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**ESTABLISHING TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS WITHIN THE CES**

Note by the ECE Secretariat

**INTRODUCTION**

1. At its October 2002 meeting, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) decided that any future joint meetings or work undertaken by the ECE secretariat in cooperation with Eurostat, OECD and other international organisations should be prepared by a Task Force or Steering Group, so as to ensure that the work leads to specific outputs and is fulfilled within a specific timeframe. Such teams of specialists should be composed of representatives of National Statistical Offices, being - as far as possible - geographically representative of ECE member states, and including the secretariats of international organisations as appropriate.

2. Since this time, a variety of types of teams of specialists have been created in various subject areas, including Steering Groups, Organising Committees, Task Forces, etc. Therefore, in October 2003 the CES Bureau asked the ECE secretariat to prepare a document to define the nature of the various groups that could be created. At its February 2004 meeting the Bureau reviewed and agreed upon the draft guidelines presented below. The Bureau also decided that these draft guideline be presented to the annual plenary session of the Conference at the June meeting for approval.

3. This document therefore details how teams of specialists should be established in general, and the defining functions of Steering Groups, Task Forces and Organising Committees. The February 2004 meeting of the Bureau also reviewed the list of teams of specialists currently in operation under the auspices of the CES, including their terms of reference (eleven teams of specialists have been set up so far). An up-to-date list is maintained

on the ECE website at: <http://www.unece.org/stats/SteeringGroups.html>). The Bureau subsequently agreed that in light of the guidelines, presented below, the "category" of the various existing teams of specialists (that is, Steering Groups, Task Forces or Organising Committees) would be reviewed and, if necessary, modified in order to make them consistent with the guidelines.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS WITHIN THE CES**

4. The following guidelines are based on those determined by the Economic Commission for Europe in June 2003 and have been adapted for the purposes of the CES.

### **Status and Characteristics**

5. A Team of Specialists<sup>1</sup> is an expert body that is established through a procedure set by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and supervised either directly by the CES or by its Bureau. Its main characteristics are as follows:

- (a) It addresses a specific area of activities under the broader theme covered by the parent body;
- (b) Its central function may be of an advisory or operational nature, or a combination of the two, depending on the tasks assigned by the Conference and/or its Bureau;
- (c) A set period of operation is normally defined but this can be extended after careful evaluation, by the Bureau, of the work achieved and the need to perform additional tasks;
- (d) Its meetings do not require full interpretation and translation, unlike the meetings of the formal ECE intergovernmental bodies.

### **Membership and officers**

6. Teams of Specialists are comprised of governmental experts and they can also include eminent specialists or representatives of international organizations, NGOs and the private sector, in compliance with the UN rules and practices in this respect. The procedure of nomination is established by the Conference and/or its Bureau. To the extent possible, consideration should be given to ensuring an appropriate geographical balance in the representation of these teams.

7. A Team of Specialists appoints its officers: a Chairperson and, if deemed necessary, one or two Vice-Chairpersons.

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<sup>1</sup> Teams of specialists is a generic term including "advisory groups", "ad hoc groups", "steering groups", "task forces", etc.

## **Methods of Work**

8. The CES and, where relevant, the Bureau have to determine the scope of issues and the achievements expected of the Team of Specialists, as well as to decide on the membership of the team.

9. At its first meeting, the Team of Specialists adopts its work plan for its operational period, clearly defining its objectives and activities and making a time schedule for their implementation; the activities can include: undertaking studies and advisory missions; organising seminars and training workshops; drafting policy models and guidelines; collecting data; and providing information and training kits etc..

10. The resources required for implementing the work plan have also to be identified; depending on the amount of regular budget resources that can be devoted to servicing the Team of Specialists and the magnitude of the work to be done, the Team of Specialists may raise funds and/or solicit in-kind contributions in support of its activities, in compliance with the relevant UN rules and regulations.

11. The Team of Specialists reports to the Bureau, and where relevant to the Conference.

12. At the end of the operational period, the team submits a full report on its accomplishments to the parent body in order to share the achievements and conclusions of its work with the wider ECE membership.

13. On the basis of this report, the CES makes an evaluation and, if there is a request for extension, determines whether the team needs to be re-conducted in order to undertake supplementary activities.

## **The Secretariat**

14. The ECE secretariat, with the support of the members of the Team of Specialists, has the responsibility for:

- (a) Handling official contacts, including correspondence, with governmental and nongovernmental experts as well as experts from international agencies involved;
- (b) Assisting in the scheduling of meetings and other activities for adoption by the group;
- (c) Cooperating with the members of the team in organising missions, workshops, seminars and training in member countries;
- (d) In cooperation with the Chairperson of the team, preparing the report on the team's accomplishments at the end of the operational period and of any new period of extension.

## **Role of the members of the Team of Specialists**

15. Members of the Team of Specialists, with the support of the secretariat as resources permit, undertake the substantive work, in particular the preparation of substantive

documentation for the meetings and the reports to be submitted to the annual session of the parent body.

#### Defining different types of Teams of Specialists

16. Teams of Specialists that are created to fulfil particular objectives and their form and scope are determined by the terms of reference created for them. Taking into account the semantic analysis of the common types of teams of specialists, the following definitions are recommended:

Steering Group: a committee set up to determine the order of business for another body, to set priorities or to manage the general course of an operation. It has a broad scope which incorporates the guiding of a set of meetings or general body of work rather than a focus on an individual task. Also, the CES Bureau has agreed that Steering Groups should advise the Bureau on work to be undertaken with specific objectives.

Organising Committee: a body of persons appointed for a specific function by, and usually out of, a larger body, commonly for carrying out the preparatory work for a particular meeting (e.g. in the last two years the seminar sessions of the Conference have been prepared by organising committees composed of several NSOs).

Task Force: a group of experts in regular contact with each other, producing work or determining outcomes related to specific issues or problems. These groups then typically report their findings to a higher body, usually in a specific time-scale determined by that body.

17. The above recommendations should not necessarily predetermine the design of an organizational grouping. Therefore, where necessary, the guidelines suggested in this paper for creating organizational groups should be implemented with a degree of flexibility - creating a balance between clarity and effectiveness.