

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2022/2023 Bureau
Cork, 12-13 October 2022

Item III (d) of the Provisional
Agenda

**SUSTAINING INNOVATION POST-COVID – OUTCOME OF THE SPRINT FOR
CHIEF STATISTICIANS**

Prepared by UNECE and the HLG-MOS Executive Board

As a follow-up of the CES plenary session in June 2021, a virtual sprint for Chief Statisticians on sustaining innovation from a strategic and managerial perspective was organized by the HLG-MOS in March 2022. The outcome is briefly presented below.

The Bureau is invited to discuss the outcome of the sprint, and to consider whether any additional further work is needed. The Bureau members are also invited to submit activity and project proposals on topics that can help countries to sustain innovation.

I. BACKGROUND

1. The CES 2021 plenary session discussed sustaining innovation in NSO organization and working arrangements after COVID-19. In October 2021, the CES Bureau considered various suggestions for follow-up to the CES session, and decided to organise a virtual sprint for Chief Statisticians focusing on sustaining innovation from a strategic and managerial perspective. The Bureau was going to decide on what further work is needed based on the outcome of the sprint.
2. The concept note for the sprint (developed by HLG-MOS, New Zealand and Poland), and invitation were shared at the 2022 February CES Bureau meeting and with all CES members (ECE/CES/BUR/2022/FEB/9). The Sprint was held on 22 March 2022.
3. HLG-MOS has an established structure and a flexible way of dealing with emerging issues for innovation. Several HLG-MOS groups are already working on related topics, such as human resource issues, communication, emergency response, ethical leadership, and different modes of work. The Blue Skies Thinking Network is constantly looking for new ideas that can feed into the HLG-MOS work programme. Efforts to sustain innovation can benefit from the existing structure of HLG-MOS. The outcomes of the virtual sprint session for Chief Statisticians can help the HLG-MOS Executive Board to scope the work.

II. OUTCOME OF THE CHIEF STATISTICIANS' SPRINT IN MARCH 2022

4. The discussion in the (mini) sprint focused on how the HLG-MOS can align its work with efforts to sustain the accelerated innovation observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was concluded that **the focus should be more on higher-end statistical services** (for example,

linked to data stewardship) **than statistical production. Understanding fully what the stakeholders need** from the HLG-MOS is important (user centricity).

5. It was also stressed that the engagement impact of HLG-MOS activities as a collaboration platform can not be underestimated. During the COVID-19 pandemic this had led to various bi- and multilateral activities that allowed to share innovative practices and solutions.

6. Some further key points that were raised during the sprint for the HLG-MOS to work on:

- Further articulating the HLG-MOS **modernisation frame for the future**;
- **How to measure the HLG-MOS successes**;
- How to **continuously improve statistical business activities** (process innovation).

7. There was strong support and appreciation of the foundational work the HLG-MOS has done to innovate and modernise official statistics. The **HLG-MOS should keep supporting implementation of the outputs that were developed** (standards, project outcomes etc.). The **key role of HLG-MOS in facilitating transformation** was emphasized. The Executive Board has a pivotal role in this. The Executive Board is trusted to keep on moving into new directions in line with the HLG-MOS vision and priorities to sustain innovation. It was emphasised that the **caveat for a continued success is that CES members provide resources for the work**.

8. The COVID-19 pandemic made clear that it is necessary to add new capabilities and to change office culture to respond well to the needs of users. The HLG-MOS should continue supporting culture change, the move from data analytics to data engineering, and attracting and keeping new staff. The HLG-MOS has the momentum to keep defining directions in terms of services and creative solutions.

III. ACTION REQUESTED FROM THE BUREAU

9. **The Bureau is invited to discuss the outcome of the Sprint and whether any additional further work on sustaining innovation is needed. The Bureau members are also invited to contribute to the work programme of the HLG-MOS and to consider submitting activity and project proposals on topics that can help countries to sustain innovation.**