



Economic Commission for Europe**Executive Committee****126th meeting**

Geneva, 13 January 2023

Item 4(b) of the provisional agenda

Matters relating to the Conference of European Statisticians: decisions on matters relating to the Conference of European Statisticians

Decisions relating to the Conference of European Statisticians***Background***

1. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) held its seventieth session on 20–22 June 2022 in Geneva. The report of the session is contained in document ECE/CES/103.
2. In June 2022, the Conference adopted the programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2023, as contained in documents ECE/CES/2022/16 and ECE/CES/2022/16/Add.1.
3. The Conference of European Statisticians decided to establish the Steering Group on statistical legislation.
4. The Conference of European Statisticians further decided to extend the mandates of the following Teams of Specialists for the period of 2023–2027:
 - (a) Steering Group on consumer price indices;
 - (b) Steering Group on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (c) Steering Group on measuring poverty and inequality;
 - (d) Steering Group on population and housing censuses.
5. The Steering Groups are composed of countries' experts who guide the work of the Secretariat. They are created in areas where there is a need for strategic development of statistical work, following the Rules governing the work of the Conference, its Bureau and Teams of Specialists (ECE/CES/2019/2).
6. The Executive Committee is invited to approve these decisions.

Draft Decision

7. The Executive Committee hereby approves the Programme of Work of the Statistics subprogramme for 2023, as contained in documents ECE/CES/2022/16 and ECE/CES/2022/16/Add.1.



8. The Executive Committee hereby approves the terms of reference, for the period 2023–2027, of the following teams of specialists established under the Conference of European Statisticians, as contained in the annexes to the present document:

- (a) Steering Group on statistical legislation (see Annex I);
- (b) Steering Group on consumer price indices (see Annex II);
- (c) Steering Group on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (see Annex III);
- (d) Steering Group on measuring poverty and inequality (see Annex IV);
- (e) Steering Group on population and housing censuses (see Annex V).

Terms of reference for the Steering Group on statistical legislation

I. Background

1. Official statistics are an indispensable element of the information system of democratic societies, serving governments, economies and the public. A strong legal and institutional setting is an essential precondition guaranteeing their independence, integrity and accountability, and assuring statistical quality and data security. Particularly, in the context of the currently changing data landscape, emergence of other data producers and new data sources, a flexible and forward-looking legal basis is needed to support and enable national statistical systems that are fit for purpose and for the environment that they are trying to measure.

2. The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) has been supporting its members in the area of modernizing statistical legislation by developing and endorsing, together with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Eurostat and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the Generic Law on Official Statistics (2016) (GLOS) and the Guidance on Modernizing Statistical Legislation (2019). Aligning with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the documents provide guidance on developing statistical legislation to support the modernization of statistical systems and unleash the full value of official statistics.

3. When endorsing the Guidance on Modernizing Statistical Legislation in 2018, the Conference agreed that regular meetings of legal and managerial experts should be organized to continue working on this topic. In February 2022, the Bureau reviewed the report on the outcomes of the first two Expert Meetings on Modernizing Statistical Legislation and supported the proposal for further work in this area, including setting up a Steering Group to provide direction to the work and identify and address the emerging issues on a continuous basis.

II. Mandate

4. The work of the Steering Group is conducted within the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians. The Steering Group will regularly report to the CES Bureau on its activities as well as on emerging issues related to statistical legislation and possible ways of addressing them.

5. The Steering Group may identify new areas of work to be undertaken by groups of experts (task forces or task teams) and submit proposals to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

6. The terms of reference for the Steering Group will be reviewed by the CES Bureau in 2027.

III. Objective

7. The objective of the Steering Group is to provide direction to the CES work on statistical legislation, identify and address emerging issues and facilitate the implementation of CES guidelines in this area.

