

# Project Outline – Communication and Outreach for HLG Activities

## I. Background

1. The importance of modernising the production of official statistics, and the resulting outputs, has been a priority for the international statistical community since the creation of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services (HLG) by the Conference of European Statisticians in 2010. At first, the work of the HLG focused on developing the necessary framework of standards and models to facilitate international collaboration on modernisation activities. More recently, the focus has shifted to delivering outputs that demonstrate the practical benefits of this initiative. The first components of the statistical production process, designed and built collaboratively to common specifications, are starting to be delivered.

2. As with any international activities, some organisations have been very active participants from the start, whilst others have participated specific activities of greatest interest to them. So far, around 40 statistical organisations have been involved to some extent in HLG activities. However, many others have not yet made active contributions. This is partly because some organisations prefer to wait for concrete results before investing scarce resources. It may also reflect a certain degree of scepticism, as other statistical modernisation projects have not always been successful. However, now that the benefits of the HLG activities are becoming clearer, the time seems right for a set of communication and outreach initiatives to raise awareness of the successes so far, and the potential for every statistical organisation to benefit from them. To ensure a coordinated approach, these communication and outreach activities are proposed to be integrated into a major international collaboration project, under the HLG, during 2015.

3. This project is important for the HLG's broad programme of modernisation of statistical production. If potential beneficiaries are not aware of what has already been achieved, and what is currently being developed, they may not have sufficient information to make the best strategic decisions for future investment in their organisations. Similarly, their specific requirements will not be taken into account during the design and execution of international projects. The more organisations that are involved in collaborative modernisation activities, the greater the potential for economies of scale. If 50 organisations commit just one expert each to international collaboration, that would create a powerful team of 50 experts, all working for the benefit of the global statistical community, with the benefits for each organisation considerably outweighing the costs. To reach this point, it is clear that many people within statistical organisations and beyond, need to be aware of, and involved in, HLG activities.

4. This project outline was developed by a temporary task team composed of representatives of 6 national and international statistical organizations<sup>1</sup>, and includes the

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<sup>1</sup> Gabrielle Beaudoin (Canada), Marko Kristof and Marianne Idakovic (Croatia), Aeidin Sheppard (Ireland), Giulia Mottura (Italy), Marton Vuicsan (Netherlands), Agnieszka Mroz and Monika Sekular (Poland)

objectives, scope and content of this project, as well as some practical project management issues.

## **II. Project objectives**

5. The project has three main objectives:

- To communicate the value of international collaboration in the area of statistical modernisation by clearly demonstrating the tangible benefits of this approach
- To facilitate the sharing within and across organizations of knowledge, expertise, tools and methods for the benefit of all
- To increase the number of organisations actively involved in HLG initiatives.

## **III. Scope**

6. This project aims to intensify and coordinate communication and outreach concerning activities relating to the modernisation of official statistics under the HLG. It will combine direct promotional activities with the development of tools and resources to ensure the sustainability of communication and outreach activities beyond the life of the project.

7. By including representatives of several national and international statistical organizations in the task team that formulated this project proposal, and by continuing to consult with these and other partners throughout, the project aims to benefit from the best practices in communication and outreach activities in each organisation. It also aims to be as relevant as possible to organization-specific needs and concerns.

## **IV. Contents**

8. This project comprises the four broad work packages outlined below. Each work package comprises a set of activities with specific goals and outputs.

### ***Work Package 1: Internal communication***

9. This work package focuses on facilitating communication about modernisation within statistical organisations. So far, international modernisation activities under the HLG have been conducted by technical specialists, such as methodologists, architects, standards experts and information technology staff. The level of knowledge about these activities amongst statistical subject-matter, generalist and mid to senior managerial staff is often rather low. This can have a negative impact on enthusiasm for, and hence the likelihood of success of modernisation projects. Better communication within statistical offices should encourage more staff to feel that they are part of the modernisation process, and ensure that they are working towards common goals.

### **Activities**

- Encourage senior managers to hold information sessions for their staff on the importance of statistical modernisation
  - Output - A resource pack for information sessions, which could include items such as PowerPoint slides, posters, videos and standard texts
- Encourage more discussion within statistical organisations about modernisation

- Output - Guidelines on how to use tools such as intranet discussion boards for this purpose
- Output - Circulate a summary of discussions on a regular basis
- Regular updates for staff on modernisation activities
  - Output - Develop an electronic newsletter template, including information on both international activities (common for all organisations, with links to the UNECE wikis), as well as organisation-specific activities. Re-use material developed for work package 2 as far as possible
  - Output - Create a network of "modernisation champions" in statistical organisations, to facilitate the flow of information

### ***Work Package 2: Communication and outreach within the official statistics community***

10. This work package focuses on communication about modernisation activities between the organisations that make up the international official statistics community. This community is defined as all producers of official statistics, so includes national and international statistical organisations, as well as other ministries and organisations at the national level that produce official statistics. The aim of this work package is to ensure that all members of this community are aware of modernisation activities, and can access relevant information and participate in HLG initiatives. A common theme across activities will be to showcase successes, where modernisation activities have delivered concrete benefits.

