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UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE



**RULES AND PROCEDURES
GOVERNING THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE
OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS (CES)**

Its Bureau and Teams of Specialists

1. The present document compiles together the rules and procedures governing the work of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), its Bureau, the Teams of Specialists established by the CES, and the procedure of adopting products (such as standards, guidelines, recommendations, manuals, etc.) by the CES and its Bureau.

2. It includes the following documents:

CES/2005/2 Rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau - adopted at the 2005 plenary session of the CES

CES/2004/8 Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within the CES - adopted at the 2004 plenary session of the CES

ECE/CES/2006/37/Rev.1 Procedure for adopting products and recommendations by the Conference of European Statisticians - adopted at the 2006 plenary session of the CES.

The brochure is also available at the website: <http://www.unece.org/stats>

37. These kinds of documents should be endorsed by the relevant Teams of Specialists (Task Forces, Steering Committees and Working Groups) that have developed them. They can be published and disseminated under the responsibility of the Secretariat.

Procedure for developing products and recommendations

38. For documents of type A and type B

- a) the work to develop either of the above-mentioned two types of documents can be initiated by the Conference, its Bureau, or based on a recommendation of an expert meeting or a Team of Specialists;
- b) the development of the document should be based on Terms of Reference;
- c) the drafts are to be prepared by a Team of Specialists (usually a Task Force) or by the UNECE secretariat in cooperation with experts from countries and international organizations. The drafts should be consulted with the experts working in the area as widely as possible. This can be done through electronic consultation or/and at expert group meetings;
- d) progress reports on the work should be submitted regularly to the Bureau or to the Conference. Depending on the nature of the document, the Bureau may decide that the document should not be made public before the Bureau approves the final draft.

39. For documents of type A only

- a) the Bureau should discuss the final drafts before they are submitted to the Conference for adoption/endorsement;
- b) the final draft should be circulated to the countries well in advance of the plenary session that will adopt the product to allow enough time for a broad consultation;
- c) the adoption of the document by the Conference will be reflected in the report;
- d) documents adopted by the Conference can be attributed to the CES (e.g. CES Guidelines, CES recommendations, etc.).

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PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTING PRODUCTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS (ECE/CES/2006/37/Rev.1)

Background

31. In June 2005, the Conference endorsed the updated Rules governing the work of the Conference and its Bureau (CES/2005/2). According to the Rules, one of the objectives of the Conference is "to discuss and adopt statistical standards in the UNECE region".

32. The present document outlines the different types of products that can be prepared under the umbrella of the CES and the modalities for their development and adoption.

Types of products and recommendations that are developed under the umbrella of the conference

33. There are basically two types of documents that can be developed under the auspices of the Conference:

Type A: Principles, classifications, standards, manuals, handbooks, recommendations, guidelines and frameworks

34. These products aim at standardizing processes, methods, etc. to ensure comparability among countries. Since they are developed in the UN framework, their implementation is not mandatory. However, adhering to the methods and practices described in these documents is an indication of professionalism and a guarantee to achieve better quality of output. Their aim is to help countries in implementing the agreed principles, classifications, standards, manuals, handbooks, recommendations, guidelines, and frameworks. The documents need to be agreed upon by the experts working in the area and consulted with as wide an audience as possible.

35. These standard documents should be adopted/endorsed by the Conference on the recommendation of the Bureau. The Bureau will consider in advance each product that will be presented to the Conference for endorsement.

Type B: Best practices, surveys of countries' practices, glossaries, etc.

36. These products are supporting materials. Their purpose is to help countries in sharing experience and in implementing the various standards and recommendations (e.g. National practices in estimating the non-observed economy). The aim is to identify what can be considered a good (or best) practice and to widely disseminate the information on that practice.

RULES GOVERNING THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS BUREAU (CES/2005/2)

Structure and relations of the Conference

3. The Conference of European Statisticians meets under the joint auspices of the UN Statistical Commission and the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

Objectives

4. The objectives of the Conference are:

- (a) to improve national statistics and their international comparability with regard to the recommendations of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations, the Specialised Agencies and other appropriate bodies as necessary;
- (b) to promote close coordination of the statistical activities in Europe of international organizations so as to achieve greater uniformity in concepts and definitions and to reduce to a minimum the burdens on national statistical offices;
- (c) to respond to any emerging need for international statistical cooperation both within the UNECE region and between the UNECE region and other regions;
- (d) to discuss and adopt statistical standards in the UNECE region.

Membership

5. The Head of the statistical service of any member country of the United Nations that participates regularly in the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe may be a member of the Conference.

