

Preparation for the 2020 Round of Population Censuses and the Production of Better Migration Data in CIS countries

Proposal for a project to be funded from the voluntary contribution of the Russian Federation to UNECE

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Background

The population **census** is a unique source of data providing specific information critical for social and economic policy and forecasting. In preparation to the 2010 round of censuses, countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) undertook efforts towards improving the methodological consistency of censuses and the comparability of their results across countries. Furthermore, Rosstat provided major inputs to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) recommendations for the 2010 round, to reflect the specific concerns of CIS countries. Over the years, expert meetings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and CIS-Stat have addressed several aspects where international comparability of CIS countries' censuses needs further improvement, including the aspects related to the measurement of migration. However, the evolution of census methodologies brings further challenges for harmonizing the census results of the 2020 round. The present project will address these needs and challenges.

Data harmonization and comparability are vitally important, as the 43rd session of the United Nations Statistical Commission specifically requested countries to increase their exchange of census data. In June 2012, CES approved a plan of preparation for the 2020 round of censuses in the UNECE region. The core task for this plan is to develop common methodologies and practices, which will serve as the basis for comparable census results across countries. According to the plan, this work must be finalised in 2015.

The UNECE Statistical Division, together with the UNECE Steering Group on Population Censuses, started a review of the 2010 round of population censuses to prepare the CES recommendations for the 2020 round. CIS-Stat and Rosstat have both been actively involved in the Steering Group. Rosstat has gained important experience with conducting the census in the Russian Federation, which could benefit the preparation of CES recommendations. With the present project, Rosstat, CIS-Stat and the national offices of other CIS countries will be involved more closely in the preparation of the CES recommendations for the 2020 census round, to ensure that harmonised solutions are found to their specific situations and data needs.

In UNECE meetings and other fora, CIS countries have expressed the need to improve the measurement of international **migration**, by utilising better the censuses, household surveys and administrative sources. CIS countries share commonalities both in the migratory processes (e.g. much of their international migration flows occur between them) and in their registration, however, the availability of data on international migration as well as its reliability and comparability fall short of the needs for evidence-based policymaking in this area. The present project is designed to improve this situation.

UNECE works towards improving the quality and availability of statistics on international migration by developing common definitions, methods and practices, and promoting them across the UNECE region. A recent series of training workshops, publication of guidance material and the online Clearing House for Migration Statistics have specifically targeted the CIS countries and provided a basis on which to build the activities of the present project. For the Russian Federation,

compiling migration statistics is a major challenge because of the high level of immigration. Rosstat's experience in compiling migration statistics can be used for further improvement of guidance material and data exchange.

Data improvement is only possible by directly engaging both the producers and users of statistics, as change is unlikely to occur unless government stakeholders work together towards this endeavour. The project thus **targets** government officials who use census data and migration statistics, and experts in national statistical offices (NSOs) and other agencies producing migration statistics in CIS countries.

This project builds upon recent successful projects between UNECE and the national statistical offices of CIS countries, such as the High-level Seminar on Modernization of Statistical Production and Services co-organised by UNECE and Rosstat in 2012 in Saint Petersburg.

The project will be carried out in **partnership** with Rosstat. CIS-Stat will be involved in its implementation taking into account its expertise.

UNECE will ensure the implementation of the provisions for analysing **gender** issues, which are inherent in all international recommendations on population censuses and migration statistics. The project is scheduled for the **period** from February 2013 to December 2015.

Objective

To strengthen capacity of CIS countries to conduct population censuses and produce statistics on international migration.

Expected accomplishments

- EA1 Data producers and policymakers in CIS countries have better knowledge of the needs and the potential use of census and migration data for policymaking.
- EA2 Improved capacity of CIS countries to implement population censuses in the 2020 round in accordance with their data needs and the CES recommendations.
- EA3 Improved capacity of CIS countries to produce statistics on international migration.

Indicators of achievement

- IA1 Increased contribution of CIS countries to the development of the 2020 CES recommendations on population censuses.
- IA2 Increased number of measures taken by CIS countries towards adjusting the concepts and definitions used in their statistical systems to the 2020 CES recommendations on population censuses.
- IA3 Increased data input from CIS countries to the UNECE Clearing House on Migration Statistics has increased.

Main activities

- A1 Opening high-level event with policymakers and data producers of CIS countries:
 - a) to launch the project and inform government officials on its priorities and goals;
 - b) to discuss the data needs for evidence-based policymaking on social and demographic issues and the challenges in meeting them;
 - c) to review the lessons learned with the 2010 round of population censuses;
 - d) to review the current state of migration data;
 - e) to agree upon a future course of action.

