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**Reports, guidelines and recommendations prepared under the umbrella of the Conference:
Measuring the value of official Statistics**

Measuring the Value of Official Statistics

Addendum

Results of the consultation on Measuring the Value of Official Statistics: testing and developing a measurement framework

Prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

This document summarizes the comments made by members of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on *Measuring the Value of Official Statistics: testing and developing a measurement framework* (ECE/CES/2022/3). The Secretariat carried out a consultation on the document in March and April 2022.

Forty-two countries and international organizations provided responses to the consultation. No country opposed endorsement by CES, subject to the amendments resulting from the comments provided during the consultation. This document summarizes the comments and suggestions for amendment received and outlines the work that will be undertaken by the Task Force to test and develop the framework for measuring the value of official statistics to amend the document accordingly.

The Conference is invited to endorse the document *Measuring the Value of Official Statistics: testing and developing a measurement framework*, subject to the amendments outlined in this document.



I. Introduction

1. This document summarizes comments made by members of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on *Measuring the Value of Official Statistics: testing and developing a measurement framework* (hereafter ‘the document’).
2. The document was prepared by the UNECE Task Force to test and develop the framework for measuring the value of official statistics (chaired by the United Kingdom), which was established in June 2019. The CES Bureau reviewed the draft document in October 2021 and requested the Secretariat to send it to all CES members and other stakeholders for consultation. The Secretariat conducted a consultation on the document in March–April 2022.
3. The following 42 countries and international organizations provided responses to the consultation: Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Gulf-Cooperation Council.
4. The comments and the Task Force’s reactions are summarized in sections II and III. Several countries provided editorial comments and suggestions related to document formatting, typographical issues and the structure of headings. These are not presented in this note but will be taken into account when revising the document for publication. Comments on the specific situation in individual countries which have no direct implications for the content of the document are also not presented in this note, although the individual experiences offered by countries as potential additional case studies will be followed up by the Task Force and included where possible in an eventual online version of the document. The Task Force wishes to acknowledge the many potential new case studies and examples received in the course of the consultation.

II. General comments

5. Many responding countries and organizations expressed strong appreciation for the work of the Task Force in this important area. For example:
 - (a) **Colombia:** “we reaffirm the excellent work that was done by members of the Task Force”;
 - (b) **Denmark:** “Thank you for this valuable work. We find it extremely important”;
 - (c) **France:** “We thank you for the rich content of the report”;
 - (d) **Ireland:** “Very well written document”;
 - (e) **Latvia:** “Great document for countries that do not have a proper existing framework and very valuable reference document for those who have already introduced one tool/system or another. Thank you!”;
 - (f) **Sweden:** “We especially appreciate the user-centric approach and the decision to use a consumer-based approach as a way of capturing the contribution that statistics provide as a public good”;
 - (g) **Poland:** “Statistics Poland would like to voice a firm and heartfelt support for the document [...] We particularly value the fact that the Task Force on measuring value made such impressive introspection of its heritage [...] and complemented it by focusing on clarifying the concept of value before passing to the ways of measuring it. ‘First, understand; then, do’ is a very commendable approach. In short, Statistics Poland would like once again to strongly endorse the report and congratulate its authors and UNECE on this tremendous piece of work”;

6. **Australia, Denmark, Colombia** and **Turkey** expressed a wish to be involved with any future groups or projects working on this topic.
7. **Germany, France** and the **Netherlands** mentioned the length of the document as an impediment to being able to appreciate fully its content.
8. **Colombia** offered to translate the final version of the document (excluding annexes) into Spanish.

Response and changes proposed by the Task Force

9. The Task Force appreciates that the document in its current format is very extensive, as the group wished to offer comprehensive and transparent evidence of the work undertaken and the reasons for their decisions. The Task Force has endeavoured to present a very short summary of the overall key messages in both written and visual format, and a highly condensed executive summary, enabling readers to glean the major points without having to read the extensive annexes. The proposal to publish the finished product in a clickable online format will further serve to guide readers with differing levels of interest in either high-level messages or technical details.

III. Specific comments

10. This section summarizes comments received on specific chapters of the document, together with the responses by the Task Force where applicable.

A. Chapter 1 – Introduction

11. Several countries gave suggestions regarding the use of terminology, suggesting both earlier definition or delineation of terms, and more consistent use of them in subsequent chapters of the document. **Colombia**, for instance, proposed better distinguishing ‘users’ from ‘consumers’; **Italy** called for clearer definition of ‘people’, ‘users’ and ‘customers’; and **Slovakia** suggested replacing all such terms with ‘customers’, rather than ‘consumers’, on the grounds that information is not ‘consumed’.