Participation in the work of the Conference by statisticians from International Agencies

6. The Heads of statistical services of the international agencies that participate regularly in the work of the Conference shall be invited.

Activities

7. The Conference shall provide a forum for work on all statistical matters that are of interest to its members. In particular, it may:

- (a) decide on the collection and dissemination of internationally comparable statistics of UNECE member countries that are required by policy makers, enterprises, researchers and the general public in the UNECE region;

- (b) promote the development of statistical methodological guidelines and standards (concepts, definitions, classifications) as required for purposes of international comparability of statistics in the region;
- (c) assist in the improvement of the statistical infrastructure of countries both within and outside the UNECE region as required;
- (d) coordinate international statistical cooperation and the statistical work programme of the UNECE;
- (e) make the results of its work available to national statistical offices, international organizations, enterprises or any other user;
- (f) arrange for any study that may be required to further its objectives.

Officers

8. The Conference elects a Bureau and a Chairman according to rules laid down by the Conference.

Secretariat

9. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe places at the disposal of the Conference the staff and facilities necessary to assist it in the accomplishment of its objectives and work programmes.

Meetings of the Conference

10. Meetings of the Conference shall take place regularly once a year, preferably in June, at a time fixed by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat. Additional meetings may be convened by the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat.

Role and functioning of the Bureau of the Conference

11. Role of the Bureau

The Bureau acts as a steering body of the Conference.

12. Functioning of the Bureau

- (a) Meetings of the Bureau will normally be held in February and October of each year. The subjects of discussion, as well as the need for the availability of all secretariat experts for the February meeting, suggest that the meeting should be held in Geneva.
- (b) Additional Bureau meetings may be convened in conjunction with the annual plenary session.
- (c) Further meetings of the Bureau could be determined by the Bureau members or the Chairman of the Conference as the need arises.

Defining different types of Teams of Specialists

29. Teams of Specialists that are created to fulfil particular objectives and their form and scope are determined by the terms of reference created for them. Taking into account the semantic analysis of the common types of teams of specialists, the following definitions are recommended:

(a) Steering Group

A committee set up to determine the order of business for another body, to set priorities or to manage the general course of an operation. It has a broad scope which incorporates the guiding of a set of meetings or general body of work rather than a focus on an individual task. Also, the CES Bureau has agreed that Steering Groups should advise the Bureau on work to be undertaken with specific objectives.

(b) Organising Committee

A body of persons appointed for a specific function by, and usually out of, a larger body, commonly for carrying out the preparatory work for a particular meeting (e.g. in the last two years the seminar sessions of the Conference have been prepared by organising committees composed of several NSOs).

(c) Task Force

A group of experts in regular contact with each other, producing work or determining outcomes related to specific issues or problems. These groups then typically report their findings to a higher body, usually in a specific time-scale determined by that body.

30. The above recommendations should not necessarily predetermine the design of an organizational grouping. Therefore, where necessary, the guidelines suggested in this paper for creating organizational groups should be implemented with a degree of flexibility - creating a balance between clarity and effectiveness.

22. At its first meeting, the Team of Specialists adopts its work plan for its operational period, clearly defining its objectives and activities and making a time schedule for their implementation; the activities can include: undertaking studies and advisory missions; organising seminars and training workshops; drafting policy models and guidelines; collecting data; and providing information and training kits etc.

23. The resources required for implementing the work plan have also to be identified; depending on the amount of regular budget resources that can be devoted to servicing the Team of Specialists and the magnitude of the work to be done, the Team of Specialists may raise funds and/or solicit in-kind contributions in support of its activities, in compliance with the relevant UN rules and regulations.

24. The Team of Specialists reports to the Bureau, and where relevant to the Conference.

25. At the end of the operational period, the team submits a full report on its accomplishments to the parent body in order to share the achievements and conclusions of its work with the wider ECE membership.

26. On the basis of this report, the CES makes an evaluation and, if there is a request for extension, determines whether the team needs to be re-conducted in order to undertake supplementary activities.

The Secretariat

27. The ECE secretariat, with the support of the members of the Team of Specialists, has the responsibility for:

- (a) Handling official contacts, including correspondence, with governmental and nongovernmental experts as well as experts from international agencies involved;
- (b) Assisting in the scheduling of meetings and other activities for adoption by the group;
- (c) Cooperating with the members of the team in organising missions, workshops, seminars and training in member countries;
- (d) In cooperation with the Chairperson of the team, preparing the report on the team's accomplishments at the end of the operational period and of any new period of extension.