IV. Planned activities and outputs

8. The Steering Group carries out the following activities:

- (a) Organize the annual Expert Meetings on Modernizing Statistical Legislation;
- (b) Identify and provide guidance on emerging issues related to statistical legislation and any other legal frameworks related to or impacting statistical activities;
- (c) Follow up on the implementation of the GLOS and the Guidance on Modernizing Statistical Legislation, periodically review existing guidelines and make recommendations regarding their updates;
- (d) Coordinate with other relevant groups and bodies working on topics related to statistical legislation and in the substantive areas where legal challenges occur;
- (e) Oversee the work of task forces and task teams set up by the Steering Group;
- (f) Provide advice to the UNECE Secretariat on capacity development and other activities that support the implementation of CES guidelines on statistical legislation.

V. Methods of work

9. The Steering Group will primarily work via email and video conferences. The Steering Group may organize informal meetings at events attended by a significant number of members, such as the Expert Meeting on Modernizing Statistical Legislation.
10. Members of the Steering Group are expected to contribute actively to the work and provide ideas for future activities. The Steering Group elects its Chair or Co-chairs.
11. The Steering Group may invite representatives of other relevant groups and bodies working on topics related to statistical legislation to the Steering Group meetings and organization of the annual Expert Meeting as deemed appropriate. Representatives of other groups may also be invited to participate regularly in the Steering Group as observers.

VI. Membership

12. As of December 2022, the representatives of the following countries and organizations expressed interest in being members of the Steering Group: Albania, Armenia, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, United Kingdom (chair), EFTA, Eurostat, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).
13. UNECE acts as Secretariat of the Steering Group.

Annex II

[English only]

Terms of reference for the Steering Group on consumer price indices**I. Background**

1. The Steering Group on consumer price indices (CPIs) was established by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in 2017 to guide the CES work on CPIs. The Bureau reviewed the work of the Steering Group and approved the proposed updated terms of reference for the Group.

II. Mandate

2. The work of the Steering Group is carried out within the CES work programme. The Steering Group reports to the Bureau on the CES activities on CPIs, as well as on emerging issues in the area.

3. The terms of reference for the Steering Group will be reviewed in 2027.

4. The Steering Group may identify new areas of work to be undertaken by groups of experts (task forces or task teams) and submit proposals to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

III. Objective

5. The objective of the Steering Group is to guide the UNECE Secretariat in its work on CPIs. To this end, the Steering Group should:

(a) Guide the Secretariat in the planning and organization of the biennial meetings of the Group of Experts on CPIs;

(b) Follow the development of recommendations and guidelines and their implementation, including collaborating on developing training materials, etc.;

(c) Identify areas where additional work and research are needed to support countries in improving their price statistics, taking recommendations of the CES Bureau into account;

(d) Advise the Secretariat on capacity development activities to support the implementation of international recommendations and guidelines on CPI in EECCA and SEE countries. Capacity development activities should be closely coordinated with regional and international partners;

(e) Ensure consultation and coordination with IWGPS and the Ottawa Group and other relevant groups and organizations on ongoing and planned activities in the area of CPI.

IV. Planned activities and outputs

6. The main activities and outputs of the Steering Group on CPIs will be the following:

(a) Organization of the biennial meetings of the Group of Experts on CPIs;

(b) Follow-up on the 2020 CPI Manual, address issues in the implementation of the recommendations of the Manual and identify possible emerging CPI issues;

(c) Advise the Secretariat on capacity building activities on CPI for EECCA and SEE countries, e.g. through workshops and special sessions for this group of countries;

(d) Ensure close coordination with other activities and groups working with price statistics, in particular, IWGPS and the Ottawa Group on Price Indices.

V. Methods of work

7. The Steering Group will primarily work via electronic means. The Group will meet face-to-face on the occasion of the meetings of the Group of Experts on CPI. Additional meetings may be organized at events attended by a significant number of Steering Group members, such as the meetings of the Ottawa Group on Price Indices.

VI. Membership

8. The composition of the Steering Group should reflect the different sub-regions of UNECE and ensure continuity of work. At present, the following countries and organizations are members of the Steering Group: France, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom (Chair), United States (Bureau of Labour Statistics), Eurostat, CIS-STAT, ILO and OECD. The Group is open to other countries and agencies that may wish to contribute to the work of the Group.