12. The **United States** felt that the distinction between value and quality was overstated in the introduction, the following chapter and elsewhere in the document, pointing out that according to the International Organization for Standardization’s (ISO) definition of quality quoted in paragraph 56, quality is in fact to be properly understood with reference to users’ needs. They considered the distinction between user-defined value and provider-defined quality to be artificial and not in fact necessary as a rationale for the work.

13. **Ecuador** noted that the introduction should include a point made later in the document, namely that cross-country comparability in value measures is not one of the central aims of the work and is not a particularly feasible prospect.

Response and changes proposed by the Task Force

14. The Task Force agrees that consistency of terms is important and will debate within the group on which terms to use, and will ensure that these are defined early in the introduction. They will then check the use of these terms in the remainder of the document.

15. The Task Force recognizes that there is significant conceptual overlap between value and quality, as emphasized in the quote definition and discussed at length in chapter 2, in section 2.3.3 (‘Value and quality’). In fact, the intention was not to imply that there is a clear-cut distinction but, on the contrary, to stress the fact that the overlap causes confusion. The Task Force will consider the merits of adjusting the language used in the key messages section to clarify this, for example by replacing the ‘≠’ symbol in the heading. The Task Force maintains that no matter the wording of the overall definition, in practice the majority of dimensions of quality and the indicators used to evaluate those dimensions are assessed without explicit reference to users.

16. The Task Force will restate the point suggested by Ecuador which currently does not appear until paragraph 160 in Chapter 6.

B. Chapter 2 – What is value and why do we want to measure it?

17. The chapter was widely welcomed. **Australia** commented that paragraph 32, on the need for National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to respond to user need in order to continue being held in high esteem, is “perfect”. **Costa Rica, Czechia, France** and **Slovakia** welcomed the chapter overall as a means of framing the problem. **Mexico** welcomed the effort to distinguish value from values.

18. **Slovakia** offered some helpful suggestions for alternative wording in section 2.2 (‘The changing face of the value of statistics in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic’).

19. The **Russian Federation** proposed that a definition of value be given earlier in the chapter, while **Canada** suggested moving section 2.3.3.2 (‘So which matters?’) higher up in the chapter on the grounds that it is “a defining representation of what matters”.

20. **OECD** offered an additional example of a Covid dashboard to be added to footnote 1.

21. **Ecuador** called for a more detailed analysis of the roles and competencies of official statistics, arguing that its “principal function is to produce statistics to guarantee that political actors take decisions based on evidence”.

Response and changes proposed by the Task Force

22. The Task Force will consider reorganizing the order of sections so that section 2.3 (‘Delimiting concepts’) may come prior to the section on how the Covid pandemic has impacted understandings of value.

23. The example from OECD will be included.

24. While touching on the nature and role of official statistics in section 2.3.4, the Task Force feels that a comprehensive analysis of such roles would be beyond the scope of the document and that it has been thoroughly discussed elsewhere. Furthermore, the “principal function” of official statistics is seen differently by different countries, with some having goals such as ‘meeting all users’ needs’ and ‘improving lives’ at their heart rather than only informing political decisions. The Task Force proposes instead to address this point by adding a sentence in section 2.3.4 alluding to the great diversity of explicitly formulated missions of official statistics and of NSOs, and the wide range of roles defined by official statistical legislation.

C. Chapter 3 – Daring to be different: a new proposal for understanding value

25. The ‘DARE’ (‘Dependable-Applicable-Relationship-Ease of Use’) model of value was widely welcomed, e.g. by **Australia, Costa Rica, France, Czechia, Lithuania** and **Mexico** who all stated that it was interesting or useful. **Australia** felt that the visual representation of the model may not be the best way to illustrate the idea.

26. **Colombia** proposed including more background information from **New Zealand** on the origins of the model upon which the DARE framework was based. Information on why it was created, how much time it took to develop, and the challenges faced, could be very illustrative for others.

27. The **United States** called for an explanation of how the DARE framework maps to the quality dimensions of a Data Quality Framework.

28. **Slovakia** and the **Russian Federation** raised questions of terminology similar to those discussed in section A above. More broadly than only terminology, the Russian Federation raised the question of ‘beneficiary’ as distinct from ‘user’.

