	(i) Number of new or revised international statistical standards and recommendations to which UNECE has contributed in substance (ii) The number of statistical areas (according to the Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA)) in which UNECE undertakes substantive methodological work.

PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2012-2013		
4. Technical assistance to UNECE member countries	(d) Improved assistance in implementation of international standards and good practices in official statistics, in particular in less advanced countries of the UNECE region	(i) The number of statistical areas for which technical assistance and advisory services were provided. (ii) Increased percentage of national experts that express, through evaluation questionnaires, satisfaction with the relevance and quality of the UNECE advisory services, training courses, and workshops.

A. Strategy

13. The Bureau is also asked to review and comment on the strategy of implementation of the 2010-2011 biennial programme that forms part of the strategic framework for 2010-2011. The Secretariat proposes the following text:

The responsibility for the sub-programme is vested in the Statistical Division. Coordinating all international statistical activities undertaken in the UNECE region will remain a central component of the strategy under the sub-programme. The sub-programme will promote the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics within the international statistical community, and provide advice to countries on institutional frameworks of official statistics.

Concerning methodological work, the sub-programme will focus on a selected number of subject areas, in particular those where UNECE can provide an added value and complement the work undertaken by other international organizations. The work will concentrate on developing and updating methodological guidelines and leading practices, on advising national statistical offices regarding the existing United Nations standards and best practices and their implementation. Public access to all meeting documents, work programmes and statistical standards and recommendations will provide the basis for transparency and accountability.

Technical cooperation activities will focus on key priorities, reflecting the needs of countries. They will be demand-driven and concentrate on areas where United Nations standards exist, such as population censuses, indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals, national accounts, prices, business statistics, and statistical data dissemination.

The data work undertaken by the sub-programme will respond to a sustained internal and external demand. Data will be accessible to the public via the Internet. A quality framework will ensure relevance, timeliness and user-friendliness of data dissemination.

Cooperation with the statistical services of other international organizations will continue in the form of joint meetings and working groups aimed at coordinating the development of methodologies and the preparation of standards, recommendations and the compilation of best practices, as well as by using modern tools of data-sharing.

IV. BUREAU DECISION

14. The Bureau is invited to comment on and approve:

- (a) The targets for the performance measures for the 2010-2011 biennial evaluations;
- (b) The strategic framework (strategy, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement) for the 2012-2013 biennium.

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