

First Meeting of the 2010/2011 Bureau
Geneva, 3-4 November 2010

Item 2(a) of the Provisional
Agenda

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TASK FORCE ON TIME USE SURVEYS

Note prepared by the German Federal Statistical Office

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) selected time-use surveys (TUS) as a topic for an in-depth review to be carried out in November 2010. To get input from the CES members, the topic was considered at the CES plenary session in June 2010 in Paris based on a paper prepared by the German Federal Statistical Office with contributions from Finland and the United States (ECE/CES/2010/25).
2. Following the CES plenary session, countries were asked to provide written comments on the in-depth review paper by Germany, in particular on the conclusions and recommendations for further work. The response was very active: twenty two countries and organizations provided comments and suggestions, as well as information about the TUS carried out in countries (see ECE/CES/BUR/2010/NOV/2/Add.1).
3. The discussion at the CES plenary session and the written comments showed that countries welcomed the in-depth review and supported the conclusions of the report. It was highlighted that there is a need to improve comparability of time-use surveys across countries. The usefulness of developing practical guidelines for implementing time-use surveys was underlined. Support was expressed to setting up an expert group or task force on TUS, as proposed in the paper, and several countries indicated interest to participate in its work

Demand for time-use data

4. The demand for time use data has been increasing in the past years. Researchers and policy makers have realized more and more that TUS data has the potential to look at economic performance and social progress.
5. The general objective of TUS is to measure the use of time of individuals. The measurement of time use is not only essential to present the various aspects of people's activities (e.g. leisure, commuting, social connection, civic engagement...), but it is also of central importance for the economy, for governmental economic and social policy, and society at large. Conclusions can be drawn from the data to describe the living conditions of a society (e.g. gender equality) and for future decisions on, for example, mobility, transport and social infrastructure.
6. Following the recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Commission, it is important to discuss whether the TUS data could be used as an instrument to measure well-being. The TUS

data are an important source of information on unpaid work and unpaid activities needed for the calculation of household satellite accounts.

7. Due to the financial situation and the budget restrictions for many national statistical institutes, a legal framework and financial means to carry out TUS are of concern for various countries. Examples of good practices in the use of TUS data, in particular for policy making, could help to advocate for this complex and resource demanding survey. Practical guidelines and possibility to learn from best practices of countries would be helpful to ensure that the results of the TUS are used to their full potential. All this work could prepare the ground for possible CES recommendations on time-use surveys in the future.

II. MANDATE

8. The Task Force on Time Use Surveys reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) through its Bureau. The Task Force will provide a final report at the end of its mandate within two years.

III. OBJECTIVES

9. The objective of the Task Force is to prepare guidelines and compilations of best practices to help countries in carrying out the TUS and to improve comparability of the TUS results at the international level.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

10. The following activities and outputs are suggestions for the work of the Task Force based on the discussion of the CES plenary session in June 2010 and the written contributions of the CES members. The Task Force should decide on priorities for its work programme which can be achieved within the mandate of two years.

- A. Discussing the different objectives of TUS in countries and developing a common set of general objectives of TUS. This is important because the objectives of TUS influence the survey design and comparability of the results.
- B. Comparison of existing national, European and international guidelines for TUS to consider the feasibility of developing common guidelines for a better comparability of time use data, and to analyse how the guidelines meet the new challenges like the recommendation of the Stiglitz-Sen-Commission and Household Satellite Accounts.
- C. Inventory of the methodology and classifications used in TUS based on the information from countries and the database on TUS of the Oxford University Centre of Time Use Research (www.timeuse.org).
- D. Compiling a set of good practices and exchanging experience on:
 - (a) Used instruments and methods for data collection;
 - (b) Methodical instruments to deal with activities involving new technological developments (e.g. internet use);
 - (c) Dealing with low response rates and low literacy;
 - (d) Training of TUS staff;

- (e) Automatic coding;
 - (f) Communicating and disseminating the results of TUS; and
 - (g) Using successfully the results of TUS for policy making.
- E. Investigating the possibility and usefulness of TUS to measure well-being as proposed by the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi-Commission, taking into account the work under the European Union Sponsorship “Measuring progress, well-being and sustainable development” as well as the experience of France which has included measures of enjoyment of time in its time use diaries for a sub-sample of respondents.
- F. Discussing ways of conducting TUS more frequently and examining the possibility to use a light version of TUS and development of adequate guidelines.

V. TIMETABLE

11. The following timetable is proposed for the Task Force:

Nov – Dec 2010	Launching the Task Force – confirming the countries and organizations interested to participate in its work
Jan 2011-Mar 2011	Discussion of work plan, including the concrete activities and outputs of the Task Force which could be implemented within the mandate of the Task Force.
Mar 2011-End of 2011	Exchange of experiences in conducting TUS; Discussing different objectives of TUS; Inventory of the methodology and classifications used in TUS; Comparison of existing national, European and international guidelines on TUS
Jan 2012 – Dec 2012	Compiling good practices in carrying out TUS Discussing the use of TUS results Dealing with new challenges.
End 2012	Presentation of the final report of the Task Force

VI. METHODS OF WORK

12. The Task Force is expected to work mainly via email and telephone conferences. The Task Force may consider organising face to face meetings to discuss and identify good practices in carrying out TUS if needed.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

13. The Task Force is open to all CES member countries. The following representatives of countries and international organizations have expressed their interest in exchanging experience in TUS and participating in the work of the Task Force on Time Use Surveys (based on written comments by countries on the TUS paper by Germany and on discussion at the CES Bureau meeting): Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Romania, Sweden, Ukraine, United States, Eurostat, Interstate Statistical Committee of

the Commonwealth of Independent States, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

14. The membership is open to additional countries or organizations that may desire to join the task force.

15. The secretariat will be provided by UNECE.

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