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**Programme of work of the Statistics subprogramme
of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe:
Reports on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians,
its Bureau and Teams of Specialists****Capacity-development and other technical cooperation
activities undertaken by the Statistical Division of the United
Nations Economic Commission for Europe****Prepared by the Secretariat***Summary*

Capacity-development and other technical cooperation activities in statistics are carried out in line with the UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy (ECE/CES/2018/10). They are linked with the normative and methodological work undertaken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Statistical Division, promote the implementation and use of standards and guidelines developed under the Conference of European Statisticians, and are demand-driven responding to the needs identified and requested by countries. The activities are coordinated by the UNECE Regional Adviser for Statistics and range from high-level meetings and Global Assessments of national statistical systems to capacity-building workshops and consultancies on specific topics. Various modalities of funding are used, including regular budget funding for technical cooperation, funds provided by donors, and co-funding and organizing activities jointly with partners such as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and Eurostat.

This report provides an overview of the capacity-development and other technical cooperation activities undertaken in 2023 and plans for 2024. It is presented to the Conference for information.



I. Introduction

1. The major aim of UNECE is to promote pan-European economic integration. This is achieved through policy dialogue, negotiation of international legal instruments, development of regulations and norms, and exchange and application of best practices as well as economic and technical expertise. Providing technical cooperation and capacity-development support for countries with economies in transition is equally important in fulfilling the mandate of UNECE.
2. Technical cooperation aims to support countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) on policy-related issues, the implementation of the UNECE legal instruments, regulations and norms as well as provide capacity-building workshops, seminars, study tours, and training courses and technical cooperation projects to adopt them. It is demand-driven, results-oriented, focused on the countries with economies in transition, and linked to the normative work of UNECE. The activities are coordinated by Regional Advisers, under the leadership of the UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary, through cooperation with the Resident Coordinator system and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in the region. Substantive sections of the Statistical Division are involved in activities in their specific area of work.
3. UNECE capacity-development and other technical cooperation activities are focused on the region's 17 programme countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, as well as on Kosovo.¹

II. Purpose and main types of activities

4. Capacity-development and technical cooperation activities are an important part of the UNECE Statistics subprogramme. Guided by the priorities and needs of the member States expressed through CES, UNECE carries out methodological work by establishing and servicing teams of national experts to develop international statistical standards, guidelines, recommendations and repositories of best practices. UNECE capacity-development and other technical cooperation activities are in line with the [UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy](#). They follow up on the CES methodological work and aim to strengthen the capacity of the programme countries to effectively implement international standards and good practices, and to produce high-quality statistics in accordance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.
5. Technical cooperation activities also help in identifying issues and needs, and prioritizing areas of work for national statistical systems of the programme countries in the SEE and EECCA regions. This ensures that all work is demand-driven and highly relevant for the programme countries. Equally important, the outcome of the activities serve as the basis for national plans for the development of official statistics and as guidance for receiving assistance from other agencies or for bilateral cooperation initiatives.
6. The capacity-development and other technical cooperation activities in statistics can be grouped in four main categories:
 - (a) High-level strategic meetings to discuss and identify priorities for EECCA and SEE countries;
 - (b) Global Assessments of national statistical systems and more in-depth sector reviews of specific areas;
 - (c) Capacity-building workshops, seminars, study tours and training courses focusing on specific areas;

¹ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

- (d) Short term technical assistance and consultancy projects addressing specific requests.

III. Funding of the technical cooperation activities

7. There are three types of sources of funding for technical cooperation:

(a) Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC): a strongly demand-driven part of the United Nations regular budget that aims to assist countries to accede to, adopt and implement the UNECE legal instruments, norms, standards and regulations as means of their integration in the region and global economy.