9. UNECE acts as Secretariat of the Steering Group.

Terms of reference for the Steering Group on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals

I. Background

1. In June 2022 the CES Bureau reviewed the progress of work of the Steering Group and decided to renew its mandate with the objective to continue guiding the CES work on statistics for SDGs and supporting the implementation of the second edition of the *CES Road map for statistics for SDGs*. Special attention was paid to reviewing the active participation and contributions of the members of the group. Given the large interest of countries, the Bureau supported the establishment of a Friends Network on statistics for SDGs that will complement the work of the Steering Group.
2. In June 2021 the Conference endorsed the *Second Edition of the Road Map* and supported further work to help countries implement the Road Map, with special attention to (i) automating data transmission, and (ii) ‘leaving no-one behind’ – how to account for vulnerable groups, and integrate data from different sources taking into account the associated risks.
3. Furthermore, several ongoing global and regional processes related to the implementation of SDGs call for action at UNECE regional level, such as:
 - (a) Regional input to the work of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development that has a central role in overseeing the processes at the global level;
 - (b) Input to the annual UNECE Regional Fora on Sustainable Development that lead the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the UNECE region focusing on practical value-added and peer learning;
 - (c) Input to the UN Interagency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs);
 - (d) Input to the UN High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB), and the Cape Town Global Action Plan.
4. Support from the Steering Group is continuously required to help coordinate and guide the regional input to these processes.

II. Mandate

5. The work of the Steering Group is conducted within the CES work programme. It will provide regular reports to the CES and its Bureau.
6. The work of the Steering Group will reflect the work of the HLG-PCCB and IAEG-SDGs, operating under the UN Statistical Commission, to provide a link with the developments at the global level. It will take into account the guidance given by the UN Secretary General on the global follow-up and review process.
7. The Steering Group may identify opportunities to brief the UNECE Executive Committee and other relevant regional policy bodies to ensure that the work and products of the CES relating to SDGs fully reflect the policy priorities of the UNECE region. Communication with all relevant stakeholders (including the policy community) will be crucial.
8. The Steering Group may identify concrete tasks or activities to support its work that could be undertaken by groups of experts (Task Forces or Task Teams). In such cases, after having verified the interest by a sufficient number of CES member countries and the

availability of resources, the Steering Group will submit proposals for Task Forces to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

9. The CES Bureau will review the terms of reference of the Steering Group in 2027.

III. Objective

10. The Steering Group will guide and coordinate the CES work on statistics for SDGs. Its mission is to be a key resource providing guidance to countries on statistical follow-up to the 2030 Agenda through numerous vehicles, including meetings, workshops, guidelines, tools, websites and international collaboration. The Steering Group aims to play a pioneering role by identifying emerging issues and strategic topics for the future.

IV. Planned activities

11. The main activities of the Steering Group in 2023–2027 will be:

(a) Providing guidance and tools to support the implementation of the *CES Road Map on statistics for SDGs* in countries; following up on the implementation of the Road Map;

(b) Overseeing the work of task forces and task teams set up by the Steering Group;

(c) Creating and disseminating promotional materials for the second edition of the Road Map;

(d) Organizing the annual Expert Group Meetings and workshops on Statistics for SDGs;

(e) Advising UNECE on statistical capacity development activities for monitoring SDGs;

(f) Maintaining the UNECE knowledge hub on statistics for SDGs.

V. Methods of work

12. The Steering Group will primarily work via email, wiki workspace and telephone conferences. Face-to-face meetings may be organized once a year. Additional meetings may be organized at events attended by a significant number of Steering Group members, such as the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, UN Statistical Commission, or other meetings.

13. Members of the Steering Group are expected to contribute actively to the work and provide ideas for future activities. Co-chairs are elected by the Steering Group.

14. The Steering Group is complemented by a Friends Network on statistics for SDGs where all interested countries and organizations can join. The network will provide an opportunity for its members to stay informed and contribute to the work by joining Task Forces and Task Teams. Members of the Friends Network can participate in extended Steering Group teleconferences that will be organized on a quarterly basis. Countries wishing to become members of the Friends Network can contact the Secretariat.

