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Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme of the
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe:
Programme planning documents for the Statistics subprogramme
of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Draft Programme of Work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2023

Prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

The draft Programme of Work of the UNECE Statistics subprogramme follows the template, as approved by the Executive Committee and further updated in line with the annual budget format, introduced in 2020 in line with General Assembly resolution 72/266, with enrichments reflecting General Assembly resolutions 74/251, 75/243 and 76/245.

The text is an excerpt from the ECE proposed programme budget for 2023 (A/77/6 (Sect.20), which was reviewed by the ECE Executive Committee in December 2021. The Programme of Work informs about the status of results planned in Programmes of Work for 2021 and 2022 (results 1 and 2), and presents a new result expected in 2023 'Increased number of countries collaborating on developing and using Machine Learning techniques for the production of official statistics' (result 3).

The draft Programme of Work for 2023 is submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for adoption and for recommending it to the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for approval.

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I. Introduction

1.   The present document sets out the draft programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme ("the subprogramme") for 2023. The Conference of European Statisticians is invited to adopt it and recommend to the Executive Committee (EXCOM) for approval. Any subsequent additional, discontinued or carried over deliverables will be reflected in UN Umoja system used by the Secretariat for planning, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the programme.

2.   The draft programme of work applies a results-based management (RBM) approach, a broad management approach which establishes logical relationship between the hierarchical results (deliverables – results – objectives – impact) known as 'results chain', the resources (human and financial) known as 'inputs' and the external factors (strategic, governance, operational, financial) which can prevent from achieving the objective.

3.   The objective, the strategy, the planned results and the deliverables in the draft programme of work correspond to those contained in the ECE proposed programme budget for 2023 (A/77/6 (Sect.20)). The work of the subprogramme is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In attaining its objective, the subprogramme builds on cross-sectoral collaboration with other subprogrammes in relevant ECE cross-sectoral collaboration areas where multiple SDGs converge[1]. This type of collaboration enables the subprogramme to maximize existing synergies, increase the efficiency of its work and have a multiplying effect on the impact of its actions to support countries to implement SDGs. The deliverables of the subprogramme fall into the following main categories: (a) facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies; (b) generation and transfer of knowledge, including technical cooperation projects, training events, seminars, workshops, and publications; (c) other substantive deliverables, and (d) communication deliverables.

4.   The details of the proposed publications are provided in Annex I. The overall ECE legislative mandates and those specific for the subprogramme are listed in Annex II.

II. Objective

5.   The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to advance official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards achieving the SDGs and to ensure the coordination of statistical activities in the ECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians.

III. Strategy

6.   The strategy of the subprogramme is guided by the priorities and needs of member States and is based on the core interlinked functions: the streamlining of international statistical work in the ECE region through policy dialogue; methodological work to develop and promote guidelines and recommendations to enhance the quality of statistics; and statistical capacity development of ECE member States with less developed statistical systems.

7.   To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will:

(a)   Promote in-depth statistical dialogue at the Conference of European Statisticians and expert meetings;

(b)   Launch regional and country-specific initiatives related to methodological work to develop and disseminate statistical models, guidelines and recommendations to enhance the quality of statistics, and to promote the use of official statistics;

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[1] The ECE cross-sectoral collaboration areas are as follows: 1) Circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources; 2) Sustainable and smart cities for all ages; 3) Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity; and 4) Measuring and monitoring progress towards achieving the SDGs.

(c)   Maintain and develop the ECE statistical database;

(d)   Establish and strengthen partnerships between geospatial experts and statisticians to support the integration of statistical and geospatial information, in cooperation with statistical departments of other regional entities such as Eurostat, OECD, the European Free Trade Association, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Eurasian Economic Commission, as well as international specialized agencies active in the region;

(e)   Facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of population and housing censuses, price statistics and environment statistics, including adaptation owing to COVID-19 restrictions; and

(f)   Provide support to countries in planning and conducting their census and developing their statistical capacity, including cross-cutting topics such as statistics for SDGs, statistical legislation, data collection, data integration, dissemination and human resource management.

