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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Conference of European Statisticians

#### Sixty-sixth plenary session

Geneva, 18-20 June 2018

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**Strategy for capacity development in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

## **UNECE Statistical capacity development strategy**

### **Addendum**

### **Results of the consultation on the UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy**

#### **Note by the Secretariat**

##### *Summary*

This note summarizes the comments by members of the Conference of European Statisticians on the *UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy*. The Secretariat carried out the electronic consultation on the strategy in April 2018.

A total of 41 countries and 2 international organizations replied. All responding countries and organizations supported the endorsement of the strategy. A few countries proposed amendments and additions. These have been taken into account by the Secretariat in the revised version of the Strategy issued as document ECE/CES/2018/10/ Rev.1 (available at <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47411>).

In view of the strong support received, the 2018 Conference of European Statisticians plenary session will be invited to endorse the *UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy* (ECE/CES/2018/10/Rev.1).



## I. Introduction

1. This note summarises the comments made by members of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) on the *UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy*. The Secretariat carried out an electronic consultation of the strategy in April 2018.
2. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) reviewed the draft strategy in February 2018 and requested the Secretariat to send the document to all CES members for electronic consultation.
3. The following 41 countries and 2 international organizations replied to the electronic consultation: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States (Bureau of Economic Analysis), Eurostat, United Nations Statistical Division.

## II. General comments

4. All responding countries and organizations considered the recommendations ready for endorsement. In a few cases this was dependent on comments being taken into account. Countries commended the Secretariat for developing a relevant and timely strategy to support the modernisation of statistical capacity development, and praised the holistic approach proposed in the strategy.
5. Several respondents stressed the importance of coordination between providers of capacity development support, and that capacity development activities must be demand driven.
6. The principles for UNECE statistical capacity development received wide support. Switzerland and the United Nations Statistical Division proposed that the principles set out in the strategy should be re-ordered to stress the importance of coordination between providers of capacity development support, and that capacity development activities must be demand driven. A few countries requested or proposed clarifications, and Norway proposed to add a principle on the need for flexibility to react to changing circumstances.
7. Coordination with other activities was also raised, particularly with the recently established Task Group on Capacity Development under the CES Steering Group for Statistics on the Sustainable Development Goals. Text on this point has been added. Several countries supported the link in the paper with the work of PARIS21 on Capacity Development 4.0.
8. Many countries supported the proposed tools, for example, Finland commented that “the seven dimensions [of capabilities] are comprehensive”, whilst Belarus, Canada, Denmark and others, highlighted the value of maturity models for assessing levels of capacity and prioritising areas for improvement. Some respondents requested more details on the proposed tools, particularly the maturity models. Whilst the details within maturity models will be specific to each capability, some general principles for defining the maturity levels, as well as two specific examples of maturity models already developed, have been included.
9. Several other enhancements to the text were proposed, mainly to give more details on goals and implementation mechanisms.

### **III. Priority areas for statistical capacity development activities**

10. At the request of the CES Bureau, and as part of the electronic consultation, the UNECE secretariat took the opportunity to ask the members of the CES which areas they saw as the top five priorities for statistical capacity development within the national statistical systems of their countries over the next two years. Whilst over 30 areas were identified, there were many common themes. The overall top ten areas for all responding countries were:

- a) Modernising official statistics;
- b) Statistics for SDGs<sup>1</sup>;
- c) Population and housing censuses;
- d) Economic statistics, including the impacts of globalisation and digitisation;
- e) Geospatial information management;
- f) Dissemination, communication and relations with users;
- g) New data sources, including “Big Data”;
- h) Human resources management and training;
- i) Quality management and process documentation;
- j) Environment statistics.

11. The responses were further analysed according to following three broad groups of countries, to identify the top 5 areas for each group:

(a) The “traditional” recipients of UNECE capacity development assistance (countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia):

- Statistics for SDGs;
- Population and housing censuses;
- Geospatial information management;
- Modernising official statistics
- Quality management and process documentation.

(b) The countries of the European Statistical System (members of the European Union and the European Free Trade Association)

- Modernising official statistics;
- Statistics for SDGs;
- Population and housing censuses;
- Economic statistics, including the impacts of globalisation and digitisation;
- Dissemination, communication and relations with users.

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<sup>1</sup> Many countries stressed the importance of institutional issues such as legal frameworks, partnerships and the coordination of SDG data producers within the country.

- (c) Other countries<sup>2</sup>
- Modernising official statistics;
  - Geospatial information management;
  - New data sources, including “Big Data”;
  - Economic statistics, including the impacts of globalisation and digitisation;
  - Quality management and process documentation.

12. The results show a strong alignment with the main areas of the UNECE statistical work programme, though they also show differences in emphasis in the different parts of the UNECE region.

13. A key principle of the UNECE statistical capacity development strategy is that activities should be demand driven. An obvious pre-requisite for this is to know and understand the demand. The information gathered through the electronic consultation is very valuable in this respect.

## IV. Next steps

14. The UNECE thanks respondents for their help in preparing its statistical capacity development strategy. A revised version, taking account of the various comments and suggestions received, has been prepared and issued as document ECE/CES/2018/10/Add.2. In line with the unanimous support received through the written consultation, this document is now presented to the Conference for endorsement.

15. Subject to the approval of the Conference, the secretariat proposes to report on implementation of the strategy and of the various capacity development activities to future CES plenary sessions.

## V. Points for discussion at the CES plenary session

16. Members of the Conference are invited to:

- Endorse the *UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy* (doc ECE/CES/2018/10/Rev.1)
  - Comment on the priority areas identified for statistical capacity development activities
  - Request the secretariat to report on implementation of the Strategy and the various capacity development activities to future CES plenary sessions.
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<sup>2</sup> The relatively heterogeneous nature of this group means that the results need to be interpreted with care.