(b) United Nations Development Account (UNDA): The Development Account is a capacity-development programme of the United Nations Secretariat aiming at enhancing capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the priority areas of the United Nations Development Agenda. The Development Account is funded from the Secretariat's regular budget and implemented by 10 entities of the United Nations Secretariat (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Economic Commission for Africa, UNECE, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia). It serves as a natural extension to the normative and policy activities of the implementing entities in their follow-up to the United Nations conferences and summits in economic and social affairs.

(c) Partnerships and extrabudgetary funding sources: extrabudgetary funding obtained from national, regional and international sources, and collaboration with key regional partners ranging from joint projects to exchange of information and expertise.

8. Only limited RPTC funds are available for technical cooperation (effectively between 60 and 80 thousand US\$ per year). The UNECE Statistical Division therefore regularly submits proposals through the annual calls for proposals for projects to be funded by UNDA.² These projects are typically around 300 thousand US\$ for a period of two to three years and are often submitted jointly with other participating United Nations entities. Extrabudgetary funding opportunities have also been sought. Examples are the ECASTAT project with the World Bank, the project on the Integration of Statistical and Geographical Data funded by Eurostat, and the project on strengthening statistical capacity of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries for providing high-quality statistics and indicators to monitor progress towards SDGs, funded by the Russian Federation.³

9. A more effective way of increasing the impact and reach of UNECE technical cooperation in statistics is by organizing joint events or by negotiating co-funding of activities. This mechanism is widely used in organizing workshops, missions and funding the participation of representatives and experts to UNECE meetings from EECCA countries.⁴ As the administrative burden is also shared with the partner organizations, this is a preferred collaboration mechanism. EFTA and Eurostat are two major partner organizations. Others are ESCAP, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and occasionally national statistical offices.

² Due to the limitations in project proposals per agency and the specific focus of each annual round, the Statistical Division of UNECE is only able to take part every couple of years.

³ There are other extrabudgetary funded projects that do not have technical cooperation as a key component, such as the Trust Fund for the Modernisation of Official Statistics.

⁴ In 2023, RPTC accounted for 70 thousand US\$, UNDA14 for 50 thousand US\$, extrabudgetary funding for 150 thousand US\$ and co-funding by partner organizations for an estimated 425 thousand US\$ (excluding in-kind contributions such as staff time).

IV. Technical cooperation activities and capacity-building events in 2023

10. The main technical cooperation activities in 2023 included:

- (a) High-Level Seminar ‘Modernisation of statistical systems’, 26–28 September, Riga, Latvia (Chief Statisticians and heads of international relations departments)
- (b) Thematic conference ‘Managing a statistical organization in times of change’, 5–7 December, Almaty, Kazakhstan (Chief Statisticians and deputies)
- (c) Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of Kazakhstan
- (d) Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of Georgia
- (e) Sector review of the information technology (IT) in official statistics and the organizational structure of the National Bureau of Statistics, Republic of Moldova
- (f) Sector review of the implementation of the UNECE Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations, Republic of Moldova
- (g) Sector review of the implementation of the UNECE Generic Statistical Business Process Model, Georgia
- (h) Kosovo National Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) dashboard gap analysis and data identification (consultancy).

11. In addition, support was provided to a number of workshops and other meetings covering such aspects as participation of country representatives, experts or staff; venue; interpretation or providing remote connection. In 2023, the following events benefited from financial support:

- (a) Joint OECD-UNECE Seminar on the Implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), Geneva, 13–15 March
- (b) Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs, Geneva, 12 and 13 April
- (c) Meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts, Geneva, 25–27 April
- (d) 3rd Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Disaster-related Statistics, Bangkok, 5–7 June
- (e) Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices, Geneva, 7–9 June
- (f) Workshop on transitioning to register-based approaches to population and housing censuses, Ankara, Türkiye, 11–16 June
- (g) Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-related Statistics, Geneva, 28–30 August
- (h) Inter-regional Expert Meeting on Data Governance for Chief Statisticians, Bangkok, 5–7 September
- (i) 9th Joint UN-GGIM: Europe – ESS – UNECE Meeting, Belgrade, 3 October
- (j) Joint UNECE, Eurostat, UN-GGIM: Europe Workshop on Integrating Statistical and Geospatial Data, Belgrade, 4 and 5 October
- (k) EFTA/UNECE workshop for EECCA countries on financial accounts, Brussels, 9–11 October
- (l) Workshop on harmonization of poverty statistics to measure SDG 1 and 10, Geneva, 27 November
- (m) Workshop on multidimensional poverty measurements, Istanbul, Türkiye, 28 and 29 November
- (n) COP28 side event on enabling climate action through data, transparency, and finance, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 5 December

