

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2015/2016 Bureau
Luxembourg, 9-10 February 2016

Item III (b) of the Provisional
Agenda

**STEERING GROUP ON POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES
AND TASK FORCE ON REGISTER-BASED AND COMBINED CENSUSES
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

*As a follow-up to the in-depth review of diversification of population census methodology and sources in October 2015, the Bureau asked the Secretariat to develop new terms of reference for the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, and set up a Task Force on Register-Based and Combined Censuses. **The Bureau discussed and approved the draft terms of reference for the two groups, provided in Annexes.***

1. Between 2012 and 2015 the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses coordinated the preparation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*. Nine Task Forces were working together with the Steering Group on the Recommendations.
2. The CES adopted the Recommendations for the 2020 census round in June 2015. The Recommendations are available in electronic format on the UNECE website¹ and are expected to be printed in English and Russian at the beginning of 2016. After the adoption of the Recommendations, new terms of reference for the Steering Group are required, covering the activities related to the preparations for the 2020 census round in the UNECE region.
3. In October 2015, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of diversification of population census methodology and sources, based on a paper by Finland and Turkey (ECE/CES/BUR/2015/OCT/3) and a note by UNECE (ECE/CES/BUR/2015/OCT/3Add.1). As an outcome of the review, the Bureau supported the preparation of new guidelines on the use of registers for population and housing censuses, and requested the Secretariat to prepare new terms of reference for the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses and for a Task Force on Register-Based and Combined Censuses (Report of the Bureau meeting: ECE/CES/BUR/2015/OCT/21).
4. This note presents the draft terms of reference for the Steering Group (Annex I) and the Task Force on Register-Based and Combined Censuses (Annex II), reviewed and approved by the Bureau in February 2016.

¹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41398&L=0>

ANNEX I

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STEERING GROUP ON POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUSES

I. BACKGROUND

1. Between 2012 and 2015 the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses coordinated the preparation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*. Nine Task Forces were working together with the Steering Group on the recommendations.
2. The CES adopted the new Recommendations for the 2020 round in June 2015. The new Recommendations are available in electronic form on the UNECE website².
3. As an outcome of an in-depth review of diversification of population census methodology and sources in October 2015, the CES Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare new terms of reference for the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses. The Bureau also supported the preparation of new guidelines on the use of registers for population and housing censuses, and the organization of regional training workshops in the following areas: internet response; use of geographic information systems (GIS), mobile devices and other technology; data protection methods for disseminating small area data; methods to give access to microdata to researchers; and assessing quality of administrative sources.
4. This note presents the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group for the period 2016-2019.

II. MANDATE

6. The Steering Group works under the mandate of the CES, and reports to the CES and its Bureau (at least every 18 months).
7. The Terms of Reference of the Steering Group will be reviewed by the CES Bureau in autumn 2019.

III. OBJECTIVE

8. The main objective of the Steering Group is to coordinate, provide advice and contribute to the UNECE programme on population and housing censuses, aimed at supporting UNECE member countries in the preparations for the censuses of the 2020 round and the implementation of the *CES Recommendations for the 2020 censuses of population and housing*.

² <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41398&L=0>

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

9. The following activities and outputs are planned:

(a) Act as organizing committee for the Joint UNECE-Eurostat expert meetings on Censuses, aimed at facilitating the exchange of experiences among countries on census methodology, technology, census content, and other issues related to the implementation of the CES Recommendations for the 2020 census round;

(b) Guide and support the Secretariat in the organization (in cooperation with CIS-Stat and possibly other organizations) of regional workshops for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), and South-East Europe, primarily in the following areas: internet response; use of GIS, mobile devices and other technology; data protection methods for disseminating small area data; methods to give access to microdata to researchers; and assessing quality of administrative sources. The workshops should preferably take place back-to-back to the UNECE-Eurostat expert meetings to facilitate the participation of national experts in all events;

(c) Oversee the work of the new Task Force on Register-Based and Combined Censuses whose expected output is a publication with provisional title “UNECE Guidelines on Register-Based and Combined Censuses” (see Annex II);

(d) Ensure coordination and avoid duplication with the activities of the 2020 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, promoted by the United Nations Statistics Division, and those of Eurostat for the 2021 EU Census Programme.

V. METHOD OF WORK

10. The Steering Group is expected to work in English only, mainly by e-mail and occasionally by telephone conferences. The UNECE Census Wiki can be used by the Steering Group to share material, develop documents, and organize discussion forums.