VI. Membership

15. Poland (co-chair), Sweden (co-chair), Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Montenegro, Netherlands, Spain, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States and the European Environment Agency. The CIS Statistical Committee, Eurostat and OECD are permanent observers on the Steering Group.

16. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Steering Group.

Terms of reference for the Steering Group on measuring poverty and inequality

I. Background

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of measuring poverty, inequality and vulnerability, in particular its goals 1 ('End poverty in all its forms everywhere') and 10 ('Reduce inequalities within and among countries'). The current issues countries face include the lack of data sources for the calculation and disaggregation of SDG indicators, the need to clarify definitions for a number of indicators and to address the differences between national and international methodologies and definitions as well as to harmonize and standardize data to streamline their collection and processing. The principle of "leaving no one behind" requires capturing the hard-to-reach population, yet another challenge in collecting SDG data. Addressing these challenges of measuring poverty and inequalities requires close cooperation among countries within the statistical community.

2. The risks and threats to meeting the SDG goal of reducing poverty are now increased by the Covid-19 pandemic. The UNECE methodological work and expert meetings remain an important tool for strengthening national statistics on poverty and inequality and ensuring a close coordination at international level in support of SDGs 1 and 10. The role of the Steering Group is therefore essential to steer CES work in this area, guide national statistical offices and ensure a close cooperation between international partners active in this area.

II. Mandate

3. The Steering Group on Measuring Poverty and Inequality will regularly report to the CES Bureau.

4. The Steering Group may identify new areas of work to be undertaken by groups of experts (task forces or task teams) and submit proposals to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

5. The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed in 2027.

III. Objective

6. The objective of the Steering Group will be to provide direction to the CES work on poverty and inequality statistics, advance methodological development, capacity development and collaboration between users and producers of poverty and inequality statistics, and provide a mechanism for following up on the implementation of the CES guidance. The Steering Group should address the additional needs and the new data requirements on measuring poverty and inequality during the pandemic and its aftermath, taking aboard both monetary and non-monetary aspects.

IV. Planned activities and outputs

7. The following activities and outputs are planned:

(a) Take forward methodological work on measuring poverty and inequality, and set priorities in this area taking into account the challenges in producing indicators for monitoring of the 2030 Agenda under the new pandemic circumstances. Focus on timely provision of statistics and sharing best practices would help governments' policy response to COVID-19, especially in building back better their social protection, social security and

employment policies as well as addressing pressing needs of vulnerable population (SDGs 1, 8, and 10);

(b) Follow up on the implementation of the *CES Guide on Poverty Measurement* and *Poverty Measurement: Guide to Data Disaggregation*, and the progress of countries in measuring poverty and inequalities. The Steering Group will continue to direct the research agenda considering the social and economic implications as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis;

(c) Organize the UNECE expert meetings on measuring poverty and inequality; elaborate proposals for topics and solicit session organizers and discussants;

(d) Advise the UNECE Secretariat on the planning of capacity development activities in the area of poverty and inequality statistics to support the statistical systems in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

8. The Steering Group will ensure coordination of the CES work on poverty and inequality statistics with Eurostat, OECD, the World Bank and the leading research group of Oxford University on poverty measurement (OPHI), the EU-SILC Network on income and living conditions (NetSILC), other relevant bodies and with current developments related to the monitoring of poverty under the Sustainable Development Goals.

V. Method of work

9. The Steering Group will work mainly via e-mail consultations and video conferences. The Group will also have face-to-face meetings in conjunction with the annual UNECE expert meetings on poverty and inequality statistics.

VI. Membership

10. The following countries and organizations are participating in the Steering Group: Austria, Canada, Italy, Poland, Spain, Russian Federation, United States, CIS-Stat, Eurostat, OECD, Oxford University (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative - OPHI), United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS, and the World Bank, thus covering the different sub-regions in the UNECE. If necessary, other experts and agencies can also be consulted or asked to contribute, to consolidate the best available expertise.

11. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Steering Group.