8.   The above-mentioned work is expected to result in:

(a)   Member States have improved statistical methodology and capacity to measure and monitor the SDGs;

(b)   Member States conducted the census through innovative and efficient approaches, including through improved cost-efficiency, coverage, accuracy, comparability and timeliness of dissemination of the census results;

(c)   Member States have improved capacity to provide the statistics necessary to develop evidence-based policies to manage their post-pandemic recovery.
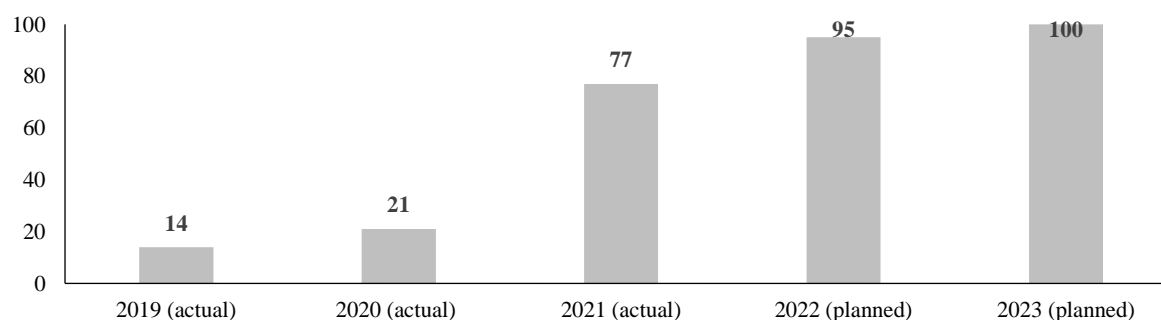
IV.   Planned results for 2023

A.   Result 1: Conducting a new population and housing census that provides cost-effective and better-quality results

Programme performance in 2021 and target for 2023

9.   The subprogramme's work contributed to the completion of population and housing censuses in 77 per cent of ECE member States by 2021, which did not meet the planned target of 84 per cent. The target was not met because some countries in the region postponed their census due to the pandemic. The progress towards the objective and the target for 2023 are presented in the performance measure below (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Performance measure: Economic Commission for Europe countries having conducted a census in compliance with the Conference of European Statisticians recommendations
(Cumulative percentage)

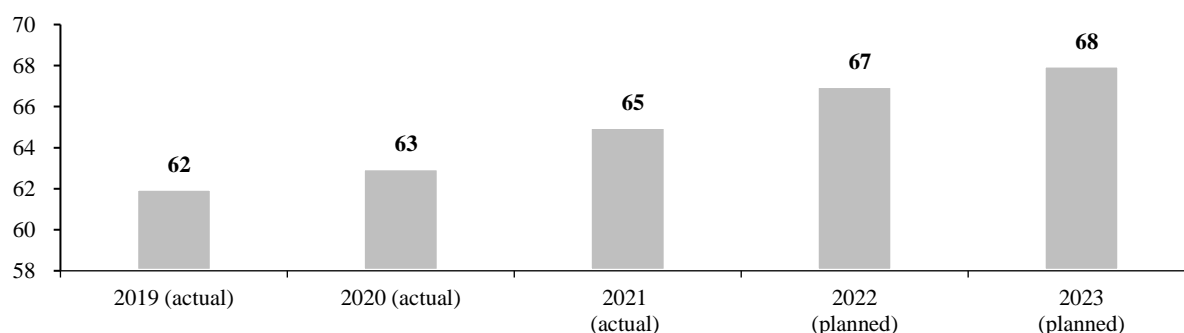## B. Result 2: Increasing the number of countries that report sex-disaggregated statistical indicators

Programme performance in 2021 and target for 2023

10. The subprogramme's work contributed to the increase to 65 percent of sex-disaggregated indicators available for ECE member States in the Sustainable Development Goals database, which met the planned target of 65 percent. The progress towards the objective and the target for 2023 are presented in the performance measure below (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Performance measure: sex-disaggregated indicators available for Economic Commission for Europe member States in the ECE Sustainable Development Goals database

(Percentage)

C. Result 3: Increased number of countries collaborating on developing and using Machine Learning techniques for the production of official statistics (new result for 2023)

Proposed programme plan for 2023

11. Monitoring the SDGs and other internationally agreed development goals require more indicators that are further disaggregated, for example, by gender statistics or disability status, and are produced more frequently. Countries do not always have sufficient resources nor consistent data sources to produce statistics needed to report adequately on progress on the SDGs or to better respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises. A large part of data collected has to be manually classified and coded. Machine Learning (ML) can help automatize this process, allowing the use of new data sources, when manual processing is not feasible. As the subprogramme promotes the use of advanced methodologies for modernising the statistical production, it had piloted a global project to investigate how ML can be used in producing official statistics, leading to several national statistical offices (NSOs) starting to use ML techniques.

