

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

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Agenda

**STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE UN BIENNIAL BUDGETING CYCLE
AND
PLANNING FOR THE BIENNIAL EVALUATIONS**

This document gives an overview of the main programmatic components of the Statistics subprogramme of the UN Economic Commission for Europe. The work undertaken under the Statistics subprogramme is steered by the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau.

The following programmatic components are further discussed in the present document.

- The UN biennial budgeting cycle (2006-2007; 2008-2009 and 2010-2011); and
- The annual UNECE statistical programmes (2006 and onwards).

The Bureau is invited to

- Take note of the status of the current UN biennial programme (2006-2007) and the UNECE annual statistical programme 2007 for which the secretariat has to prepare an evaluation at the end of 2007;
- Review and agree on the approach to be used for the planned biennial evaluation for the upcoming biennium 2008-2009 and related annual statistical programmes: 2008 and 2009;
- Review the proposal for a strategic framework for the 2010-2011 UN biennial programme before its submission to the UNECE Executive Committee by the end of 2007.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations, including UNECE, is expected to plan its activities quite in advance and with the participation of stakeholders, enabling the Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly to make necessary funding decisions. After a defined period, those responsible for a programme should report on their achievements and be accountable for the results.

2. The UN works with a biennial programme and budget cycle, the current biennium being 2006-2007. The biennial programmes present the planned activities in an aggregated way. The planning and evaluation is carried out in the following phases:

- preparation of biennial programmes about 2-3 years before the biennium by defining a strategic framework. The strategic framework includes:
 - the objective of the subprogramme;
 - expected accomplishments;
 - indicators of achievement; and
 - strategy¹ ;

¹ The Strategic Framework for the 2008-2009 biennium was discussed by the CES Bureau at its October 2005 meeting (See ECE/CES/BUR/2005/4).

- specification of a schedule of outputs and resource requirements approximately 1-2 years before the biennium;
- discussion of the strategic framework, outputs and resources by the 5th Committee of the UN General Assembly (GA) within one year before the biennium. The documents are finally approved by the 5th Committee and the General Assembly;
- an assessment of the work accomplished at the end of each biennium and contained in the Programme Performance Report (PPR) is prepared by the Secretariat, reviewed by the Bureau and submitted to the UN Headquarters.

3. In the case of the Statistics subprogramme, the detailed planning is undertaken through annual statistical programmes (SP). The Secretariat prepares a draft annual statistical programme for the upcoming year in July-August. The CES Bureau reviews and approves the Statistical Programme at its October meeting. It is a comprehensive list of all statistical activities planned in the UNECE, and the main instrument of transparency and accountability for those activities (appr. 80%) that are carried out as part of the statistical sub-programme of UNECE under the responsibility of the Conference of European Statisticians.

4. The CES Bureau evaluates the implementation of the Statistical Programme for the completed year at its February meetings. In October 2006, the CES Bureau agreed that the evaluations will be approved by the CES Chairperson who can consult with the CES Bureau members, if needed².

5. The current status of planning and evaluations for the period 2006-2011 is explained in Table 1.

Table 1: Status of planning, implementation and assessment for the period 2006-2011

UN biennial programmes					
2006-2007		2008-2009		2010-2011	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved by the GA • Assessment of the work accomplished to be undertaken by Dec.2007-Jan.2008 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic framework approved by the CES Bureau in October 2005 • Approved by the UNECE Executive Committee in October 2006 • Biennial evaluation at the end of 2009 (See Section II) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early drafting stage of the Strategic Framework (to be completed in the beg. of 2008) 	
UNECE annual statistical programme					
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Evaluation done in February 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in progress • Evaluation by the Bureau in Feb.2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and approval by the CES Bureau in Oct. 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and approval by the CES Bureau in Oct. 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval in Oct. 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval in Oct. 2010

² See ECE/CES/BUR/2006/OCT/13.

II. PLANNED BIENNIAL EVALUATION FOR 2008-2009 AND HARMONISATION OF UN BIENNIAL AND UNECE ANNUAL PROGRAMMES

6. The UNECE member countries, being committed to the transparency and effectiveness of programme management, agreed at the Commission session in 2004 to place more emphasis on evaluation as a tool in managing the Commission's work. The 2005 UNECE reform further strengthened this approach. The Conference of European Statisticians, similarly to other UNECE sectoral committees, is therefore requested by the Commission to conduct biennial evaluations of the Statistics subprogramme and to take into account the results of these evaluations in determining the future work programmes.

7. It should be emphasised that the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau have already a well established approach to planning for the UNECE annual statistical programmes and evaluating their implementation. In October 2006 the CES Bureau agreed on a procedure how to make the two exercises compatible and to focus the evaluation efforts on positive experiences of the Conference.