- A2.1 Expert meeting for CIS countries to prepare substantive contributions to the CES recommendations for the 2020 round of population censuses, to be held back-to-back with the 2013 UNECE Expert Meeting on Population Censuses.
- A2.2 Expert meeting for CIS countries on finalizing the CES recommendations on the 2020 round of population censuses, to be held back-to-back with the 2014 UNECE Expert Meeting on Population Censuses.
- A3.1 Expert meeting for CIS countries on the use of population censuses and household surveys to measure international migration in CIS countries, to be held back-to-back with the 2014 UNECE Work Session on Migration Statistics.
- A3.2 Expert meeting for CIS experts on improving the use of administrative sources to measure international migration in CIS countries.
- A3.3 Production of a guide, in Russian and English, on the use of administrative data and household surveys to measure international migration in the CIS region. The guide will be presented at the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in Geneva in June 2015.

Assumptions and risks

The project can succeed on the assumptions that governments of CIS countries are committed to (a) carrying out population censuses in the 2020 round and (b) improving their countries' statistics on international migration.

A risk is related to the lack of a government's political will for making adjustments in the national statistical system to implement the internationally agreed recommendations, in which case its statistics would not be comparable to others and could mislead decisions based on them. Another risk is a country's unwillingness to share internationally the statistics and the concepts and definitions used in their compilation, which would hamper assessment and comparison.

Both risks pertain to the achievements of the project for the concerned countries and depending on their number and size, for the whole CIS region. They do not threaten the implementation of the project activities.

Budget

The indicative budget of the project for the whole implementation cycle is 282,500 United States dollars, including the United Nations standard programme support charge of 13% on all incurred project expenditures. In addition, the UNECE in-kind contribution in the form of staff time over the 3 years period of the project amounts to 3 months of a P-4 and 2 months of a P-3 level Statistician, and 1 month of a G-6 Programme Assistant.

Project manager at UNECE

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Work plan

Expected accomplishment	Activity	Year			Estimated cost, USD	Partners	Beneficiaries	Venue, time, expected number of participants
		2013	2014	2015				
EA1. Data producers and policymakers in CIS countries have better knowledge of the needs and the potential use of census and migration data for policymaking	A1. Opening high-level event with policymakers and data producers of CIS countries	x			70 000	UNECE, Rosstat, CIS-Stat	Data users and producers in CIS countries	In the Russian Federation, partners to decide on the venue, September 2013, 30 participants
EA2. Improved capacity of CIS countries to implement population censuses in the 2020 round in accordance with their data needs and the CES recommendations	A2.1. Expert meeting for CIS experts to prepare substantive contributions to the CES recommendations for the 2020 round of population censuses, to be held back-to-back with the 2013 UNECE Expert Meeting on Population Censuses	x			40 000	UNECE, Rosstat, CIS-Stat	NSOs, CIS-Stat	Geneva, 30 Sep – 4 Oct 2013, 15 participants
	A2.2. Expert meeting for CIS experts on finalizing the CES recommendations on the 2020 round of population censuses, to be held back-to-back with the 2014 UNECE Expert Meeting on Population Censuses.		x		40 000	UNECE, Rosstat, CIS-Stat	NSOs, CIS-Stat	Geneva, September 2014, 15 participants

Expected accomplishment	Activity	Year			Estimated cost, USD	Partners	Beneficiaries	Venue, time, expected number of participants
		2013	2014	2015				
EA3. Improved capacity of CIS countries to produce statistics on international migration	A3.1. Expert meeting for CIS experts on the use of population censuses and household surveys to measure international migration in CIS countries, to be held back-to-back with the 2014 UNECE Work Session on Migration Statistics		x		40 000	UNECE, Rosstat, CIS-Stat	NSOs, CIS-Stat	Geneva, October 2014, 15 participants
	A3.2. Expert meeting for CIS experts on improving the use of administrative sources to measure international migration in CIS countries			x	40 000	UNECE, Rosstat, CIS-Stat	NSOs, CIS-Stat	In a CIS country, spring 2015, 15 participants
	A3.3. Production of a guide, in Russian and English, on the use of administrative data and household surveys to measure international migration in the CIS region			x	20 000	UNECE, Rosstat, CIS-Stat	NSOs, CIS-Stat	Presented at the CES plenary session in June 2015 in Geneva