

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2019/2020 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 16-17 October 2019

Item 4(b) of the Provisional
Agenda

**STEERING GROUP
ON STATISTICS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Note by the Secretariat

The CES Bureau set up a Steering Group on statistics for SDGs in February 2016 with the aim to prepare a Road Map on statistics for SDGs, and to coordinate and guide the work of the Conference of European Statisticians in this area. The terms of reference of the Steering Group were planned to be reviewed in 2019.

The 2018 and 2019 CES plenary sessions requested the Steering Group to prepare a Second Edition of the Road Map to continue to provide vision and guidance to countries on statistics for SDGs. Furthermore, the Steering Group's guidance is continuously needed for CES and the Secretariat to provide input to global and regional processes related to monitoring the implementation of SDGs.

The CES Bureau extended the mandate of the Steering Group and reviewed and approved its updated Terms of Reference.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) set up the Steering Group on statistics for SDGs in February 2016. The aim of the Steering Group was to prepare a Road map for statistics for SDGs, follow up on the implementation of the Road Map and to coordinate and guide the CES work in this area.
2. The Steering Group prepared the first edition of the *Road map on statistics for SDGs* which the Conference approved in June 2017. The Road Map has been published in English and Russian (some countries have also translated it into their national languages, such as Spanish and Serbian).
3. The Road Map has been widely used by countries, international organizations and other stakeholders helping to establish a system for measuring progress towards SDGs. At the same time, the processes for providing statistics for SDGs have evolved at global, regional and national levels. Many challenges remain and new ones emerge that require new solutions and approaches. These developments should be reflected in an updated Road Map to continue to provide vision and guidance.
4. In June 2018 the Conference welcomed the progress made in implementing the Road Map and requested the work to continue under the guidance of the CES Steering Group. The Conference “supported the proposal for a second edition of the Road Map, ... and requested the

Steering Group to prepare a plan and timetable for its preparation”¹. In June 2019, the Conference encouraged countries and organizations to contribute to the Second Edition of the Road Map, and noted that it “should focus on practical advice to reduce the burden and simplify the work on statistics for SDGs”.²

5. Furthermore, several ongoing global and regional³ processes related to the implementation of SDGs call for action at UNECE regional level, such as:

- (a) Regional input to the work of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development that has a central role in overseeing the processes at the global level;
- (b) Input to the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development that leads reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the UNECE region focusing on practical value-added and peer learning;
- (c) Input to the Interagency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs);
- (d) Input to the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB), and the Cape Town Global Action Plan.

6. Support from the Steering Group is continuously required to help coordinate and guide the regional input to these processes.

II. MANDATE

7. The work of the Steering Group is conducted within the CES work programme. It will provide regular reports to the Bureau and CES. The Terms of Reference of the Steering Group will be reviewed in 2022.

8. The work of the Steering Group will reflect the work of the HLG-PCCB and IAEG-SDGs, operating under the UN Statistical Commission, to provide a link with the developments at the global level. It will take into account the guidance given by the UN Secretary General on the global follow-up and review process.

9. The Steering Group may identify opportunities to brief the UNECE Executive Committee and other relevant regional policy bodies to ensure that the work and products of the CES relating to SDGs fully reflect the policy priorities of the UNECE region. Communication with all relevant stakeholders (including the policy community) will be crucial.

10. The Steering Group may identify concrete tasks or activities to support its work that could be undertaken by groups of experts (Task Forces or Task Teams). In such cases, after having verified the interest by a sufficient number of CES member countries and the availability of resources, the Steering Group will submit proposals for Task Forces to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

III. OBJECTIVES

11. The objectives of the Steering Group are:

¹ ECE/CES/95, para 63.

² ECE/CES/97, para 34.

³ Referring to A/RES/70/1, the term ‘regional’ is used to denote regions of the world, such as the UNECE region.

- (a) To follow up on the implementation of the CES road map on statistics for SDGs; The road map provides a strategy on how to implement a system for producing data on SDGs, and guides the CES members in implementing the *Declaration on the role of national statistical offices in measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals* (ECE/CES/89/Add.1) adopted by the Conference in 2015;
- (b) To update and adjust the road map to reflect global developments and progress at regional and national levels;
- (c) Coordinate CES work in the area of statistics for SDGs, and oversee the work of CES task forces and task teams working in these areas.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

12. Building on already existing collaborative efforts in the UNECE region, the Steering Group will:

- (a) Maintain a road map including concrete actions and priorities for the development of official statistics for SDGs under CES;
- (b) Implement activities of the road map, such as:
 - i. Outline the mechanism for providing statistics for SDGs (who does what and when);
 - ii. Provide advice on setting up and maintenance of a “UNECE regional platform on Statistics for SDGs”⁴;
 - iii. Identify new areas where methodological work could be undertaken to provide statistics for SDGs under CES and as an input to the global initiatives. The Steering Group may propose to the CES Bureau to set up Task Forces to carry out specific tasks;
 - iv. Develop a strategy on how to reinforce communication with other data providers and users of official statistics, including policy makers;
 - v. Develop a strategy on how to deal with the recommended disaggregations of data, following the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and ensuring data quality;
 - vi. Define the necessary capacity building for CES member countries for providing statistics for SDGs;
 - vii. Identify the relevant partners throughout the process and ensure coordination of activities at global, regional and national levels; and
 - viii. Promote collaboration and strategic partnerships between various international agencies, scientists and other data producers on SDGs (e.g. through the UN World Data Forum) to ensure efficient data flows and avoid double reporting.
- (c) Coordinate the CES work on statistics for SDGs using a bottom-up approach, and in close collaboration with Eurostat and OECD;
- (d) Organize the annual Expert Meetings on statistics for SDGs;
- (e) Advise the UNECE Secretariat on statistical capacity development activities in support of SDGs. These activities should be closely coordinated with other regional partners;

⁴ ECE/CES/2019/8/Add.1, para 10.

(f) Promote the sharing of methods, techniques, research, training materials and other resources related to statistics for SDGs.

(g) Review progress and outcomes of possible CES tasks forces working in the area of statistics for SDGs.

13. The main outputs of the Steering Group in 2019-2022 will be:

(a) A Second Edition of the *Road Map on statistics for SDGs*, reflecting the priorities and needs of CES member countries (planned to be endorsed by CES in June 2021);

(b) Support to setting up and maintaining a regional platform on statistics for SDGs, composed of three elements:

- i. Knowledge hub on statistics for SDGs;
- ii. Dashboard of SDG indicators for the UNECE region;
- iii. Database of SDG indicators (based on the UNECE statistical database)⁵;

(c) Annual Expert Meetings on Statistics for SDGs;

(d) A capacity-building needs analysis of CES countries for monitoring SDGs;

(e) A review and identification of improvements to data, indicators and methodologies to support monitoring SDGs, and an establishment of priorities.

V. TIMETABLE

14. The Steering Group will prepare annual work plans. The Steering Group will prepare a first draft of the road map by end March 2020.

15. The CES Bureau will review the terms of reference of the Steering Group in 2022.

VI. METHODS OF WORK

16. The Steering Group will primarily work via email, wiki workspace and telephone conferences. Face-to-face meetings may be organised once a year. Additional meetings may be organized at events attended by a significant number of Steering Group members, such as the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, UN Statistical Commission, or other meetings.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

17. The following countries and organizations are members of the Steering Group: Poland (co-chair), Sweden (co-chair), Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, CISSTAT, Eurostat and OECD.

18. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Steering Group.

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⁵ idem