

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

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Item III (f) of the Provisional
Agenda

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE STEERING GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED STATISTICS

Prepared by the Steering Group and the Secretariat

This document presents a report on the work carried out in 2018-2023 by the UNECE Steering Group on climate change-related statistics. The draft terms of reference for the Steering Group for 2023-2028 are presented as document 11/Add.1.

The Bureau reviewed and approved the report and the proposed terms of reference.

I. BACKGROUND

1. In April 2014, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) endorsed the *CES Recommendations on climate change-related statistics* to improve the usefulness of existing official statistics for climate analyses and greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories. The Conference supported organizing regular expert meetings for producers and users of climate change-related statistics with the participation of key partners involved in the measurement of climate change.
2. In October 2014, the CES Bureau established the Steering Group on climate change-related statistics for the initial period of four years, to guide the implementation of the CES Recommendations and advance international work in the area. In 2018, the CES Bureau reviewed work of the Steering Group and renewed terms of reference until 2023¹.
3. The Steering Group was first chaired by Norway (Nina Holmengen) then by Luxembourg (Olivier Thunus) and until October 2023 by the Netherlands (Arthur Denneman). Canada (Michele McMillan) is proposed as the next chair under the new mandate. Currently, the countries and organizations participating in the work of the Steering Group are: Canada, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the European Environment Agency, Eurostat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Midsummer Analytics.

II. WORK CARRIED OUT BY THE STEERING GROUP

4. Between 2018 and 2023, the Steering Group has been working to guide and support the countries in the implementation of the *CES Recommendations on Climate Change-Related*

¹ [Current terms of reference of the Steering Group \(2018-2023\)](#).

Statistics (2014) and, later, the *CES Set of Core Climate Change-Related Statistics and Indicators* (2020) with the overarching objective of improving the usefulness of official statistics for climate change policies and analyses.

5. The work has been carried out through e-mails and regular online meetings taking place every few weeks (in total, 35 Steering Group meetings between October 2018 and September 2023). In addition, many meetings of ad hoc subgroups, task teams and Task Forces have taken place.

6. The main activities carried out are described below, grouped according to the activity types from the terms of reference. The main outputs developed under the Steering Group are available on a dedicated UNECE web page: <https://unece.org/statistics/climate-change>. All the materials related to meetings are available under respective event pages: <https://unece.org/statistics/climate-change/meetings>.

A. Steering CES activities in climate change-related statistics

7. **Expert Fora.** Since 2018, the Steering Group has organized five annual Expert Fora for producers and users of climate change-related statistics serving as a platform for collaboration, sharing ideas and experience, discussing concepts and measurement issues, and identifying areas for development of practical guidance. Since its establishment, the Expert Forum remains globally the only regular UN meeting solely dedicated to climate change-related statistics, including environmental, economic and social statistics relevant in the context of climate change.

8. Within these five years, Expert Forum has been held twice in person only (2019 and 2023), twice online only (2020 and 2021) and once in a hybrid format (2022). The topics discussed between 2018 and 2022 included:

- (a) Producing climate change-related statistics and indicators;
- (b) Measuring climate change vulnerability and adaptation;
- (c) Hazardous events and disasters;
- (d) Links between climate change, wealth and well being;
- (e) Role of the statistical community in climate action;
- (f) Carbon footprint and consumption-based emissions
- (g) Good practices in producing, disseminating and using climate change-related statistics;
- (h) New frontiers in climate change-related statistics.

9. The topics are decided by the Steering Group based on the discussions in previous meetings, proposals made by meeting participants in the evaluation form and emerging developments. Since 2022, a call for contributions on the tentative list of topics is sent out early to all statistical offices and international organizations to solicit presentations and papers. The final topics are decided based on the received contributions. NSOs are always encouraged to forward the invitation and the call for contributions to their counterparts in other national organizations producing or using climate change-related statistics.