8. The UNECE Statistical Division streamlined the structure of the UNECE annual statistical programme with UN biennial programme in order to allow for the evaluations undertaken on the basis of the UNECE annual statistical programmes to feed into the UN biennial evaluation process. This was achieved through structuring both exercises around the four main statistical work areas of the UNECE:

- coordination of international statistical activities;
- data work;
- methodological work;
- technical assistance.

These are further disaggregated into eight clusters of activities as indicated in Table 2.

9. Annex I presents expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each of the eight clusters of activities that will form a basis for the 2008-2009 biennial evaluation by the CES Bureau in 2009. It should be noted that these expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement correspond exactly to those specified in the UNECE Annual Statistical Programme for 2008, see document ECE/CES/BUR/2007/OCT/7. The definitions in the SP 2008 will allow direct aggregation into indicators of achievement for the UN Programme Performance Report.

Table 2: Structural correspondence between the 2008-2009 UN biennial programme and the 2008 UNECE annual statistical programme

Annual statistical UNECE programme 2008	UN Biennial programme 2008-2009
Clusters of activities	Expected accomplishments
<i>Coordination</i>	
1. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region	(c) Streamlined activity patterns of statistical work between international organizations through elimination of overlaps and gaps
<i>Data work</i>	
2. Collection, processing and dissemination of macroeconomic statistics	(d) Increased availability of reliable, timely and comparable macroeconomic, social and demographic statistics, particularly about the less advanced countries of the region
3. Collection, processing and dissemination of social and demographic statistics	
4. Processing and dissemination infrastructure for statistics	
<i>Methodological work</i>	
5. Methodological work in economic statistics	(b) Increased development of internationally recommended standards and practices to ensure comparable statistics
6. Methodological work in social and demographic statistics	
7. Methodological work on cross-cutting issues of official statistics	
<i>Technical assistance</i>	
8. Technical assistance to UNECE member countries	(a) Further developed national institutional frameworks and corresponding implementation practices of member countries, in line with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

III. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE 2010-2011 BIENNIUM

10. The outcomes of the 2005 reform of the UNECE confirmed that in the medium term the UNECE statistical work will continue to be organized around the four pillars listed in paragraph 8 above. Therefore, the structure of the Strategic Framework 2010-2011 can follow a similar pattern as in 2008-2009. Table 3 comprises the draft objective, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for the Strategic Framework for the 2010-2011 biennium. These are presented according to the generic structure of annual statistical programmes.

11. The CES Bureau is invited to review the proposal for a strategic framework. However, the Bureau should be aware that the final version adopted formally by the UN General Assembly could be slightly different due to the complexity of the intergovernmental approval process.

Table 3: Strategic Framework for the 2010-2011 biennium

PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2010-2011		
Objective: To improve the reliability of national official statistics and ensure their comparability at the international level, and to play the central coordination role for the international statistical activities undertaken in the region.		
Cluster of activities	Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
<i>Coordination</i>		
1. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region	(a) Streamlined activity patterns of statistical work between international organizations through elimination of overlaps and gaps	(i) The number of international organizations regularly reporting their activities in the integrated presentation of international statistical work programmes
<i>Data work</i>		
2. Collection, processing and dissemination of macroeconomic statistics	(b) Increased availability of reliable, timely and comparable macroeconomic, social and demographic statistics, particularly about the less advanced countries of the region	(i) Percentage of available data of good quality in the overview tables (percentage of filled data cells to the total number of data cells)
3. Collection, processing and dissemination of social and demographic statistics		(ii) Percentage of users that express, through user surveys, satisfaction with the quality, coverage and timeliness of data contained in the ECE database
4. Processing and dissemination infrastructure for statistics		
<i>Methodological work</i>		
5. Methodological work in economic statistics	(c) Increased development of internationally recommended standards and practices to ensure comparable statistics	(i) The number of new or revised international statistical standards and recommendations to which ECE has significantly contributed in substance
6. Methodological work in social and demographic statistics		(ii) The number of statistical areas (according to the DISA classification) in which the ECE undertakes substantive methodological work
7. Methodological work on cross-cutting issues of official statistics		

PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2010-2011		
<i>Technical assistance</i>		
8. Technical assistance to UNECE member countries	(d) Progress in implementation of international standards and good practices by statistical systems, particularly in less developed countries of the region	(i) The number of countries ensuring better compliance with the Fundamental Principles through revision of their national statistical legislations (ii) The number of ECE recommendations implemented to improve national institutional frameworks for official statistics (iii) Number of participants to training workshops on implementing international statistical standards.

