CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

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

D R A F T

Prepared by the Steering Group and the Secretariat

Abstract

This note provides a progress 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 in the annex. The progress report and proposed terms of reference will also be presented to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in October 2023 for review and approval. **The Expert Forum is invited to take note of the work completed and discuss the future work on climate change-related statistics under the Conference of European Statisticians.**

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 2023[1].

3.   The Steering Group was first chaired by Norway (Nina Holmengen) then by Luxembourg (Olivier Thunus) and currently by the Netherlands (Arthur Denneman). 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, the United Nations Economic Commission for

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

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 Statistics* and, later, the *CES Set of Core Climate Change-Related Statistics and Indicators* with the overarching objective of improving the usefulness of official statistics for climate change polices 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 are described below, grouped in line with 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.   In 2023, the Expert Forum is discussing:

(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.

10.   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 counter parts in other national organizations producing or using climate change-related statistics.

11.   **In-depth review on 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.

12.   **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 to the new Task Force on the role of NSOs in achieving national climate objectives.

B.   Methodological work – identifying and addressing new areas.

13.   **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.

14.   **Task Force on measuring hazardous events and disasters** (chaired by Italy – Angela Ferruzza). Since 2015, the Task Force have 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 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. **The Task Force will present its work to the Expert Forum in session 4 Informing climate change adaptation policies.**

15.   **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 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 24 below.

16.   **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.

17.   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.

18.   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".

19.   **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 is presented to the Expert Forum as Working Paper 2.**

20.   **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 is presented to the Expert Forum as Working Paper 3.**

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

21.   **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.

22.   The reports prepared so far 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" (URL to be added when available)

23.   The 2021 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.

24.   **[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*.

25.   **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 the countries to submit their case studies describing contexts, tools and methodologies, including experimental approaches and practical solutions using available statistical information.

26.   **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

27.   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.

28.   Since 2018, three high-level representatives of international organizations have given keynote speeches in the Expert Fora: Dr. Rodolfo Lacy, the Director of the Environment Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (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.

29.   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.

30.   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.

31.   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.

III.   NEED FOR CONTINUATION OF WORK

32.   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.

33.   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 comments and inputs by the Expert Forum are provided in the Annex.**

ANNEX

**2023 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STEERING GROUP
ON CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED STATISTICS**

D R A F T

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   Climate change represents one of the greatest challenges facing humanity today. Finding ways to allow continued economic and social development while drastically reducing emissions of greenhouse gases is a vast technical and political challenge. The global initiatives responding to this challenge, such as Paris Agreements, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, generate new data requirements extending from direct data on climate and greenhouse gas emissions to data on the social, economic and environmental impacts of climate change, and efforts taken to mitigate it or adapt to it.

2.   These requirements, in line with the scope of climate change-related statistics defined by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), have increased the demand for data held by national statistical offices also in areas not directly linked to greenhouse gas emission inventories. Continued effort in coordination, further methodological work and capacity development is needed to meet the upcoming challenges in this area.

II.   MANDATE

3.   The work of the Steering Group is conducted within the framework of CES and its Bureau. The Steering Group will regularly report to the CES Bureau on the CES activities on climate change-related statistics, including on the outcome of expert meetings and task forces working under its guidance.

4.   The Steering Group may identify concrete tasks or activities to support its work that could be undertaken by groups of experts (Task Forces). 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 to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

III.   OBJECTIVE

5.   The objective of the Steering Group to provide direction to the CES work on climate change-related statistics, identify and address emerging issues and facilitate the implementation of CES guidelines in this area.

IV.   PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

6.   The Steering Group will carry out the following activities:

(a)   Steer CES activities on climate change-related statistics and coordinate with other relevant groups, bodies and international organizations working on related topics;

(b)   Act as an organizing committee to the annual UNECE Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics, and other related expert events that may be organised;

(c)   Oversee any CES task forces on climate change-related statistics;

(d)   Identify areas of climate change-related statistics that require further methodological work or where practical guidance would need to be developed;

(e)   Provide advice on methodological work on climate change-related statistics, including new areas, methods or data sources;

(f)   Promote and enable multiple avenues of sharing ideas and good practices and peer-to-peer learning;

(g)   Follow up on countries' progress in implementing the CES guidelines and recommendations on climate change-related statistics;

(h)   Advise on and identify options for capacity development on climate change-related statistics, including strengthening of underlying data;

(i)   Collaborate closely with international organisations active in this domain, discuss the roles and responsibilities of the statistical community and support exchange of experience and knowledge between the statistical community and other producers and users of climate change-related data.

V.   TIMETABLE

7.   The terms of reference of the Steering Group will be reviewed in 2028.

VI.   METHODS OF WORK

8.   The Steering Group will primarily work via email and videoconferences. Informal meetings are organised on the occasion of events attended by a significant number of Steering Group members, such as the Expert Fora for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics or other relevant events.

VII.   MEMBERSHIP

9.   As of August 2023, the representatives of the following countries and organizations participate in the Steering Group: 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, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Midsummer Analytics.

10.   Members of the Steering Group are expected to contribute actively to the work and provide ideas for future activities. Membership will be periodically reviewed. The Steering Group elects its Chair or Co-chairs and Vice-Chairs.

11.   UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Steering Group.

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