10. The 2023 Expert Forum was held from 28 to 30 August in Geneva and discussed:

- (a) Producing, disseminating and communicating climate change-related statistics and indicators for policymakers and the public;

- (b) Informing climate change mitigation policies;
- (c) Informing climate change adaptation policies;
- (d) Data needed to support a just transition;
- (e) Climate finance and the economic aspects of climate change.

11. The conclusions from the 2023 Expert Forum sessions will inform the final phase of the work of the Task Force on the role of NSOs in achieving national climate objectives (see paragraph 21 below) and the future priorities of the Steering Group under the new mandate.

12. [In-depth review of the role of the statistical community in climate action](#). In February 2020, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of the role of the statistical community for climate action based on a paper prepared by the Steering Group. The paper presented an overview of international activities related to climate change statistics and data, a description of country practices, and a number of identified issues and challenges. Among the conclusions, it was noted that NSOs could play an essential role in national climate change information systems, but the statistical community has to step up its efforts and engage more actively in the complex landscape of data for climate action. In October 2020, the Bureau supported the follow-up activities proposed by the Steering Group. In terms of focus areas, the Bureau recommended to prioritize (i) climate change adaptation, (ii) green finance and green investment, and (iii) more broadly, linkages between climate change and the economy.

13. **Session on official statistics for climate action during the [2021 CES plenary session](#)**. Following the conclusions of the in-depth review, the CES Bureau decided to have a high-level discussion on “Official statistics for climate action” during the 2021 CES plenary session, which was organized by the Steering Group. The Conference recognized the increasing need for climate change-related statistics and data, and the key role national statistical offices must play in meeting this need. It was noted that producing such data requires systemic approaches, linking various statistical fields, innovation, collaboration across the national statistical system, and effective communication with users. The Conference asked for a close collaboration with the policy process, including for developing guidance on using statistics for reporting under the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement, which led to the establishment of the new Task Force on the role of NSOs in achieving national climate objectives.

B. Methodological work – identifying and addressing new areas

14. **Task Force on the set of core climate change-related statistics and indicators** (chaired by Italy – Angelica Tudini). The Task Force worked between 2015 and 2020 in two stages. First, it developed the initial set of key climate change-related indicators endorsed by CES in June 2017. In the second stage, the Task Force refined the initial set of indicators, proposed contextual and operational indicators and developed the implementation guidelines. The Conference endorsed the [final set of 44 core indicators](#) in 2020 and the official publication was issued in 2021.

15. **Task Force on measuring hazardous events and disasters** (chaired by Italy – Angela Ferruzza). Since 2015, the Task Force has been focusing on the role of national statistical offices in measuring extreme events and disasters and disaster response, and promotes harmonized measurement approaches, concepts and definitions for assessing progress towards the 2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Until 2020, the Task Force has been working under the Steering Group. In 2020, it received a standalone mandate from the CES but continued to collaborate closely and share regular updates with the Steering Group. In 2020, the Task Force has finalized the [Recommendations on the Role of Official Statistics in](#)

[Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters](#). In 2023, it finalized a pilot [Set of Core Disaster-Risk-Related Indicators](#), complementing the CES Set of Core Climate Change-Related Statistics and Indicators.

16. **Subgroup on climate change adaptation** (led by Italy – Giovanna Tagliacozzo). At the beginning of 2021, a small subgroup chaired by Italy, including also Mexico, Netherlands, UNFCCC, UNSD, UNECLAC, Midsummer Analytics and UNECE was created under the Steering Group to brainstorm on how to provide useful support for NSOs and make collective progress in measuring climate change adaptation. The group proposed collecting case studies with practical examples of statistical activities related to measuring climate change adaptation relevant in different country contexts to enable mutual learning. The subgroup has initiated the collection of case studies using a [template](#) including a set of keywords to tag the examples, which provides a structure for the collection but allows to share a variety of approaches and. The case study collection is described under paragraph 26 below.

