

Information Notice No.1

I. DATE, LOCATION AND OBJECTIVES

1. This online expert meeting¹ will be organized as part of the Conference of European Statisticians' work programme for 2021, within the context of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics. It will take place online on 27-30 September 2021. The event will be scheduled for the maximum 3 hours per day between 12:00 and 17:00 CET/Geneva².

2. The objective of this expert meeting is to identify innovative ways and best practices in statistical data collection, and to provide a platform for practitioners to exchange experiences and foster collaboration in this area. In addition to the more traditional presentations, the agenda will include target-driven small group discussions and activities to identify best practices and new opportunities. Delegates will be asked to contribute to the development of internationally-coordinated work in the field of statistical data collection.

II. AGENDA

3. The world of data collection for official statistics is changing rapidly. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an unprecedented acceleration of this. The need for reliable and timely data relevant for making decisions, have become even more apparent due to the pandemic. The expert meeting is an opportunity to jointly face these challenges, to share experiences, and to discuss how we can make the legacy become a permanent improvement in our data collection practices.

4. The programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive topics:

(i) **Adapting data collection in a crisis context**

When conducting data collection activities, we are always working on set timelines with the goal to disseminate data in a timely fashion, to meet user needs. We have all experienced unexpected emergency situations which impacted our data collection activities, whether it be the most recent pandemic, technological issues, natural disasters, etc. The goal of this session is to look at how NSO's adapt when faced with these challenges, mitigate the impact on ongoing and planned surveys, and present the strategies developed to minimize that impact. This topic will cover the following sub-topics:

- Adaptation of the collection strategy in response to the crisis/emergency
- Measures taken to minimize impact on response rates and outcomes
- The 'new normal' – practices developed to mitigate impact and opportunities for the future
- Economic and social impacts (i.e. new challenges in the measurement of vulnerabilities such as economic insecurity, inequality, poverty)

¹ Until 2020, it was called the Workshop on Statistical Data Collection

² For your time-zone check <https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/meeting.html>

(ii) **Communication with respondents and data providers**

Data collection is essentially a matter of effective communication with respondents and information providers, and this is considered to be one of the critical success factors for the quality of statistical surveys. This session will focus on the importance of statistical authorities managing the relationship with respondents, both in the design of questionnaires and methods of collection, as well as other processes of the statistical production chain. This topic will include the following subtopics:

- Data Collection Portals and other channels
- Designing questionnaires and mixed data collection modes
- Feedback to respondents
- Survey communication measures

(iii) **Measuring, monitoring and reducing response burden**

Much of the data needed for official statistics is still collected directly from respondents and data providers. The time and effort required to meet these data requests can be a real or perceived burden on society. This session will focus on the importance of managing the response burden that statistical authorities produce. Practical ways to measure, mitigate or even eliminate the response burden will be presented and discussed. This topic will include the following subtopics:

- Measuring and monitoring actual and perceived burden
- Measures to reduce response burden
- The governance of response burden management
- Re-designing surveys

(iv) **Integration of survey data with other data sources**

Socio-economic statistics are traditionally obtained through well planned and executed surveys. The corresponding statistical data collection methods are scientifically sound, well tested, and well understood. But they are slow, expensive, prone to selection bias issues, and do not incorporate the opportunities of big data. Big data is nowadays easy to obtain and contain a wealth of information. However, the information is often indirect, not collected under scientific principles, and it is less known how we can make official statistics from such data. One of the issues is the stability and dynamics of the information contained within big data. Furthermore, big data is likely to be selective with regard to the target population of the statistics. In this session, we would like to see examples of successes in using various data sources for creating official statistics, but also suggestions for alternate data sources that are useful for creating more relevant, accurate, timely or detailed statistical information. Examples of sub-topics covered:

- Data fusion: integrating multiple data sources to produce more consistent, accurate, and useful information.
- New data sources - big data: such as scanner data; sensor data; social media data; smart phone data; web scraping data.
- Administrative data sources: among which are tax registers, non-probability samples.
- Data donation: collecting data by asking people or companies to donate an export of specific data such as bank transactions or smart meter data.
- Data crowdsourcing: citizen statistics.
- Intergovernmental coordination: make agreements for the harmonisation of data at national and international level.