Responses and changes proposed by the Task Force

29. The Task Force will consider including more of the background material received from New Zealand about the development of the DARE model, and/or offering more extensive references to direct the interested reader to such information externally.
30. A brief discussion will be added of the links between the DARE components and established quality dimensions. This will provide an opportunity to note both the similarities and the differences, which will be useful in highlighting why a new model is advocated.
31. The Task Force proposes to engage graphic designers and other interested contributors to improve all the visual representations in the document prior to its final preparation as an online publication.
32. The terminology will be aligned in accordance with the comments made in section A.

D. Chapter 4 – Reviewing the measurement framework

33. The inclusion of country experiences was welcomed. **Czechia** and **Costa Rica** found the chapter relevant and clear.
34. There were several calls for reducing and summarizing the chapter: **Canada** felt that the content would be more useful if condensed into 1-2 lines per example; the **United States** called for an overall synthesis of recommendations, lessons learned and challenges; while **Ecuador** called for a summary table containing principal challenges and solutions arranged by area of measurement.
35. Several countries put forward their specific arguments regarding the exclusion or inclusion of certain indicators (**Canada, Slovakia, Turkey**).
36. The **United Kingdom** proposed that the descriptions of some of the monetary indicators would benefit from review by economists.
37. **Slovakia** offered some precise and helpful suggestions for alternative wording.

Responses and changes proposed by the Task Force

38. The Task Force agrees that the chapter should be condensed, reserving the detail for the technical annex. The group also plans to produce a clickable summary table for the planned online version, enabling easier navigation to areas of interest to the reader.
39. The document explains (e.g. in paragraph 106, as well as in the key messages on page 5 ‘Excluding measures from the framework does not mean they are unimportant’) that the conclusions of the Task Force on specific indicators are not prescriptive. Moreover, given the shift of focus away from refining the existing indicator framework towards the idea of developing a framework from scratch based on a Results Map, the Task Force does not propose to add, remove or re-categorize indicators in chapter 4 or the corresponding annex.

E. Chapter 5 – A paradigm shift in measuring value: measuring for results

40. Opinions on the proposed ‘paradigm shift’ towards the use of a Results Map approach were both varied and strong. **Australia** described the idea as “amazing” and **Czechia** welcomed it as a “very good tool”, while **France** felt it is “not completely clear at this stage” and **Costa Rica** considered it “useable”, albeit with some need for adjustment for it to be applied to any given institution. The **United States** felt that describing this as a paradigm shift may be too strong a term.
41. **Colombia** suggested that the chapter make reference to the wider paradigm shifts occurring in official statistics, as described in chapter 2.
42. **Ecuador** suggested that the chapter should make reference to the limitations imposed by tools and resources available in each country. to clarify that resources are an important prerequisite for undertaking any significant new task.

43. **Slovakia** offered both some revised wording and additional important references.

Responses and changes proposed by the Task Force

44. The Task Force welcomes the varied feedback on the Results Map idea and recognizes that it is in early stages of development. It would be necessary for some countries to try it out, report back on experiences whether positive or negative, and refine the idea, before it could become anything that should be widely recommended for use. The Task Force encourages any country willing to develop the idea, to do so and to share their experiences with the community. Referring to the ‘paradigm shift’, it remains to be seen whether such a shift will indeed occur, but the Task Force intends to retain this terminology as it represents the hope that the approach will be successful.

45. A brief cross reference will be made to Chapter 2 to situate the discussion within broader shifts in official statistics.

46. A sentence will be added to clarify that no suggestion is made that any country should over-extend beyond the limits of their available resources and capacities in an attempt to assess the value of their work. This being said, the argument is that the proposed exercise should eventually enable NSOs to better target the use of limited resources.

47. The Task Force will make the changes proposed by Slovakia.

F. Chapter 6 – Conclusions, recommendations and further work

48. Many countries provided positive feedback on the conclusions and recommendations, with **Australia** adding “Thank you so much for the opportunity to comment. I really enjoyed reading this”. Opinions varied among other countries: **Czechia** considered the conclusions “very clean, reasonable and meaningful”, while **Germany** felt that there were too many conclusions leading to a lack of focus.

49. **Canada** suggested that recommendation 6.3.3 (‘Continue international collaboration to share and improve’) should include a mention of who will be responsible for ensuring that follow-up will happen: “Assigning a lead will increase the likelihood of these further actions taking place.” **Czechia** also explicitly supported the recommendation to continue international sharing of good practice.

50. Relatedly, **Colombia** proposed offering a tentative timetable for adopting these recommendations, while Slovakia felt that a visual representation would be helpful.