17. **Subgroup on green finance and green investment** (led by Luxembourg – Olivier Thunus). At the beginning of 2021, a subgroup chaired by Luxembourg, including Netherlands, the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at the University of Cambridge and UNECE was created to brainstorm how the Steering Group can contribute to monitoring green and climate finance.

18. The group noted many ongoing activities related to measuring and monitoring green finance, such as the Network for Greening the Financial System; the ECB Statistics Committee Expert Group on Climate Change and Statistics; the ECB/Eurostat Task Force on the statistics on sustainable finance and climate related risks under the Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics (CMFB); or the IMF Climate Change Indicators Dashboard. Further, the group asked the NSOs in the region about the statistical activities and information demands related to green finance and organized a discussion about the topic in the 2021 Expert Forum based on the survey results.

19. The Expert Forum noted that monitoring green and climate finance is a new important topic for NSOs and provides an opportunity to test existing frameworks, develop new approaches and answer the user needs better. It was concluded that the Expert Forum should continue discussing the topic of green finance with a specific focus on climate finance. A glossary with definitions, methodological guidelines and a review of existing initiatives would be helpful for NSOs. Detailed summary of NSOs' responses on green finance is presented in the Expert Forum background document "[Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice 2021](#)". Further discussion on this topic took place at the 2023 Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics.

20. [UNECE/IEA/Eurostat Webinar on Administrative Microdata for Climate Change, Environment and Energy Statistics](#) (led by Ireland – Gerry Brady). Following the recommendation of the 2022 Expert Forum, the Steering Group organized in March 2023, a webinar to gather more information on the current use of large-scale environment-related administrative microdata for statistical purposes. Among new data sources for climate change, energy and environment statistics, particularly promising are administrative microdata, such as utility meter data, energy performance certificates of buildings and vehicle tests data. These sources can complement traditional data collection methods to increase the efficiency of data production or enable producing new statistics, indicators and analyses. The webinar was held as a joint event of UNECE, IEA and Eurostat. A [note describing the background and content of the webinar](#) has been prepared and will feed into the upcoming in-depth review on the same topic.

21. **[Task Force on the role of NSOs in achieving national climate objectives](#)** (chaired by Netherlands – Otto Swertz). Following up on the CES request for a close collaboration with the policy process and developing guidance on using statistics under the Paris Agreement, a new Task Force was established in February 2022 to analyse opportunities for NSOs' involvement in meeting national climate change objectives and showcase what the statistical system already offers to support climate action. The Task Force has four subgroups working on guidance on the role of NSOs in reporting under the Paris Agreement, informing mitigation, adaptation and just transition policies, climate finance and informing the public about climate-related issues. The [draft Guidance document](#) was presented to the 2023 Expert Forum for review and consultation.

C. Follow-up on the progress and promoting sharing of ideas and good practices

22. **Questionnaire on “Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice”**. In October 2020, the Steering Group started conducting an annual exercise of collecting and sharing information about countries' new achievements and plans to strengthen the exchange of good practices in climate change-related statistics. This exercise complements the annual UNECE Expert Forum and the wiki with good practices on climate-change related statistics through:

- (a) Collecting and sharing information about achievements and plans in climate change-related statistics in the CES member countries and organizations;
- (b) Promoting experience sharing and mutual learning;
- (c) Informing the discussions during the Expert Fora;
- (d) Guiding future work of the Steering Group.

23. The reports are available under the links below:

- (a) [“Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice 2021](#) (23 countries and 4 organizations)
- (b) [“Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice 2022”](#) (33 countries and 2 organizations)
- (c) [“Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice 2023”](#) (22 countries)

24. The 2022 Expert Forum noted that the results of the “Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice” were very informative for its work and requested the questionnaire to be conducted annually, and its results to be reported to the future Expert Fora.

