

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For decision

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

Item III (a) of the Provisional
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN
STATISTICIANS STEERING GROUP
ON STATISTICS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Note by the Secretariat

*In October 2015, the CES Bureau decided to set up a Steering Group to coordinate and guide the work on the development of official statistics for monitoring Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the Conference of European Statisticians. **The CES Bureau is invited to review and approve the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. The 2015 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) decided to “launch work on a road map for the development of official statistics for monitoring SDGs.”¹ The Conference further specified that “this road map could include:

- (i) An outline of the setup of reporting on SDGs (who does what and when);
- (ii) Identification of new areas of statistics where internationally harmonized indicators need to be developed in cooperation with international organizations, academia, civil society, and other stakeholders;
- (iii) A strategy on how to reinforce communication with other data providers and users of official statistics, including policy makers;
- (iv) A strategy on how to deal with the required disaggregations of data;
- (v) A plan for the necessary capacity building for reporting on SDGs;
- (vi) Collaboration between various international agencies in the region.”

2. Furthermore, the Conference noted that this road map “could contribute to a future action plan at a global level to succeed the Busan action plan for statistics adopted in 2011”.

3. In June 2015, the CES Plenary session also approved the *Declaration on the role of national statistical offices in measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals* (ECE/CES/89/Add. 1). The Declaration:

- (a) calls upon national governments to support national statistical offices in their key

¹ ECE/CES/89, paragraph 23

role in measuring and monitoring SDGs in countries and also recognizes the importance of cooperation at local, national, subregional, regional and global levels in monitoring SDGs; and

- (b) emphasizes the importance of efficient coordination of SDG monitoring and reporting at regional level between relevant international organizations and between international organizations and national statistical offices.

4. Several ongoing global processes related to the implementation of SDGs call for action at regional level, such as:

- (a) Regional input to the work of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) which will have a central role in overseeing the processes at the global level and “will facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up. It will promote system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies”;
- (b) Input to the Interagency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs);
- (c) Input to the High Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for post 2015 monitoring (HLG for post-2015 monitoring)² that will establish a global action plan for data for the follow up and review of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. This global action plan of statistics will include a road map at the global level and is intended to involve all relevant stakeholders that will contribute to a global monitoring framework.

5. In October 2015, the Bureau considered follow-up actions to the 2015 CES seminar on response of official statistics to SDGs. The Bureau reviewed an outline of a road map for the development of official statistics for SDGs, prepared based on an electronic consultation held with member countries (ECE/CES/BUR/2015/OCT/11). The Bureau decided to set up a CES Steering Group to provide guidance on the work on developing official statistics for SDGs.

II. MANDATE

6. The work of the Steering Group is conducted within the CES work programme. The Steering Group will provide regular reports to the Bureau and CES. The terms of reference of the Steering Group will be reviewed in 2019.

7. The work of the Steering Group will reflect the work of the HLG for post-2015 monitoring 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 and the work of the UNECE Task Force on adjusting the *CES Recommendations for measuring sustainable development* to SDGs.

8. The Steering Group may identify concrete tasks or activities to support its work that could be undertaken by groups of experts (Task Forces). 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 to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

² The group will be renamed during the 47th UN Statistical Commission in March 2016 into “High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

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.

III. OBJECTIVES

10. The objectives of the Steering Group are:
- (a) to prepare a road map for developing official statistics for SDGs under CES, learning from the Busan Action Plan. The road map will provide a strategy on how to implement a monitoring system for SDGs under CES, and guide the CES members in implementing the Declaration adopted by the Conference in 2015;
 - (b) to follow up on the implementation of the road map.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

11. Building on already existing collaborative efforts in the UNECE region, including the Task Force on adjusting the CES Recommendations to SDGs, the Steering Group will:

- (a) Prepare 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 reporting mechanism on SDGs under CES (who does what and when);
 - ii. analyse the need and establish criteria for a set of regional indicators to monitor SDGs, in collaboration with the Task Force on Adjusting CES Recommendations to SDGs, and taking into account the priorities identified at the policy level;
 - iii. identify new areas where methodological work could be undertaken to support the implementation of a monitoring system 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 reporting on SDGs;
 - vii. identify the relevant partners throughout the process and ensure coordination of activities; and
 - viii. promote collaboration between various international agencies, scientists and other data producers on SDG reporting (e.g. through the UN World Data Forum) to ensure efficient data flows and avoiding double reporting.
- (c) Coordinate the CES work on the implementation of a monitoring system for SDGs using a bottom-up approach, and in close collaboration with Eurostat and OECD;

(d) Advise the UNECE Secretariat on capacity building activities in support of monitoring SDGs. These activities should be closely coordinated with other regional partners;

(e) Promote the sharing of methods, techniques, research, training materials and other resources related to monitoring SDGs.

(f) Review progress and outcomes of possible CES tasks forces working in the area of monitoring SDGs.

12. The main outputs of the Steering Group in 2016-2019 will be:

(a) A road map for the development of official statistics to monitor SDGs, taking into account the priorities of CES member countries and their needs (the first draft to be considered at the CES plenary session in April 2016);

(b) An assessment of the readiness of CES members to provide data on the global and possible regional list of indicators;

(c) An analysis of capacity building needs of CES countries for monitoring SDGs;

(d) Identification of new areas where methodological work is needed to support monitoring SDGs and the establishment of priorities.

V. TIMETABLE

13. The Steering Group will prepare annual work plans.

14. The Steering Group will prepare a first draft of the road map by end March 2016.

15. The CES Bureau will review the terms of reference of the Steering Group in 2019.

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 at events attended by a significant number of Steering Group members, such as the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians and other meetings.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

17. The following countries and organizations are members of the Steering Group: Switzerland (co-chair), United States (co-chair), Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, Eurostat and OECD. Other countries and organizations may also join the Steering Group as the work progresses.

18. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Steering Group.

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