Role of the members of the Team of Specialists

28. Members of the Team of Specialists, with the support of the secretariat as resources permit, undertake the substantive work, in particular the preparation of substantive documentation for the meetings and the reports to be submitted to the annual session of the parent body.

- (d) The documentation necessary for the Bureau meetings would be determined by the Bureau members in each case. As a rule, the secretariat should make all documentation available via e-mail at least two weeks prior of the meeting.
- (e) As a rule, announcements for Bureau meetings are issued by the secretariat not less than six weeks in advance.
- (f) For purposes of consultation with the Bureau, the secretariat may take initiatives on matters affecting the implementation of the work programme of the Conference, or in relation to other issues that are of interest to the Conference and the Bureau.

13. Composition of the Bureau

- (a) Any member of the Conference is eligible for membership in the Bureau of the Conference. The members of the Bureau undertake to devote the time necessary to an adequate discharge of their duties.
- (b) The Bureau is composed of up to 8 members, of whom 6 members should be from the UNECE member countries and the remaining one or two places be reserved for possible candidates from countries in other regions.
- (c) If a Bureau member leaves the Bureau, a new member may be co-opted until the time of the next plenary session, when a new Bureau member is elected.

14. Permanent observers and other participants

- (a) Standing invitations are extended to the Director-General of Eurostat, the Chief Statistician of the OECD, the Chairman of the OECD Committee on Statistics, the Chairman of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, the Director of the IMF Statistics Department and the Director of the Development Data Group of the World Bank. The Director of the UN Statistical Division is invited to participate in Bureau meetings as a representative of the UN secretariat.
- (b) The Bureau may invite to the meetings of the Bureau anyone who may facilitate its work.

15. Election of the Bureau

- (a) The election of the Bureau by the Conference is carried out on the basis of a proposal by the most senior previous Chairman of the Conference present at the plenary session concerned. The proposal should be prepared in such a way that it maximizes the chances of being adopted by consensus.
- (b) If no previous Chairman of the Conference is present at the plenary session or in exceptional cases, the Bureau proposes the designation of a member of the Conference at the beginning of the plenary session,

who will assume the task of preparing the proposal for the composition of the Bureau.

- (c) The Conference elects its Bureau for a period of two years.
- (d) Bureau members can be elected to four successive Bureaus. Any previous Bureau member can be re-elected to the Bureau after an interruption of at least two years.

16. Election of the Chairman of the Conference

- (a) The Chairman of the Conference is elected by the Conference from among the members of the Bureau. The term of office is two years. The election is carried out on the basis of a proposal by the designated member of the Conference who is responsible for the proposal of the Bureau composition.
- (b) If the post of Chairman of the Conference falls vacant, the Bureau designates an Acting Chairman from among the Bureau members until the time of the next plenary session, when a new Chairman is elected by the Conference.
- (c) A Chairman of the Conference may be re-elected once. Any previous Chairman may be re-elected Chairman after an interruption of at least two years.

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF TEAMS OF SPECIALISTS WITHIN THE CES (CES/2004/8)

17. The following guidelines are based on those determined by the Economic Commission for Europe in June 2003 and have been adapted for the purposes of the CES.

Status and Characteristics

18. A Team of Specialists¹ is an expert body that is established through a procedure set by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and supervised either directly by the CES or by its Bureau. Its main characteristics are as follows:

- (a) It addresses a specific area of activities under the broader theme covered by the parent body;
- (b) Its central function may be of an advisory or operational nature, or a combination of the two, depending on the tasks assigned by the Conference and/or its Bureau;
- (c) A set period of operation is normally defined but this can be extended after careful evaluation, by the Bureau, of the work achieved and the need to perform additional tasks;
- (d) Its meetings do not require full interpretation and translation, unlike the meetings of the formal ECE intergovernmental bodies.

Membership and officers

19. Teams of Specialists are comprised of governmental experts and they can also include eminent specialists or representatives of international organizations, NGOs and the private sector, in compliance with the UN rules and practices in this respect. The procedure of nomination is established by the Conference and/or its Bureau. To the extent possible, consideration should be given to ensuring an appropriate geographical balance in the representation of these teams.

20. A Team of Specialists appoints its officers: a Chairperson and, if deemed necessary, one or two Vice-Chairpersons.

Methods of Work

21. The CES and, where relevant, the Bureau have to determine the scope of issues and the achievements expected of the Team of Specialists, as well as to decide on the membership of the team.

¹ Teams of specialists is a generic term including "advisory groups", "ad hoc groups", "steering groups", "task forces", etc.