

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2017/2018 Bureau  
Helsinki (Finland), 14-15 February 2018

Item III (b) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TASK FORCE ON THE USE OF  
LONGITUDINAL DATA FOR MIGRATION STATISTICS**

**Note by the Steering Group on migration statistics**

*The Bureau approved the terms of reference for the Task Force on the use of longitudinal data for migration statistics.*

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. As the number of international migrants continues to grow, it is becoming increasingly important for the public and policymakers to understand the impact of migration on individuals, families, societies and economies. In many cases, the key questions pertain to the process of migrant settlement – how long migrants stay in the receiving country, how they integrate with the receiving societies and how their socioeconomic outcomes change over time.

2. Since the process of migrant settlement and integration is a long-term one, it is well suited to be studied using a longitudinal approach. However, such studies have often been stand-alone and are rarely used for regular or annual migration statistics.

3. With the increasingly widespread use of administrative data and integration of multiple data sources for producing migration statistics, more and more countries are able to construct longitudinal datasets without bearing excessive costs. As a result, longitudinal and cohort studies are becoming more common and national statistical offices could consider making them part of the regular production of migration statistics. However, there are currently no international guidelines on the compilation of longitudinal indicators, how these indicators would compare with cross-sectional indicators with retrospective content and what would be the good practices in the production, analysis and dissemination of such data.

4. The use of a longitudinal approach for measuring integration of migrants was discussed several times at the joint UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics (e.g. in 2012, 2014 and 2017). In October 2017, the Work Session recommended pursuing further methodological work on this topic, recognizing that it is a favourable time to review the national practices and develop recommendations that will promote the international comparability of longitudinal data, as more countries consider their regular production.

5. Moreover, the Work Session highlighted that the work would build on the recent methodological work of UNECE task forces. The report “Measuring change in the socio-economic characteristics of migrants” (2015) illustrated the benefits of using longitudinal data and recommended that countries develop data linking methodologies to acquire longitudinal data sets. The Task Force on data integration for measuring migration in its

2017 draft report presents several examples where integration of different datasets led to the compilation of longitudinal data. One of the benefits of the work could also be the development of a recommendation on producing longitudinal data allowing the estimation of circular migration, for which a UNECE Task Force on defining and measuring circular migration developed a definition in 2016. Another aspect that could be addressed using longitudinal data is family migration, i.e. the analysis of a family unit that migrates together and whereby family members are not looked at as individuals who migrate independently of each other. The Work Session recognized also the challenge of providing universal recommendations while the potential sources for longitudinal data vary greatly.

6. As a follow-up to the recommendation of the Work Session, the Steering Group on migration statistics developed the present terms of reference for methodological work that would help countries in producing better migration estimates.

## **II. MANDATE**

7. The work of the Task Force is conducted within the framework of CES and its Bureau. The Task Force will be created for a period from March 2018 to June 2020.

## **III. OBJECTIVE**

8. The objective of the Task Force is to prepare guidelines on how to incorporate longitudinal data into annual migration statistics and complement the available cross-sectional measurements.

9. The guidelines will include a set of longitudinal indicators that could be calculated at a regular basis, analysis of their added value compared to cross-sectional measurements with retrospective content and description of good practices in production, analysis and dissemination of longitudinal data.

## **IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS**

10. The Task Force will produce the following outputs:

- (a) Practical guidance on incorporating longitudinal data into annual migration statistics;
- (b) A set of longitudinal indicators that could be calculated at a regular basis, including indicators on migrant integration, family migration and circular migration;
- (c) Comparison of longitudinal data to cross-sectional data with retrospective content;
- (d) Good practices in production, analysis and dissemination of longitudinal data.

11. The Task Force will carry out the following activities:

- (a) Review of current practices of countries producing longitudinal data and identifying policy-relevant longitudinal indicators that potentially could be compiled on regular basis;
- (b) Document similarities and differences in relevant longitudinal data sources from participating countries;

- (c) Analysis of complementarity and comparability of longitudinal and cross-sectional measurements;
- (d) Development of a harmonized set of indicators including indicators on the socio-economic outcomes of migrants, family migration and circular migration;
- (e) Development of practical guidelines on incorporating longitudinal data into annual migration statistics including recommendations on good practices in production, analysis and dissemination of longitudinal data.

## V. TIMETABLE

12. The activities of the Task Force are planned for the period from March 2018 to June 2020, according to the following tentative schedule:

Mar - Apr 2018	Establishment of the Task Force and drafting of a work plan with activities, timing and division of work
May - Sep 2018	Review of current practices and data sources (activities <i>a-c</i> )
Oct 2018	Meeting of the Task Force and presentation of the review of current practices to the joint UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics
Nov 2018 - Feb 2019	Development of a set of longitudinal indicators including indicators on migrant integration, family migration and circular migration (activity <i>d</i> )
Mar - Jul 2019	Development of practical guidelines on incorporating longitudinal data into annual migration statistics including recommendations on good practices in production, analysis and dissemination of longitudinal data (activity <i>e</i> )
Aug - Sep 2019	Review of the indicator set and the draft of the practical guidelines by the Task Force
Oct 2019	Meeting of the Task Force and presentation of the draft to the joint UNECE-Eurostat Work Session on Migration Statistics
Oct - Nov 2019	Finalization of the indicator set and the practical guidelines
Dec 2019 - Jan 2020	Review of the full draft guidelines by the CES Bureau
Feb - Mar 2020	Revision based on the comments by the CES Bureau
Apr - May 2020	Electronic consultation among all countries in CES
Jun 2020	Expected endorsement by the CES plenary session

## VI. METHOD OF WORK

13. The Task Force will primarily work via e-mail, wiki workspace, and telephone conferences. A face-to-face meeting of the Task Force is planned back-to-back with the UNECE-Eurostat Work Sessions on Migration Statistics in October 2018 and 2019.

## VII. MEMBERSHIP

14. The following countries and organizations have expressed interest in participating in the Task Force: Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Eurostat and OECD. Other countries and organizations will be invited to join the Task Force after the Bureau approves the terms of reference.

15. UNECE will act as Secretariat to the Task Force.

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