Strategy

12. The Bureau is also asked to review and comment on the strategy of implementation of the 2010-2011 biennial programme that forms part of the strategic framework for 2010-2011. The Secretariat proposes the following text:

The Statistical Division is responsible for the subprogramme. Coordinating all international statistical activities undertaken in the region will remain a central component of the strategy under the subprogramme. The subprogramme will promote the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics within the international statistical community, provide advice to countries on institutional frameworks of official statistics, and monitor the implementation of Fundamental Principles.

Concerning methodological work, the programme will focus on a selected number of niches in different subject areas, in particular those where UNECE can provide an added value and complement the work undertaken by other international organizations. The work will concentrate on developing standards, guidelines and leading practices, including the advice on existing UN standards, and related implementation at the national level. Public access to all meeting documents, work programmes and statistical standards and recommendations will provide the basis for transparency and accountability.

Technical cooperation will focus its activities on key priorities, reflecting the needs of countries. It will be demand driven and focus on areas where UN standards exist, such as population censuses, indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals, national accounts and prices.

The data work undertaken by the Statistical Division will respond to a sustained internal and external demand. Data will be accessible to the public via Internet. A quality framework will ensure relevance, timeliness and user-friendliness of data dissemination.

The cooperation with the statistical services of other international organizations will continue in the form of joint meetings aimed at coordinating the development of

methodologies and the preparation of standards, recommendations and publication of best practices, as well as through using modern tools of data sharing.

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ANNEX I

**DETAILED STRUCTURE OF ACTIVITY CLUSTERS, EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE BIENNIAL EVALUATION 2008-2009**

Cluster of activities	Expected accomplishment	Indicators of achievement
<i>Coordination</i>		
1. Coordination of international statistical work in the UNECE region	Streamlined activity patterns of statistical work between international organizations through elimination of overlaps and gaps.	(i) The percentage of joint activities in the UNECE Statistical Programme undertaken in cooperation with the OECD, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), The Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and other international organizations. (ii) The number of international organizations regularly reporting their activities in the Database on International Statistical Activities (DISA, formerly the “Integrated Presentation”).
<i>Data work</i>		
2. Collection, processing and dissemination of macroeconomic statistics	Increased availability of reliable, timely and comparable macroeconomic statistics, particularly about the less advanced countries of the region.	(i) Percentage of available data of good quality in the macroeconomic overview tables (percentage of filled data cells to the total number of data cells). (ii) Percentage of users that express, through user surveys, satisfaction with the quality, coverage and timeliness of data contained in the UNECE macroeconomic database
3. Collection, processing and dissemination of social and demographic statistics	Increased availability of reliable, timely and comparable social and demographic statistics with gender breakdown, particularly about the less advanced countries of the region.	(i) Percentage of available data of good quality in the social and demographic overview tables (percentage of filled data cells to the total number of data cells). (ii) Percentage of users that express, through user surveys, satisfaction with the quality, coverage and timeliness of data contained in the UNECE gender database.
4. Processing and dissemination infrastructure for statistics	Improved functionality of the processing and dissemination infrastructure for statistics	(i) Number of functionalities that were decided by the UNECE Database Coordination Group and successfully implemented.

Cluster of activities	Expected accomplishment	Indicators of achievement
<i>Methodological work</i>		
5. Methodological work in economic statistics	Increased development of internationally recommended standards and practices to ensure comparable economic statistics	<p>(i) The number of new and revised international standards and recommendations in the field of economic statistics endorsed by a statistical authority to which the UNECE has contributed in substance.</p> <p>(ii) The number of statistical areas (according to the DISA classification) related to economic statistics in which the UNECE undertakes substantive methodological work.</p>
6. Methodological work in social and demographic statistics	Increased development of internationally recommended standards and practices to ensure comparable social and demographic statistics	<p>(i) The number of new and revised international standards and recommendations in the field of social and demographic statistics endorsed by a statistical authority to which the UNECE has contributed in substance.</p> <p>(ii) The number of statistical areas (according to the DISA classification) related to social and demographic statistics in which the UNECE undertakes substantive methodological work.</p>
7. Methodological work on cross-cutting issues of official statistics	Increased development of internationally recommended standards and practices to ensure comparable statistics	<p>(i) The number of new and revised international standards and recommendations on cross-cutting issues of official statistics endorsed by a statistical authority to which the UNECE has contributed in substance.</p> <p>(ii) The number of statistical areas (according to the DISA classification) related to on cross-cutting issues of official statistics in which the UNECE undertakes substantive methodological work.</p>
<i>Technical assistance</i>		
8. Technical assistance to UNECE member countries	Progress in implementation of international standards and good practices by statistical systems, particularly in less developed countries of the region	<p>(i) The number of countries ensuring better compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics through revision of their statistical systems</p> <p>(ii) The number of UNECE recommendations implemented to improve national institutional frameworks for official statistics</p> <p>(iii) Percentage of participants to training workshops related to specific subject areas, who expressed that the workshop was useful for their future work.</p>