51. The **United States** suggested adding to areas for further work, an exploration of how to maintain engagement with users, and how to turn information gathered from satisfaction surveys and tools into actionable information.

52. **Ecuador** proposed adding to areas of further work, the idea of assessing impacts of statistics in terms of their effects on welfare and well-being.

Responses and changes proposed by the Task Force

53. Given the varied opinions on the number of recommendations and the overall positive responses, the Task Force does not propose to alter the list of recommendations. They will consider preparing a visual summary of them.

54. Naming a lead for follow-up and devising a timetable for adoption are extremely welcome suggestions, although they fall outside of the purview of the current Task Force. A concrete plan for follow-up work, including those countries who indicated during the consultation that they are interested in being involved, could be considered in a separate proposal for further work to the CES Bureau. The Task Force stands ready and eager to prepare such a proposal if invited to do so.

55. The suggestion for further work from the United States will be added.

56. The suggestion for further work from Ecuador will be added, in the context of a brief discussion of the fact that improving lives is in fact the ultimate goal of producing statistics.

Indeed this lies at the heart of the suggestion in Chapter 5 that organizations should formulate their central goal in terms of impact on and value to society.

G. Technical Annex: Evaluating measures of value

57. **Canada, Czechia, Mexico** found the comprehensive information in the annex to be useful, while **Germany** considered it too detailed. The **United Kingdom** noted a need for further linguistic editing.

Responses and changes proposed by the Task Force

58. The level of detail required to assess each measure and explain the observations transparently underlies the Task Force's decision to include this material as a technical annex, complemented by Chapter 4 in the main body of the document.

59. Further linguistic and visual editing will be undertaken prior to final publication.

H. Annex – Measuring value in practice: country case studies to test and refine value measures

60. **Czechia, Germany** and **Slovakia** stated that the annex offers a lot of interesting information. **Ecuador** called for more standardization in content and layout of different case studies. **Germany** noted that some case studies have only a loose connection to value as defined in the document.

61. **Ecuador** also drew attention to the geographical spread of the countries represented in the Task Force and those from whom case studies are included in the annex, which are mostly countries with developed economies and advanced levels of statistical capacity.

Responses and changes proposed by the Task Force

62. The Task Force recognizes that the case studies vary in format, style and relevance to the topic of measuring value. Further editing will take place to harmonize them to the extent possible, bearing in mind that they reflect diversity in the amount of information each NSO wished to share. The Task Force feels that even those with a relatively loose connection to user-defined value are of potential interest to others, not least because they may demonstrate the learning path of countries which undertook projects to measure value, before finding that the results (even if useful for other reasons) were not necessarily indicative of value.

63. The Task Force takes note of the observation that the diversity of countries included in the case studies does not fully reflect the diversity of economic situations in countries nor of the range of degrees of maturity in statistical capacity. As is the case for all CES Task Forces, participation in the group and contribution of case studies was on an open and voluntary basis among those expressing interest. The Task Force is of the view that the principal purpose of the case studies is to inspire and to share lessons learned, rather than necessarily for projects and practices to be directly replicated. If a country with a developing statistical system can benefit from the lessons learned by those with more advanced statistical systems, the Task Force considers this as a success. An introductory sentence to this effect will be added at the start of the case studies annex to clarify the role of the case studies.

64. By turning the work into an online format the group hopes to receive further case studies from a wide range of countries, which could then better reflect the diversity in geography and statistical capacity among CES member countries.

65. The consultation feedback form asked countries if they could offer additional examples and case studies. Many positive replies were received. These will be followed up by the Task Force and will be included where possible in the final online version of the document.

IV. Conclusion

66. All 42 countries and organizations that responded to the consultation supported endorsement of the document, subject to the amendments presented in this document.

67. Thirty-three countries indicated that they are very likely or somewhat likely to make practical use of the guidance and recommendations in the document. The answers to the follow-up question, “Which aspects do you think you may make use of?”, should guide the development of proposals for future work.

68. Thirty-eight countries indicated that that would find it useful for the document to be prepared as a clickable, navigable online publication with the possibility of adding new case studies, similar to a mock-up example included in the consultation form.

V. Proposal to the Conference

69. In view of the support received from countries and organizations in response to the consultation, the 2022 Conference is invited to endorse the document *Measuring the Value of Official Statistics: testing and developing a measurement framework*, subject to the amendments being made as outlined in this document.

70. The Conference is also invited to support further work on this topic as outlined in para 54.

71. The Secretariat invites countries to consider supporting the preparation of an online version of the document.