(v) **Managing and modernizing Data Collection**

This session will focus on the governance and modernization of official statistics to meet the emerging needs of high-quality, internationally comparable statistical production in a rapidly changing data ecosystem. Managing data collection functions in the changing environment includes managing and integrating multiple modes of data collection and new data sources, centralizing processes, and improving the respondent's

experience. The modernization of data collection requires an efficient and updated technology, new frameworks and an infrastructure that supports statistical production in an integrated, flexible and scalable way. This topic will include the following subtopics:

- Data collection governance
- Integrated data infrastructures
- Automatic data collection and hybrid data collection
- Multi-mode data collection
- Beyond traditional data collection
- Use of new technologies for *smart* surveys
- Privacy-preserving technologies

5. In addition to the sessions based on the submitted contributions, the event will include small group discussions on lessons learned and to identify topics for future work.

6. The target audience for the expert meeting includes senior and middle-level managers responsible for data collection activities and new data sources, across all statistical domains.

7. The Steering Committee of the meeting will make the final decision in regards to the acceptance of proposals for contributions. The Steering Committee consists of the following members:

- Lise Rivais, Statistics Canada
- Susan Oudshoorn and Kees van Berkel, Statistics Netherlands
- Paulo Saraiva dos Santos, Statistics Portugal
- Zübeyir Özçelik, Turkstat, Turkey
- Ian O'Sullivan, ONS, United Kingdom
- Andrea Ascheri, Eurostat

III. CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

8. Participants are strongly encouraged to consider submitting an abstract that summarises the content of their proposed contribution. These should cover one or more of the topics in the meeting programme. All contributions should be submitted in English only.

9. A short abstract of the proposed contribution should be submitted through the meeting registration form (see further below) or by email to the UNECE Secretariat, taeke.gjaltema@un.org and gerald.muriel@un.org, as soon as possible and by **Monday 28 June 2021** at the latest.

10. The steering committee will notify in due time whether the submission is accepted or not and might request changes. Contributions should normally consist of a paper, plus an accompanying presentation. Other forms of contributions may be proposed. Please note that as we finalize the agenda, it may not be possible to allocate time to all proposed contributions.

11. Any written papers must be provided by **Monday 30 August 2021** at the latest. A link will be sent to the authors where documents can be uploaded.

12. Any presentation slides, videos or other electronic materials should be provided by **Monday 30 August 2021** at the latest. Any equipment required for practical demonstrations must be provided by the participants. A link will be sent to the authors where presentations can be uploaded.

IV. REGISTRATION

13. Participants should register online at the site <https://forms.office.com/r/BEMi54zxZ9> by **Monday 30 August 2021**. Only registered participants will get further information and be permitted access to the online

meeting platform (Webex).

14. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and of interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the meeting. Participants representing non-governmental organizations in a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council may also attend. All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization.

V. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

15. The official language of the meeting is English. No interpretation or translation will be provided.

16. The expert meeting will consist of presentations, small group discussions to exchange experiences and to identify lessons learned, and interactive discussions to identify future work in the area of data collection. Participants are expected to actively contribute to the discussions.

17. Abstracts and papers will be made available in pdf format on the meeting website (<https://statswiki.unece.org/x/uAWfEQ>). Presentations will be added in pdf format to this web site after the event.

18. Participants are encouraged to download the papers from the website and, where feasible, to use electronic devices to read papers in order to minimise paper use. Documents posted on the website before the meeting will **not** be distributed in the conference room.

VI. VENUE

19. The expert meeting will be held online on the UNECE Webex platform. Connection details and testing opportunities will be provided to registered participants in due time.

VII. FURTHER INFORMATION

20. For further information you may contact the following organisers:

Mr Taeke Gjaltema, tel: +41 22 917 1272, email: taeke.gjaltema@un.org

Mr. Gerald Muriel, tel: +41 22 917 3323, email: gerald.muriel@un.org

Statistical Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

DEADLINES

28 June 2021	Abstract or proposal for intended contribution
30 August 2021	Registration
30 August 2021	Paper or detailed abstract if no paper is provided
30 August 2021	Presentation (draft)
20 September 2021	Final versions of presentations
27-30 September 2021	Expert meeting