(o) Expert meetings on building capacity for using administrative sources for population and housing censuses and developing related recommendations, New York, 11–15 December.

12. Other events and activities organized by the Statistical Division that did not receive additional financial support also contributed to capacity-building. Staff of the Division contributed to multiple consultations by EECCA countries, publications and other materials produced to support countries in implementing normative work, best practices and international recommendations. This includes requests to assist countries made through the respective United Nations Country Teams⁵. Support was also provided directly to the United Nations Country Teams.

V. Technical cooperation planned for 2024

13. The liquidity crisis at the United Nations⁶ has reduced the RPTC funds available for 2024. There are still significant UNDA funds available leading to an actual increase in planned technical cooperation activities.⁷ EFTA, Eurostat and other partners have committed substantial funds to co-organize or support UNECE activities in the area of statistics.

14. Examples of planned activities are:

- (a) Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of Uzbekistan
- (b) Peer review of the National Statistical System of Armenia
- (c) Sector review of Environmental Statistics in Georgia
- (d) Sector review of Environmental Statistics in Kazakhstan
- (e) High-level seminar for Chief Statisticians and heads of international relations departments of EECCA countries
- (f) Advisory mission for the 2024 Census in Kosovo
- (g) Support to the identification and assessment of SDG indicators in Kyrgyzstan
- (h) Support to the integration of statistical and geospatial data in two EECCA countries
- (i) Support for implementation of an IT strategy at the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova
- (j) Methodological training to the staff of the Bureau of National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the national multidimensional poverty index
- (k) Support to improve the capacity to produce energy accounts and energy statistics in Georgia
- (l) Support in developing SEEA waste accounts for measuring circular economy and other policy areas related to improving waste management, reducing plastics waste, and sustainable use of natural resources in the Republic of Moldova

⁵ United Nations Country Teams include all the United Nations entities working on sustainable development, emergency, recovery and transition in programme countries and are led by the United Nations Resident Coordinator who is representing the United Nations Secretary-General in a particular country.

⁶ The budget of United Nations Secretariat Organizations such as UNECE is based on the approved work programme and funded from the membership contributions of the Member States. Unfortunately, some Member States have not paid their contributions on time which has led to shortage of funds to finance the planned regular budget activities.

⁷ The fourteenth UNDA project for statistics is a global project where eight ECOSOC entities participate. In each region, the implementing entities selected a limited number of target countries that will benefit from the second phase of the project. For the UNECE region, Georgia, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Moldova were selected.

(m) Support to improve timeliness and frequency of price statistics in Kazakhstan.

15. Other cooperation activities will focus on acceleration of modernization, methodological support for the 2024 population census in Kazakhstan, and follow-up to the Global Assessments and sector reviews.

16. Several workshops and meetings will also benefit from RPTC, Development Account and co-funding by EFTA, Eurostat and other partners. For example:

(a) Ninth Joint OECD-UNECE Seminar on SEEA Implementation, Geneva, 18–20 March 2024

(b) Meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts, Geneva, 23–25 April 2024

(c) Expert Group on Quality of Employment, Geneva, 14–16 May 2024

(d) UNECE/EFTA Workshop on Modernizing Statistical Legislation, Tirana, 29–30 May 2024

(e) Workshop on the utilisation and integration of new data sources for the Consumer Price Index, Brussels, 29–31 October 2024.
