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**Topics of common interest to statistical and geospatial communities -
joint session with the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial
Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM: Europe)
Developments in data stewardship**

Results of the consultation on the *Report of the Task Force on data stewardship*

Prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

The document summarizes the comments by members of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on the *Report of the Task Force on data stewardship*. The Secretariat carried out an electronic consultation on the Report in June 2022.

The CES Bureau set up the Task Force (chaired by Estonia) in February 2021. Its aim is to clarify the terms related to data stewardship and public data governance, and the tasks of national statistical offices that this may include in different settings. As a result of the first stage of its work, the Task Force has prepared a draft report defining ‘data stewardship’ and the related terms; describing the wider setting of data stewardship, the data governance models and principles, the responsibilities and skills of data stewards; and providing guidance how to communicate this role. The report includes a glossary and examples of how statistical offices in different countries are implementing data stewardship and data governance.

Twenty-nine countries replied to the consultation. Countries provided positive feedback on the usefulness of the report and gave suggestions on how to improve it further.

Countries are welcome to provide further feedback, including comments on individual chapters by 15 July by filling in the feedback form at: <https://forms.office.com/r/qBFemwDzyR>, or sending a copy of the questionnaire in Word to tiina.luige@un.org.

The Task Force will continue its work, taking into account the comments received. The report is planned to be submitted to the CES plenary session for endorsement in 2023.



I. Introduction

1. The document summarizes the comments by members of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on the *Report of the Task Force on data stewardship*. The Secretariat carried out an electronic consultation on the Report in June 2022.
2. The Report is the result of the first phase of work of the Task Force on data stewardship established by the CES Bureau in February 2021. The Task Force is composed of Canada, Estonia (Chair), Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland (since May 2022), United Kingdom, Eurostat, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNECE. The Task Force members represent statistical offices and other government institutions dealing with data governance.
3. The aim of the Task Force is to clarify the terms related to data stewardship and public data governance, and the tasks of national statistical offices that this may include in different settings. The work is planned to be carried out in two stages: first, defining the concepts and looking at possible tasks/responsibilities, and in a later stage developing a maturity model and possible recommendations. The current version of the report represents a draft outcome of the first stage of the work, defining 'data stewardship' and the related terms; describing the wider setting of data stewardship, the data governance models and principles, the responsibilities and skills of data stewards; and providing guidance how to communicate this role. The Report includes a glossary and examples of how statistical offices in different countries are implementing data stewardship and data governance.
4. The draft report was sent for consultation to all countries and organizations participating in the work of CES. The aim of the consultation was to gather as wide feedback as possible to improve the final product and ensure that it would be useful for all statistical offices, and more widely for the public sector.
5. The feedback was gathered in two stages: (1) general questions on the usefulness and quality of the report by 15 June, and (2) more detailed suggestions on individual chapters by 15 July 2022.
6. The following twenty-nine countries have replied to the consultation: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, Estonia (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications), Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics), Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.
7. This document summarises the comments received by 19 June 2022.
8. Countries are welcome to provide further feedback by 15 July, including comments on individual chapters, by filling the feedback form at <https://forms.office.com/r/qBFemwDzyR>, or sending a copy of the questionnaire in Word to tiina.luige@un.org. Examples of how NSOs are involved in data stewardship and data governance in the public sector are welcome.
9. The Task Force will continue its work, taking into account the comments received. A maturity model and possible guidelines or tools are expected to be developed in the second stage. The report is planned to be submitted to the CES plenary session for endorsement in 2023.

II. General comments

10. All responding countries considered the report useful and that it has improved their understanding of data stewardship and NSOs role in it. For example:
 - (a) **Albania:** Every element of the report is important, and the language used is easy and understandable;
 - (b) **Austria:** The report is well structured, including concise definitions and a wide range of practical examples. It serves as a useful guide;

(c) **Chile:** An excellent framework of definitions for organizing work around data management;

(d) **Croatia:** The report gives a broad picture on the subject. The structure and explanations are very useful. The practical examples allow to see how certain activities function in real statistical world, in different parts of the world so that it could be useful in different national circumstances;

(e) **France:** A successful attempt to highlight the different aspects of data stewardship as such and from the perspectives of NSOs. This report can facilitate strategic thinking by NSO's about their positioning in the national data chain, while preserving their core statistical missions and values. The description of the data stewardship tasks, and external interactions is particularly interesting in our national context, since these tasks are currently under the responsibility of different bodies;

(f) **Georgia:** The report gives well-founded definitions of data stewardship and data governance. Annexes 1 and 2 give useful explanations and practical examples;

(g) **Hungary:** A very useful starting point to understand the concepts, their elements, context, and relations. The information on what models exist in other countries is extremely valuable;

(i) **Latvia:** Based on this report, it would be easy to convey the ideas to a broader audience and government partners. The report will help lobbying for the NSO's role in the data ecosystem;

