

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2017/2018 Bureau  
Helsinki (Finland), 14-15 February 2018

Item III (c) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TASK FORCE  
ON COMMUNICATING GENDER STATISTICS**

**Note by the Steering Group on gender statistics**

*These terms of reference for the establishment of a Task Force on Communicating Gender Statistics are prepared by the Steering Group on gender statistics at the request of the participants of the UNECE Work Sessions on Gender Statistics. **The Bureau reviewed and approved the terms of reference for the Task Force on communicating gender statistics.***

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. Gender statistics, like statistics on any other topic, are most valuable to users when they are easily found and accessed, and when users find them relevant and understandable. Hence the responsibility of national statistical offices (NSOs) does not stop at production, nor even at dissemination: actions must be taken to communicate gender statistics to promote awareness, understanding and use. While true across all statistical areas, this brings particular challenges for gender statistics.

2. First, gender-related data come from many different sources, and deal with a wide variety of topics across several domains, each of which may have its own dissemination products. These may not incorporate a gender perspective or even a simple sex-disaggregation of data. Furthermore, each domain may have its own approach to communication. Hence gender-related data may be spread around many products and hard to find, or in some cases not published at all.

3. Second, gender issues occupy a unique place in policymaking which necessitates extra care for NSOs, as they are obliged to remain impartial while balancing this with the obligation to produce relevant data that can inform policymaking and answer the needs of those who demand the data. The choices statisticians make about which data to present and how are reflections of underlying views about what is important. Getting a message across to audiences with particular attitudes and prejudices about gender issues presents additional challenges. For example, there may be a reluctance to accept certain findings, or the importance of statistics on some topics may be questioned. Gender statistics is thus faced with a need to communicate not only about statistics themselves but also about their value.

4. The growing importance of communication is not unique to gender statistics. The High Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) has chosen as its

flagship project for 2018 the development of a strategic framework for communicating with data users and the public<sup>1</sup>. In the light of changing communication environments, developments in technology and the growth of alternative data providers, HLG-MOS identified effective communication strategies as essential to maintaining the relevance and reach of official statistics. The focus of the HLG-MOS project is *strategy*, and it explicitly “will not cover communication tactics nor provide guidance in producing specific communication products”. On the tactics and products, UNECE has produced guidance in the form of the *Making Data Meaningful* series of publications<sup>2</sup>.

5. Dissemination and communication of gender statistics has been a long-standing component of the UNECE work programme in gender statistics. The 2010 publication *Developing Gender Statistics: a Practical Tool*<sup>3</sup> includes a chapter on ‘Improving the use of gender statistics’, in which the distinction between communication and dissemination is clarified; the importance of both, as well as their close interlinkage, is explained, with a particular emphasis on the aspects that create specific challenges for gender statistics; and good practices are showcased. UNECE also has a long history of delivering capacity-building workshops focusing partly or entirely on dissemination and communication of gender statistics, for individual countries and for the sub-region of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

6. Over the years, discussions at UNECE Work Sessions on Gender Statistics have frequently gravitated to the issue of communicating gender statistics; in particular communicating with policymakers, but also with the public, to ensure that gender statistics are accessible, understandable, usable and meet the needs of those who require them. The 2017 Work Session recommended developing guidance on communication of gender statistics with policymakers and with the public, and requested that the Steering Group on gender statistics draft terms of reference for a Task Force on this topic.

## II. MANDATE

7. The work of the Task Force will be conducted under the oversight of the Steering Group on Gender Statistics. The Task Force will report to the CES Bureau. It will be created for the period from February 2018 to June 2020.

## III. OBJECTIVE

8. The objective of the Task Force is to develop guidance for NSOs on the communication of gender statistics, focusing on both communication with policymakers and communication with the public.

9. The Task Force will concentrate on those aspects that are *specific or especially pertinent to gender statistics*, while ensuring coherence with the HLG-MOS project on

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<sup>1</sup> Available at

<https://statswiki.unece.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=165249242&preview=/165249242/165249374/Strategic%20Communication%20Project%202018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/writing/>

<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.unece.org/?id=17450>

strategic communication and avoiding duplication of the existing UNECE work on statistical dissemination and communication.

#### IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

10. The Task Force will carry out the following activities:

- (a) Identify communication challenges for which examples of good practice would be helpful, including those that are unique or especially pertinent to gender statistics, and bearing in mind the existing UNECE guidance;
- (b) Review current practices in the dissemination and communication of gender statistics, including design of statistical products (paper and electronic publications, databases, web-based tools, visualizations, etc.), user engagement, and methods of analyzing use;
- (c) Collect examples of good practice and compile these into a reference tool for NSOs, and develop a mechanism for updating with new examples;
- (d) Produce a set of recommendations for tackling the challenges identified.

#### V. TIMETABLE

11. The activities of the Task Force will proceed according to the following tentative schedule:

Feb - Apr 2018	Establish Task Force; draft work plan with activities, timing and division of work
May - Jul 2018	Identify communication challenges
Aug - Oct 2018	Gather and review current practices
Nov 2018 – Jan 2019	Identify and organize good practices
Feb - Mar 2019	Develop prototype platform for good practice examples
Apr 2019	Meeting of the Task Force and presentation of interim report to Work Session on Gender Statistics
May – Sep 2019	Draft recommendations Finalize compilation platform for good practice examples
Oct – Dec 2019	Finalize recommendations
Feb 2020	CES Bureau reviews final draft of recommendations
Feb - Mar 2020	Revise based on comments from CES Bureau
Apr - May 2020	Electronic consultation among all CES countries; revision if required
Jun 2020	Expected endorsement by the CES plenary session

#### VI. METHOD OF WORK

12. The Task Force will work primarily via wiki workspace, e-mail and telephone or web conferences. A face-to-face meeting will take place on the margins of the 2019 Work Session

on Gender Statistics. Other face-to-face meetings may be convened on the basis of need and available resources.

## **VII. MEMBERSHIP**

13. The following countries and organizations have expressed interest in participating in the Task Force: Canada, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Eurostat and OECD. Other countries and organizations will be invited to join the Task Force after the Bureau approves the terms of reference.

14. UNECE will act as Secretariat to the Task Force.

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