#### **Activities**

- Create a single point of entry for all information related to statistical modernisation, including information about groups and projects at the national and international level
  - Output - A single web portal for modernisation activities, widely publicised, regularly updated and heavily used
- Targeted communication using the "inverted pyramid" communication method, to deliver appropriate messages to all levels of staff
  - Output - Short, focused documents written in a non-technical way on key topics in modernisation, with links for those who want more detail and technical information
- Inform existing subject-matter expert groups about HLG initiatives and modernisation activities, through a network of modernisation outreach specialists
  - Output - A network of modernisation outreach specialists who can inform expert groups about modernisation activities
  - Output - Presentations / briefing papers for expert group meetings
- Events to communicate about and encourage active participation in modernisation activities
  - Output - Workshops and seminars on relevant topics
  - Output - Virtual events, such as webinars and web conferences, to be held according to a regular and published schedule
- More effective use of social media as a communication tool within the official statistics community
  - Output - Case studies on the purpose and benefits of different social media tools to communicate modernisation activities
  - Output - Sustainable social media networks and resources

### ***Work Package 3: Communication and outreach to external stakeholders***

11. This work package focuses on communication about statistical modernisation with external stakeholders. This includes groups such as policy-makers, the press, data suppliers and data users. It will identify the needs of each group in terms of information about modernisation activities. It will also consider how the views of different external stakeholder groups can best be taken into account when modernisation activities are being planned and designed.

12. The media (traditional and web-based) are a special stakeholder group because they are not only the recipient of information, but also a partner in its further dissemination. Skillful use of this partnership may be help in informing the public about modernisation activities. Briefings and press conferences devoted specifically to modernisation could be used, or information about modernisation activities could be included in regular briefings about statistical outputs. Data journalists should be a specific target group.

#### **Activities**

- Identify external stakeholders, assess their information needs, and the most appropriate communication channels
  - Output - Guidelines on how to communicate modernisation activities to each of the identified groups of external stakeholders
  - Output - Best practices on making the case and securing funding for modernisation activities
  - Output - Best practices on engaging with schools, universities and students to increase interest in careers in official statistics amongst those whose skills will be most in demand (e.g. data scientists)
  - Output - Best practice and standard materials for engaging with traditional and new media, including data journalists (see, for example, <http://datajournalismcourse.net/>)
- Identify potential activities to get external stakeholders more involved in modernisation activities
  - Output - List of potential activities (e.g. app competitions, hackathons)
  - Output - Launch one or more activities?
  - Output - Consider the coordinated release by multiple statistical organisations of new "nice to know" statistics made possible by modernisation activities
- Assess the potential of social media for communication with external stakeholders
  - Output - Study with recommendations

### ***Work Package 4: Project management and coordination***

13. This work package comprises the necessary project management activities to ensure the successful delivery of the other three work packages.

#### **V. Definition of success**

14. Overall, this project will be successful if it results in an improved understanding within the international statistical community of the practical opportunities and benefits of international collaboration in the modernisation of official statistics. Success criteria for the individual work packages are:

- Work package 1: Staff within statistical organisations understand the benefits of standards-based modernisation, and actively support modernisation initiatives
- Work package 2: Senior managers within the international statistical community, experts working on international collaboration, and producers of official statistics outside national statistical organisations, are all aware of modernisation activities, how to find more information, and how to get actively involved
- Work package 3: Key external stakeholders for official statistics receive tailored and coherent communication on the benefits and implications of statistical modernisation activities
- Work package 4: The project is completed on schedule, and delivers results that are of value to the international statistical community.

## VI. Expected costs

15. The following table shows an estimate of the minimum resources and other costs needed to deliver the different work packages. Each organization involved in the project will be expected to cover the costs of their participation (including wages and any travel expenses for participants).

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>Estimated resources</b>	<b>Source of resources</b>	<b>Other costs (in US Dollars)</b>
1: Internal communication	12 person months	Volunteer NSOs plus UNECE Secretariat	Possible travel costs if a workshop or sprint session is needed Possible costs for the tools and knowledge to develop common resources (up to \$10,000)
2: Communication and outreach within the official statistics community	12 person months	Volunteer NSOs plus UNECE Secretariat	Possible travel costs if a workshop or sprint session is needed
3: Communication and outreach to external stakeholders	12 person months	Volunteer NSOs plus UNECE Secretariat	Up to \$1,000 for costs associated with preparing communication materials
4: Project management	6 person months	A project manager working in the UNECE Secretariat. Input from Executive Board and HLG members (in their role as project sponsors)	Up to \$500 for telecommunications and other incidentals Travel costs for project events
<b>Total</b>	<b>42 person months</b>	<b>UNECE Secretariat (9 person months) NSO / International organization staff (33 person months)</b>	<b>Up to \$11,500 for miscellaneous costs Possible consultancy costs Travel costs of experts</b>

## **VII. Timetable**

16. The project will aim to complete the activities described by the end of 2015. There are, however, various unknowns which may affect the timetable:

- The availability of resources from national and international statistical organizations to support this project – if the necessary resources are not available, either the timetable will need to be extended, or the outputs will need to be re-defined (in terms of quality or quantity or both)
- The availability of project management and support resources in the UNECE Secretariat – to meet the resource requirements of this project will require the continued availability of a project manager and work-package coordinators, either via financial donations to allow suitable persons to be hired, or by donations in kind, such as the allocation of an expert to assist with project management. If this is not forthcoming, either the timetable will need to be extended, or the outputs will need to be re-defined.

17. All four work packages will run throughout the year, though substantial work should be completed by mid-November so that outcomes can be reported and demonstrated at the annual HLG Workshop.

## **VIII. Project governance**

21. The project sponsor is the HLG. This is the group that has ultimate responsibility for signing off the project deliverables. In practice, this responsibility will be delegated to the Executive Board.

22. A project manager will have day-to-day responsibility for the running of the project, providing regular updates and signalling any issues to the Executive Board as necessary.