25. **[Wiki with good practices on climate-change related statistics](#)**. The Steering Group maintains a wiki platform with good practices in climate change-related statistics. The wiki contains good examples presented at the Expert Fora so far, and other examples on how to implement the *Recommendations on Climate Change-Related Statistics*.

26. **Collection of climate change-adaptation case studies**. The Steering Group has been collecting case studies of statistical activities related to climate change adaptation using the template developed by the adaptation subgroup in 2021 (see above). The template and the first example of a case study prepared by the Netherlands were presented in the [2021 Expert Forum](#), and further five case studies were collected in [2022](#). The Steering Group continues to invite all countries to submit their case studies describing contexts, tools and methodologies, including experimental approaches and practical solutions using available statistical information.

27. **EFTA/UNECE Training Webinars on Climate Change-related Statistics.** Steering Group members contributed to two series of UNECE and EFTA training webinars held in [December 2020](#) and [January 2022](#).

D. Collaboration with international organizations

28. The Steering Group includes the following **international organizations** which contribute to the activities and regularly share information about ongoing work: ECLAC, EEA, Eurostat, FAO, IEA, OECD, UNFCCC. In addition, International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the United Nations Statistics Division are members of the current Task Force.

29. Since 2018, three high-level representatives of international organizations have given **keynote speeches at the Expert Fora**: Dr. Rodolfo Lacy, the Director of the Environment Directorate of OECD, Dr Youssef Nassef, Director of the UNFCCC Adaptation Division and Chair of the World Adaptation Science Programme, and Mr. Fabio Massimo Natalucci, the Deputy Director of the Monetary and Capital Markets Department at the International Monetary Fund.

30. The CES Set of Core-Climate Change-Related Statistics and Indicators, developed by the UNECE dedicated Task Force between 2015 and 2020, constituted a significant contribution to the development of the **UN Global Set of Climate Change Statistics**, adopted at the fifty-third session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2022 as the framework for climate change statistics and indicators to be used by countries when preparing their own sets of climate change statistics and indicators according to their individual concerns, priorities and resources. 34 out of 44 indicators from the CES Set are included in the Global Set either verbatim or in a related form.

31. The work carried out by the Task Force on Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters under the Steering Group has contributed to the creation of the **Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-Related Statistics** and the **Interagency Expert Group on Disaster-Related Statistics**.

32. In addition to that, **regular updates** on various aspects of work under the Steering Group and its Task Forces have been given in the meetings of the United Nations Expert Meeting on Environment Statistics, the OECD Working Party on Environmental Information, and UNCEEA Area A Group on coordination, as well as in some ad-hoc meetings, e.g., the webinars of the UNFCCC Consultative Group of Experts on embedding climate reporting in national statistics or the 2023 meeting of the UNECE Working Party on Transport Statistics.

33. In December 2024, in consultation with the Steering Group and the Task Force on the role of NSOs in achieving national climate objectives, UNECE will co-organize an **official UN system side event on “Enabling climate action through data, transparency and finance” at the COP28** in Dubai (30 November to 12 December). The event will be held jointly with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations University and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The exact date of the event will be announced in the end of September by UNFCCC. The approved proposal is presented in document 11/Add.2.

III. NEED FOR CONTINUATION OF WORK

34. Climate change continues to be high on the political agenda and can be expected to acquire even more prominence as the effects of climate change are being felt all over the world. Continued work is needed to increase data availability and quality to meet the upcoming data needs. Further development of climate change-related statistics in the region requires continued effort in coordination, methodological work, guidance for implementation, capacity building, and platforms for sharing knowledge and experience among producers and users of statistics.

35. The 2023 Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics has reviewed this report and supported the continuation of the work of the Steering Group.

36. Given the challenges and need for further work it is proposed to extend the Steering Group's mandate until 2028. The Group will report regularly to the CES Bureau on achievements and new work to be undertaken. **The draft Terms of Reference for review and approval of the Bureau are presented in document 11/Add.1.**

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