11. Informal meetings of the Steering Group can be organized on the occasion of expert meetings attended by a significant number of members of the Steering Group, such as the Joint UNECE-Eurostat Expert Meetings on Censuses.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

12. The Steering Group includes representatives of the following countries and international organizations: Armenia, Canada (Chair), Finland, France, Georgia, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Eurostat, CIS-STAT, UNECE, UNSD, UNFPA. The secretariat is provided by UNECE.

ANNEX II

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TASK FORCE ON REGISTER-BASED AND COMBINED CENSUSES

I. BACKGROUND

1. In October 2015, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of diversification of population census methodology and sources. As an outcome of the review, the Bureau supported the preparation of new guidelines on the use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses, and decided to set up a Task Force for this purpose (Report of the Bureau meeting: ECE/CES/BUR/2015/OCT/21).

2. This note presents the terms of reference for the Task Force on Register-Based and Combined Censuses.

II. MANDATE

3. The Task Force reports to the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses, which in turn reports to the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau. The Task Force is created for a period from 2016 to 2018.

III. OBJECTIVE

4. The objective of the Task Force is to prepare new *UNECE Guidelines on the use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses*, covering operational, practical, technical and legal aspects. The new guidelines should cover the use of multiple sources (including the so-called combined censuses) and include methods for measuring coverage and quality of the various sources, without specific focus on the comparability of the various census methods.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

5. The Task Force is expected to prepare a set of Guidelines on the use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses. The planned output is a publication in electronic and printed format, in English and possibly in Russian (subject to availability of resources), to be finalized by April 2018.

6. The Task Force will start its work by collecting available material on the use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses. In particular, the Task Force should consider the publication “Register-based statistics in the Nordic countries”³, the relevant text in the census recommendations for the 2020 round, and the papers prepared in the last years for UNECE expert meetings on censuses, describing the preparation and conduction of register-based and combined censuses⁴.

7. The Task Force should also establish cooperation with other relevant international activities, including in particular those conducted under Eurostat’s ESS.VIP.ADMIN project

³ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/Register_based_statistics_in_Nordic_countries.pdf

⁴ <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/censuses/Collection+of+papers+on+transitions+to+new+census+methods>

(part of ESS Vision 2020) on the assessment of the quality of administrative sources.

8. The available material should be reviewed, expanded and integrated with new text, in order to produce a comprehensive document covering the following topics (the list is tentative and not exhaustive):

- Definitions of register-based and combined censuses, and description of the methods more commonly adopted in the 2010 and previous rounds;
- How to assess the coverage and quality of registers and administrative data, and how to decide if and how they can be used for the population and housing census;
- Advantages, disadvantages, and necessary conditions for register-based and combined censuses;
- Transition from traditional census to combined or register-based censuses;
- Methods for assessing the quality of register-based and combined censuses.

9. The Task Force should use as much as possible the information available on national census practices, availability and use of data from registers and administrative sources, and plans for the 2020 round, including in particular the information collected by UNECE in the 2013 and 2015 surveys on population and housing censuses. If necessary, the Task Force may collect, through the UNECE, additional information from member countries, minimizing the burden on national statistical offices.

10. The Guidelines should present good practices identified by the Task Force that could be used as examples by other countries. The Guidelines may also include additional recommendations to complement those already provided in the CES Recommendations for the 2020 censuses.

V. TIMETABLE

Feb 2016	Establish the Task Force and draft detailed work plan with activities, timing and division of work
Mar-Apr 2016	Collect and review available material
Apr-July 2016	Prepare outline of the Guidelines, and first draft chapters
Sep 2016	Present progress report at UNECE-Eurostat Expert Meeting on Censuses
Oct 2016-Jun 2017	Revise draft and prepare complete draft Guidelines
Sep 2017	Present draft Guidelines at UNECE-Eurostat Expert Meeting on Censuses
Sep-Dec 2017	Revise draft Guidelines based on discussion at Expert Meeting
Dec 2017	Submit final draft Guidelines for review by CES Bureau in February 2018
Feb 2018	Review of draft Guidelines by CES Bureau
Feb-Mar 2018	Electronic consultation among all CES members
Apr 2018	Expected endorsement by the CES plenary session

VI. METHODS OF WORK

11. The Task Force is expected to work in English only, mainly by e-mail and telephone conferences. The UNECE Census Wiki platform can be used by the Task Force to share work material, develop documents, and possibly organize discussion forums.

12. Face-to-face meetings of the Task Force could be organized in connection with Joint UNECE-Eurostat Expert Meetings on Censuses, or other events attended by a significant number of members of the Task Force.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

13. The following countries and organizations participate in the work of the Task Force: Austria, Estonia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands (Chair), New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, United Kingdom, United States, Eurostat, FAO and UNECE. The secretariat is provided by UNECE.

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