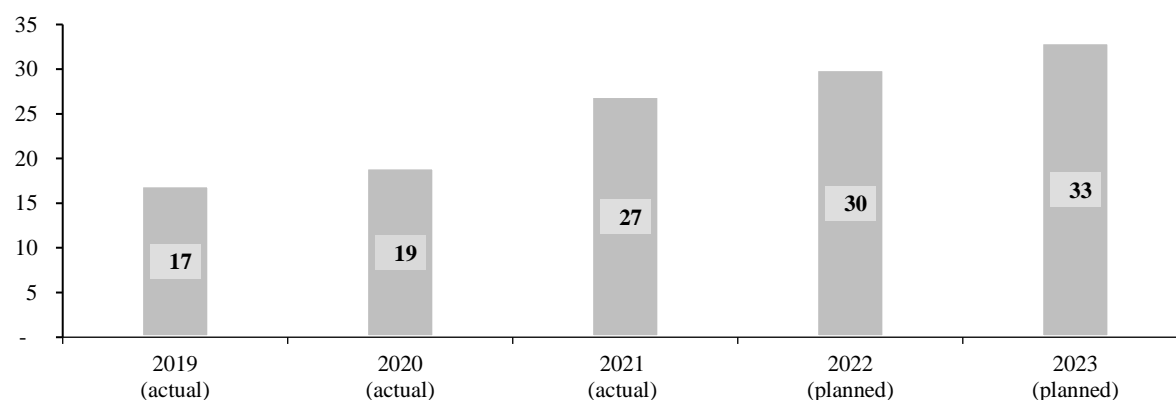*Lessons learned and planned change*

12. The lesson for the subprogramme was that there was a strong need for further developing and implementing ML techniques in producing official statistics, in order to ensure that best practices on the use of ML can be scaled up. It will enable NSOs to produce higher volumes of more disaggregated statistics with a higher frequency, allowing for better monitoring of progress towards SDGs.

13. In response, the subprogramme will setup and support a community platform and environment where NSOs will share knowledge and experiences and collaborate on further developing common solutions on the use of ML techniques. Pilot studies in several areas and for different types of application of ML will be setup and ways to transfer knowledge will be established. Results and experiences as well as algorithms and methodologies developed publicly will be shared through online platforms, online seminars and other events. The

expected progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Performance measure: Number of member States actively collaborating in developing and using Machine Learning techniques for the production of official statistics
(number of member States)

V. Deliverables to be implemented in 2023

14. The below table lists all deliverables of the subprogramme.

Deliverables	2023 plan
A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies:	
Parliamentary documentation (number of documents)	**81**
1. Documentation for Conference of European Statisticians	43
2. Documentation for expert bodies	38
Substantive services for meetings (number of three-hour meetings)	**85**
3. Meetings of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau	13
4. Meetings of expert bodies	72
B. Generation and transfer of knowledge:	
Technical cooperation and field projects (number of projects)	**1**
5. Project on social and economic statistic	1
Seminars, workshops and training events (number of days)	**6**
6. Workshops on social and economic statistics	3
7. Workshops on innovating statistical production	3
Publications (number of publications)	**7**
8. Publications on topics covering multiple statistical areas	1
9. Publications on social, environmental and economic statistics	6

C. Substantive deliverables:

- **Consultation, advice and advocacy:** advisory services for more than 100 government officials (staff of national statistical systems) and other stakeholders of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe on economic, social, demographic and environment statistics, statistics for the SDGs, geospatial statistics and institutional issues and modernization of official statistics (4 countries).

- **Databases and substantive digital materials:** ECE statistical databases (SDG, population and gender statistics database; economic statistics database; hosting the transport and the forestry databases which are updated and maintained by subprogrammes 2 and 7 respectively).

Deliverables	*2023 plan*

D. Communication deliverables:

• **Outreach programmes, special events and information materials:** leaflets and other promotional materials.

• **External and media relations:** articles for the "UNECE Weekly" and "EnvStats" newsletters for regional access.

• **Digital platforms and multimedia content:** interactive digital workspaces (wikis, including the ECE census wiki); website of the subprogramme.

Annex I

Details of proposed publications and information materials for 2023

A. Publications

Item No.	Title	Mandate	Print and/or electronic	Trim size	No. of pages	Original language(s)	Translated language(s) and Source of funding (RB or XB)	No. of copies and language(s)
1	Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the UNECE region	Mandate expected to be provided by the meeting of the CES in June 2022.	Electronic	A4	76	E		
2.	UNECE countries in figures 2023	Mandate expected to be provided by the meeting of the CES in June 2022.	Print and electronic	A5	80	E		300E
3	Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and men	Mandate expected to be provided by the meeting of the CES in June 2022.	Electronic	A4	76	E		
4	Statistical Modernisation Monograph (based on 2022 or 2023 work programme tbd)	Mandate expected to be provided by the meeting of the CES in June 2022.	Print and electronic	A4	120	E		300E
5	Recommendations on measuring circular economy	Mandate expected to be provided by the meeting of the CES in June 2022.	Print and electronic	A4	120	E		300E
6	Update of the Handbook on Measuring Quality of Employment	Mandate expected to be provided by the meeting of the CES in June 2022.	Print and electronic	A4	100	E		200E
7	Data stewardship and the role of national statistical offices	Mandate expected to be provided by the meeting of the CES in June 2022.	Print and electronic	A4	100	E		150E
8	Guidelines for measuring hazardous events and disasters	Mandate expected to be provided by the meeting of the CES in June 2022.	Print and electronic	A4	100	E		300E

