



Economic Commission for Europe**Conference of European Statisticians****Sixty-ninth plenary session**

Geneva, 23-25 June 2021

Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe****Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists****Report of the Regional Coordination Group on Data and
Statistics for Europe and Central Asia****Prepared by the Secretariat***Summary*

The Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia was established in January 2020 in response to the United Nations Secretary General's Recommendations on Phase 2 of the United Nations Development System Reform. According to its terms of reference, its work should be guided by the Conference, and it should provide regular reports and updates to the Conference.

This report covers the period since the 2020 plenary session of the Conference. The Conference is invited to take note of its contents, and to provide any guidance as appropriate.



I. Background

1. The Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia was established in response to Recommendation 4 of the UN Secretary-General's report on the "Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019"¹. That recommendation was to:

"launch a region-by-region change management process that will seek to consolidate existing capacities with regard to data and statistics, as well as other relevant analytical functions that may be currently duplicative. This exercise will have to be unique to each region and will be detailed and fleshed out in full consultation with each regional commission and respective regional team of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group".

2. Following extensive consultation within the UNECE region, the various United Nations agencies active in the field of data and statistics proposed to respond to this recommendation by creating a regional coordination group, which would take the form of a regional version of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA). This approach received political support from the UNECE Executive Committee at its meeting of 14 October 2019. The regional coordination group met for the first time in January 2020 and is co-chaired by UNECE and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

II. Membership

3. The regional coordination group initially consisted of representatives of the different UN agencies active in the field of data and statistics in the region. Its membership has since been enlarged twice. From July 2020, it has included the data and statistics focal points from the UN Country Teams of the 17 UN "programme countries" in the region (see annex 2), to ensure coordination between the regional and national levels. From January 2021, it was opened to representatives of non-UN organisations with data and statistics activities in the region, to ensure more comprehensive coordination of support to countries. The membership currently includes 24 international organisations (see annex 2).

III. Activities since June 2020

4. The regional coordination group has worked on the following activities and outputs since the last report to the Conference in June 2020:

(a) Updated Terms of Reference in January 2021 to reflect the expanded membership (see Annex 1).

(b) Sharing information on data and statistics initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic - <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/RCG/COVID-19>.

(c) Inputs to key regional statistical publications, including case studies for the SDG progress assessment "Is the UNECE region on track for 2030"² and comments on the forthcoming second version of the *CES Roadmap on Statistics for SDGs*³.

(d) A calendar of statistical capacity development activities, as required by the UN Chief Executive Board's Roadmap on Data and Statistics, to promote collaboration and facilitate information sharing – <https://teamup.com/ks5swirisz6nrwybdh>.

(e) Inputs to the 2021 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, and particularly the Roundtable on "SDGs and COVID-19—how can data and statistics help building back better?"

¹ A/74/73 – E/2019/4

² <https://unece.org/statistics/publications/unece-region-track-2030>

³ ECE/CES/2021/6

(f) Information sharing about the UN Statistical Commission, and the topics discussed at its 2021 meeting, to help to link activities from the global to the regional and national levels.

(g) General sharing of information on data and statistics activities and events, with the aim of improving coordination, increasing the integration of UN Country Team focal points into the international statistical community, and providing regional support for national activities.

IV. Action requested from the Conference

5. The Conference is invited to take note of the contents of this report, and to provide any guidance to the regional coordination group as appropriate.

Annex I

Terms of Reference for the Regional United Nations Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia (updated January 2021)

I. Background

1. The establishment of a Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia was proposed as a response to the UN Secretary General's recommendations on UN development system reform. It built on proposals to create regional versions of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA), a global group comprising of the heads of statistics of 45 UN and non-UN international organisations.

II. Objectives

2. The Regional Coordination Group (RCG) promotes a more coherent approach to supporting the national statistical systems in the region, with a particular focus on statistical capacity development in the 17 "programme countries"⁴. The ultimate aim is to improve official statistics at the national level, with respect to the collection, analysis, and dissemination of accurate, reliable and comparable data, to better monitor national policies and priorities, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3. The main objectives of the RCG are:

- Coordination of statistical work of the different agencies, towards ensuring coherence and synergies at the country level, as well as with the priorities and work carried out by the main intergovernmental body for the region, the Conference of European Statisticians
- Promotion of international and regional statistical norms and standards for modernized national statistical systems, in line with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice.

4. The work of the RCG is demand-driven, responding both to common challenges across the region, as well as country specific requests for technical assistance from producers of official statistics or UN country teams. The RCG recognizes the specific comparative advantage of each participating agency while seeking to maximize synergies within the limited resources for available for statistics.

III. Membership

5. The RCG is co-chaired by the UNECE Statistics Division and another agency that is engaged in activities in at least 50% of the programme countries in the region, on a rotational basis. The second co-chair is elected by the RCG for a two-year period and is eligible for re-election for a second term.

6. The co-chairs will prepare draft agendas, organize the meetings, ensure written summaries of meetings, and the maintenance of a shared virtual workspace for the RCG. The co-chairs may represent the RCG in other groups as necessary. The UNECE Statistical Division provides the secretariat for the RCG.

7. RCG membership is open to all UN funds, agencies and programmes working in the area of data and statistics in the Europe and Central Asia region, as well as non-UN

⁴Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

organisations engaged in similar activities in the region. Data and statistics focal points of UN country teams in the region are also invited to participate in RCG activities. Observers may be invited on a case-by-case basis as necessary and when relevant.

8. Each member agency will designate a focal point, ideally a statistician, to be their main representative. Representation is expected at senior technical level, e.g. head of unit or section. Any cost of participation will be met by each participating member agency.

9. The focal points are responsible for providing an update on their organization's statistical activities and plans, as well as keeping colleagues in their respective agencies informed on the activities of the RCG.

IV. Meetings, deliverables and reporting

10. The RCG will meet at least quarterly, in on-line meetings. Face-to-face meetings may also be convened on the margins of other events where RCG members are present.

11. Typical activities may include but are not limited to:

- Joint needs assessments in the area of statistics (capacity gaps, data gaps, etc.)
- Organising joint activities, e.g. capacity development workshops
- Maintaining a joint calendar of data and statistics capacity development activities in the region
- Developing analytical products and reports to address specific data needs
- Contributing to regional events and reports, including the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
- Responding to specific technical assistance requests from national statistical offices and UN country teams
- Joint advocacy for the development and modernisation of official statistics at the national level.

12. The RCG will prepare an annual workplan. Its work will be guided by the Conference of European Statisticians, the CCSA and the Regional Collaborative Platform. It will provide reports and updates to these, and other relevant groups, as necessary.

Annex II

Membership of the Regional Coordination Group

I. Regional organizations

- Eurasian Economic Commission
- European Free Trade Association
- Eurostat
- Food and Agriculture Organization
- International Atomic Energy Agency
- International Labour Organization
- International Organization for Migration
- International Telecommunications Union
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / PARIS21
- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- United Nations Environment Programme
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- United Nations Population Fund
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees
- United Nations Children's Fund
- United Nations Office for Project Services
- UN-Women
- World Health Organization.

II. United Nations Country Teams

- Albania
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Georgia
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Moldova
- Montenegro

- North Macedonia
 - Serbia
 - Tajikistan
 - Turkey
 - Turkmenistan
 - Ukraine
 - Uzbekistan.
-