(j) **Mexico:** The report is a very good effort to understand the challenges behind the use of data steward in the data ecosystem;

(k) **Norway:** A very thorough and comprehensive report with a clear purpose;

(l) **Sweden:** The report helps to position our national efforts as data steward in the light of different data governance models as well as from an external vs. internal perspective;

(m) **Ukraine:** A very balanced and systematic approach to the NSO role in data governance in the state sector;

(n) **United States:** While some of the language may differ, the concepts and values identified in the Data Stewardship report are consistent with the principles governing U.S. statistical activities. The Data Stewardship report confirms much of what the United States is already doing and provides guidance for future improvements. As such, the document is immensely helpful;

(o) **Uzbekistan:** The report provides a complete overview of data management: definitions, models, standards, and the role of NSOs in it. All these concepts and examples are very important for further improving the statistical potential of the State Statistics Committee and other ministries and departments in Uzbekistan.

11. Several countries said that the report is very timely as they are currently looking at how to strengthen their data stewardship role.

12. **Albania:** The report will be used as a guide to our office to further elaborate the position we will take in the data steward role. The report will be used to promote the role of NSO, and the value of official statistics, and to evaluate the best approach of its position in the future data ecosystem.

13. **Chile:** Since 2019, our statistical office has a team responsible for Data Governance and Stewardship, which has been advancing in different ways, so this document is a very good guiding element of the challenges we have as an institution.

14. **Israel:** At the Central Statistics Bureau (CBS) of Israel, we are currently building a Chief Data Office that will be responsible for managing the data at CBS and for building a government Data Lake. In this context we are in the process of writing a Data Governance Standard for the organization. The definitions and explanations as well as the international review are very relevant to us at this time.

15. **Malta:** The National Statistics Office is currently looking to strengthen its role as a data steward to map the national data ecosystem and transmissions and ensure the implementation of a quality-check mechanism before the publishing/distribution of statistics. The usefulness of the report is that it provides a generic analysis that could then be applied and 'transposed' by NSOs according to national circumstances.

16. The feedback questionnaire asked what the most useful part of the Report was. Several countries replied that all parts are useful, and it would be difficult to choose one. Practically all Chapters were mentioned by several countries as the most useful ones.

17. Many countries highlighted the importance of having practical examples of how data stewardship and data governance are implemented in countries. The Annex with country case studies was among the most appreciated parts of the Report.

18. **Costa Rica** and the **United States** sent examples of the setup of the data governance and data stewardship in their country. These examples will be included in the Annex with countries' case studies. More country examples are welcome.

III. Proposals for improvement

19. Countries provided good suggestions for additional points that could be reflected in the Report.

20. To facilitate the reading, the content of each chapter should be described in the beginning of the chapter, and some conclusions added at the end (**Chile**). The main messages should be made more visible, now they are difficult to identify as so many good ideas are presented (**Finland**).

21. In the chapters on definitions (3) and responsibilities and skills for data stewardship (6), it was suggested to incorporate diagrams and comparative tables that show the relationships and differences between the terms (**Chile**).

22. **New Zealand** raised an important point about translating the terms into national languages (in particular, data stewardship). How the terms are translated may have an influence on the definitions in different languages.

23. **Norway** suggested that the NSO-perspective and operational guidelines could be highlighted more than the general and theoretical chapters, they make the role of NSOs in relation to data stewardship clearer. **Uzbekistan** asked to explain more about the problems faced by NSOs in this area and the ways to overcome them.

24. It would be desirable to include in the Report information about the costs and benefits for better understanding of necessary preconditions for implementation of data stewardship related activities (**Croatia**).

25. Attention should be also paid to different trade-offs and what the data steward can do about it. For example, does the data steward have a say in balancing administrative burden? Public administration is forced to reduce the administrative burden on businesses and public institutions, which usually implies reducing reporting obligations that make data less rich. This later comes back like a boomerang when decision-makers need more detailed data (**Latvia**).

26. The points addressing possible risks in the Report were considered to be rather defensive and should be redrafted in a more balanced way (**Austria**).

27. It was considered useful to elaborate in more detail a profile of a data steward (necessary skills, characteristics, qualifications, fields of knowledge, experience, position in the NSO) (**Croatia, Greece**).

28. The part of interaction of NSOs and alternative data providers could be expanded in the Report, taking into account the legislation in countries. The current legislation often does not allow calculating official statistical indicators based on privately held data (**Russian Federation**).

29. It was pointed out that the level of detail in the different chapters varies and could be better harmonised. There are also some repetitions. The feedback also included some editorial comments which will be considered but are not reflected here. The Task Force will take these suggestions on board when the Report will be edited.

30. The final report will also include an Executive Summary and possibly a section of Key Messages.

IV. Conclusion

31. The Task Force is grateful for the support and for the very useful comments for further improving the Report. All comments and suggestions will be carefully considered in the further work to develop the final version of the document to be submitted to the CES for endorsement in 2023.
