

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2014/2015 Bureau  
Geneva (Switzerland), 21-22 October 2014

Item 5 (b) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**FURTHER WORK RELATED TO TIME-USE SURVEYS**

**Note by the Secretariat**

*This document presents a proposal for further work on Time-Use Surveys. It also informs the Bureau about the activities carried out in follow-up to endorsing the Guidelines for Harmonizing Time-Use Surveys. **The Bureau discussed the steps taken and approved the terms of reference of the proposed Task Force on Valuing Unpaid Household Service Work.***

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. At its meeting in January 2014, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) approved the proposed activities for follow-up work regarding time-use statistics. These included:

- a) Collecting and making available on the UNECE website methodological material on time-use surveys, specifically on the implementation of light time-use diaries, novel data collection methods and the measurement of subjective well-being in time-use surveys;
- b) Consulting with CES members a proposal to set up a Task Force for developing guidelines on valuing unpaid household work.

2. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to report on the outcomes in October 2014.

**II. PROGRESS OF WORK**

**A. Web pages on country experiences with time-use surveys**

3. In June 2014, the Secretariat conducted a survey to collect countries' experience in three areas: conducting light time-use surveys, using novel technologies for diary collection, and measuring subjective well-being through time-use surveys.

4. The questionnaire was sent to all countries that participate in CES work and have conducted a time-use survey within the last five years. Eight countries provided information on light time-use diaries, two on the use of novel technologies for diary collection and twelve on the measurement of subjective well-being through time-use surveys.

5. The collected information is organized and displayed on the UNECE web site<sup>1</sup>. The Secretariat will keep it up-to-date with new country experiences by asking the countries that conduct a new time-use survey to fill in the questionnaire.

**B. Need for further work on valuing unpaid household work**

6. In September 2014, the Secretariat consulted with selected countries and organizations a proposal to set up a Task Force for developing guidelines on valuing unpaid household work. The consultation was targeted to countries and organizations that had earlier indicated interest in participating in the development of such guidelines or that could potentially contribute based on their experience with compiling Household Satellite Accounts. Seven countries (Azerbaijan, Canada, Czech Republic, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland and United Kingdom) and four international organizations (CIS-Stat, Eurostat, ILO and OECD) confirmed their interest. The proposed terms of reference of the task force are provided in the Annex.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/countrytus>

## **ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF A TASK FORCE ON VALUING UNPAID HOUSEHOLD SERVICE WORK**

### **I. BACKGROUND**

7. In November 2010, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of time-use surveys, which led to the establishment of a Task Force on this topic. The Task Force developed the *Guidelines for Harmonizing Time-Use Surveys* that were published in 2013<sup>2</sup>. Subsequently, the CES Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for further work based on the issues raised in the Guidelines and in the related discussion at the CES plenary session. In January 2014, the Bureau supported the proposal to prepare guidelines on valuing unpaid household service work, and requested the Secretariat to consult with CES members about setting up a task force for this purpose.

8. According to the *Guidelines for Harmonizing Time-Use Surveys*, unpaid work is one of the areas where information from time diary surveys is necessary for informed policymaking, and for which other sources do not provide adequate data. Lack of information on unpaid household service work might lead to a policy conclusion that an increase in services, such as childcare or long-term care provided by the government or private sector, increases the quantity of goods and services produced in a country. In fact, this would simply reflect that the production of the same service takes place in another institutional sector instead of the household sector. Some countries have started to value these activities through a Household Satellite Account, which provides important information on the economy and society.

9. Placing monetary values on activities carried out in the household is not straightforward since the work is unpaid and often produces intangible services. Related measurement challenges include the question of multitasking as, for example, it is possible to prepare a meal, keep an eye on a small child and help an older child with their homework at the same time. Furthermore, there is a question about the borderline with household service work and leisure as, for example, some people would regard gardening as a chore while others may see it as a leisure activity.

10. Several countries have experience in compiling Household Satellite Accounts, and this has been reviewed internationally.<sup>3</sup> However, there is currently no general agreement on the methodological choices in resolving the measurement challenges. The relevant international guidance dates back for more than a decade. It is therefore necessary to revisit the existing national experience and provide guidelines on these issues. Further need for updated guidance emerges from the “Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization” adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in October 2013. The Resolution provides operational concepts, definitions and guidelines for distinct forms of work which have implications on the classification and analysis of activities related to unpaid household service work.

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<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.unecce.org/publications/time\\_use\\_surveys.html](http://www.unecce.org/publications/time_use_surveys.html)

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat (2003), *Household production and consumption: proposal for a methodology of Household Satellite Accounts*; United Nations (2000), *Household accounting experience in concepts and compilation vol. 1 household sector accounts, Vol. 2 Household satellite extension*.

## II. MANDATE AND REPORTING

11. The work of the Task Force is conducted within the framework of CES and its Bureau. The Task Force will be created for a period from November 2014 until June 2017. A final report will be submitted to the Bureau at the end of the work.

## III. OBJECTIVE

12. The objective of the Task Force is to develop guidelines on valuing unpaid household service work.

## IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

13. To achieve its objective, the Task Force will undertake the following activities:

- a) Prepare an inventory of the approaches used for valuing unpaid household work in Household Satellite Accounts;
- b) Analyse the different national approaches;
- c) Identify the practices to be recommended and their implications for data collection;
- d) Draft guidelines on valuing unpaid household service work.

14. In pursuing these activities, the Task Force will take into account relevant international initiatives, such as those of the ILO and OECD on measuring volunteer work, and the potential data collection through international survey programmes such as EU-SILC.

## V. TIMETABLE

15. The activities of the Task Force are planned for the period from November 2014 to June 2017, according to the following tentative timetable:

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November-December 2014	Launching the Task Force – confirming the countries and organizations interested to participate in its work
January-March 2015	Discussion of work plan to identify the concrete activities and the scope of the guidelines
April-September 2015	Preparing an inventory of the methods used in national Household Satellite Accounts
October-December 2015	Analysis of the different national approaches
November or December 2015	Face-to-face meeting to agree on the recommendations to be included in the guidelines and on the distribution of the drafting work
January-April 2016	Drafting of the guidelines
April-June 2016	Consultation of the draft guidelines within the Task Force and wider expert network

July-September 2016	Revision of the draft guidelines based on the consultation; submission of the full draft to the CES Bureau
October 2016 – January 2017	Revision and editing of the guidelines to take into account comments by the Bureau
February 2017	Electronic consultation of the draft guidelines among CES members
March-June 2017	Finalisation and submission of the guidelines to the June 2017 CES plenary session for endorsement

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## **V. METHODS OF WORK**

16. The Task Force will primarily work via email and telephone conferences. At least one face-to-face meeting will be organized. For the preparation of draft documents, the Task Force will use the wiki infrastructure available at UNECE.

## **VII. MEMBERSHIP**

17. The following countries and international organizations have expressed their interest in participating in the Task Force: Azerbaijan, Canada, Czech Republic, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, United Kingdom, CIS-Stat, Eurostat, ILO and OECD.

18. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Task Force.

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