Terms of reference for the Steering Group on population and housing censuses

I. Background

1. Between 2012 and 2015 the UNECE Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses coordinated the preparation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*¹. The CES endorsed these Recommendations in June 2015.
2. After the endorsement of the Recommendations, the Steering Group coordinated UNECE activities supporting the member countries in fulfilling the Recommendations. The progress reports of the Steering Group presented to the Bureau in February 2016 (ECE/CES/BUR/2016/FEB/6), in January 2018 (ECE/CES/BUR/2018/FEB/6) and in February 2020 (ECE/CES/BUR/2020/FEB/6) summarize these activities.
3. With the 2020 census round almost completed, the focus of the Steering Group must shift to reviewing countries' experiences in conducting these censuses and using such experiences to inform development of the next edition of the Recommendations.
4. In light of the issues raised in the draft document *Future Censuses Beyond 2020* (ECE/CES/BUR/2020/FEB/19), the next edition of the Recommendations will need to consider fundamental questions about the way censuses are conducted, their frequency, content, concepts and sources. The Steering Group will need to guide the CES work to ensure that these issues are suitably addressed in the Recommendations.

II. Mandate

5. The Steering Group works under the mandate of the CES and regularly reports to the CES and its Bureau on its activities and outputs.
6. The Steering Group may identify new areas of work to be undertaken by groups of experts (task forces or task teams) and submit proposals to the CES Bureau for review and approval.
7. The Terms of Reference of the Steering Group are to be reviewed in 2027.

III. Objectives

8. The main objective of the Steering Group is to coordinate, provide advice and contribute to the UNECE programme on population and housing censuses. This entails:
 - (a) Supporting UNECE member countries in preparing and conducting censuses and in disseminating and communicating results in accordance with the *CES Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*;
 - (b) Developing a set of Recommendations for the 2030 round. The "2030 round" is understood here to refer principally to the decennial population and housing data collections, while recognizing that the Recommendations will need to be consistent with the move towards more frequent census-like collections of population data as foreseen, for example, in the Eurostat *Vision for Census Statistics After 2021*².

¹ Available in English, French and Russian at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41398>

² See <https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/e9072c55-f448-47f6-b4e2-cb3697ae7dc1/DSS-2016-Oct-3.2%20Census%20post%202021%20vision.pdf>

IV. Planned activities and outputs

9. The following activities and outputs are planned for the Steering Group:
- (a) Review the format and content of the UNECE census wiki for the 2020 round and revise as necessary; coordinate the collection of updates from CES member countries; analyze the results and present an overview of pertinent findings to the Expert Group Meetings;
 - (b) Establish a set of Task Forces on the key areas deemed by the Steering Group to be necessary for the review and reformulation of the Recommendations to update them for the 2030 round;
 - (c) Coordinate the work of the Task Forces until 2024, provide advice on the preparation of the CES Recommendations for the 2030 round and ensure their consistency. Compile the results into a coherent set of Recommendations to be presented to the Bureau in February 2025;
 - (d) In consultation with the members of the Task Forces, prepare and conduct a survey of national practices in the census 2020 round; prepare a publication summarizing the results of this survey;
 - (e) Work with the UNECE secretariat to prepare the annual UNECE-Eurostat Expert Meetings on Population and Housing Censuses;
 - (f) Ensure the coordination between the preparation of the CES Recommendations for the 2030 round and the preparation of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) Global Principles and Recommendations for the 2030 round.

V. Methods of work

10. The Steering Group works mainly by email and online discussion via the UNECE wiki platform, as well as a face-to-face meeting each year during the UNECE-Eurostat Expert Group Meeting. Informal meetings of the Steering Group may be organized on the margins of other expert meetings attended by a significant number of Steering Group members.

VI. Membership

11. The Steering Group currently includes representatives of the following countries: Armenia, Belarus, Canada, France, Georgia, Italy, Netherlands (Chair), Poland, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America. CIS-Stat, the European Free Trade Association, Eurostat, the United Nations Population Fund and the UNSD also participate.
12. UNECE will act as Secretariat of the Steering Group.
-