Annex II

Legislative mandates

A. Overall ECE legislative mandates

1. Resolutions of the General Assembly

Res No.	Title
66/288	The future we want
67/10	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Eurasian Economic Community
67/290	Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development
69/277	Political declaration on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations
69/313	Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)
70/1	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
71/14	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization
71/16	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization
72/237	South-South Cooperation
72/279	Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
73/10	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative
73/195	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
74/122	Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly
74/128	Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly
74/144	Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto: accessibility
74/216	Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
74/231	Development cooperation with middle-income countries
74/235	Women in development
74/271	Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat
74/297	Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
74/306	Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic
75/8	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM
75/9	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States

75/12	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization
75/216	Disaster risk reduction
75/221	Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
75/233	Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
75/290 B	Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and 70/299 on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level

2. Resolutions of the Economic and Social Council

Res No.	Title
1998/46	Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields
2006/38	Workplan on reform of the Economic Commission for Europe and revised terms of reference of the Commission
2013/1	Outcome of the review of the 2005 Reform of the Economic Commission for Europe

3. Economic Commission for Europe decisions

Res No.	Title
A (64)	The Work of the Economic Commission for Europe
A (65)	Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE
A (66)	Endorsement of the High-level statement on the post-2015 development agenda and expected sustainable development goals in the ECE region
A (69)	High-level statement
B (69)	Circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources
C (69)	Extension of the mandate of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

B. Legislative mandates specific to the subprogramme

1. Resolutions of the General Assembly

Res No.	Title
67/144	Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women
68/261	Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
69/210	Entrepreneurship for development
69/282	World Statistics Day
72/234	Women in development
73/148	Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment
76/140	Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas
76/141	Violence against women migrant workers

2. Resolutions of the Economic and Social Council

Res No.	Title
2006/6	Strengthening statistical capacity
2014/7	Further implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002
2015/10	2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme
2016/27	Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management
2017/7	Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2018/5	Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all
2018/7	Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system
2020/5	Strengthening coordination of the statistical programmes in the United Nations system

3. Economic and Social Council decisions

Res No.	Title
2013/235	Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-fourth session (Statistical Commission decision 44/105: Environment statistics)
2014/219	Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-fifth (Statistical Commission decisions 45/101: Implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics); 45/103: Programme review: broader measures of progress); 45/110: Big data and modernization of statistical systems)
2015/216	Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-sixth session (Statistical Commission decisions 46/101: Data in support of the post-2015 development agenda; 46/102: Population and housing censuses; 46/107: International trade and economic globalization statistics)
2016/220	Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-seventh session (Statistical Commission decisions 47/102: High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 47/112: Climate change statistics)
2017/228	Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-eighth session (Statistical Commission decisions 48/101: Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 48/103: Transformative agenda for official statistics; 48/107: Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics; 48/108: Integration of statistical and geospatial information; 48/114: Business registers)
2018/227	Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-ninth session (Statistical Commission decisions 49/101: Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 49/102: Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 49/108: Regional statistical development; 49/113: Climate change statistics; 49/114: Statistical classifications)
2019/210	Report of the Statistical Commission on its fiftieth session (Statistical Commission decisions 50/101: Global indicator framework for Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 50/103: Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 50/106: National quality assurance frameworks; 50/116: Disaster-related statistics; 50/117: International migration statistics)
2020/211	Report of the Statistical Commission on its fifty-first session (Statistical Commission decisions 51/101: Global indicator framework for the 2030 Agenda; 51/104: Coordination of statistical programmes; 51/106: National accounts; 51/107: International trade and business statistics; 51/108: Price statistics; 51/110: Environmental-economic accounting; 51/112: Demographic statistics; 51/115: Gender statistics; 51/120: Management and modernization of statistical systems; 51/123: Integration of statistical and geospatial information)

2021/224   Report of the Statistical Commission on its fifty-second session (Statistical Commission decisions 52/102: Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 52/10:3 Partnership, coordination and capacity-building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 52/105: Economic statistics; 52/106: National accounts

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