

HIGH-LEVEL GROUP FOR THE MODERNISATION OF STATISTICAL PRODUCTION AND SERVICES – TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. BACKGROUND

1. In recent years, many national and international statistical organizations have initiated developments to restructure the statistical production process. The “Data Deluge” and technological advances are providing opportunities to use new types of sources, enhance existing outputs, and develop new ones. These developments have significant implications for the structure and efficiency of statistical organizations, and a major impact on strategic decisions related to budget, human resources and corporate strategy.

2. Several existing international groups are involved in expert-level discussions on specific aspects of the modernisation of official statistics, such as methodology, information technology, software tools, and enterprise architecture, but until recently there has been no overall coordination of these activities. To achieve strategic oversight and especially better coordination of developments in different groups and countries, a forum on the highest level (Director General) was needed. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) established a High Level Group for this purpose, in 2010. This group, which was known as the High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics, was initially created for a period of 2 years, after which its terms of reference would be reviewed by the CES Bureau.

3. Since 2010, the High-Level Group has produced a strategic vision, which was adopted by the CES in June 2011, and a strategy to implement that vision, which was adopted by the CES in June 2012¹.

4. These present Terms of Reference reflect an updated view of the role and responsibilities of the High-Level Group, based on experience gained in the first two years of operation. They also reflect the change of the name of the group to “High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services” (HLG) reflecting the evolution of the scope of the work of the group, and the feedback from the Conference of European Statisticians when endorsing the vision and strategy.

II. MANDATE

5. The HLG reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). It therefore derives its legitimacy and mandate from this body. It should prepare strategically-focused annual progress reports, to inform and solicit comments from the CES and its Bureau.

¹ Both documents are available at <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/hlgbas>

III. OBJECTIVES

6. The mission of the HLG is to oversee development of frameworks, and sharing of information, tools and methods, which support the modernisation of statistical organisations. The aim is to improve the efficiency of the statistical production process, and the ability to produce outputs that better meet user needs. The HLG will discuss and collaborate with other bodies involved in related work, both within and beyond the official statistics community. Within the official statistics community, it will take a leadership and coordination role.

7. The HLG will oversee and steer the work of relevant CES expert groups, and will coordinate, and give leadership where needed, to other relevant international expert groups and UN regional commissions. It is responsible for stimulating development of global standards and overseeing activities undertaken in collaboration.

8. The objectives of the HLG are:

(a) To promote common standards, models, tools and methods to support the modernisation of official statistics;

(b) To drive new developments in the production, organisation and products of official statistics, ensuring effective coordination and information sharing within official statistics, and with relevant external bodies;

(c) To advise the Bureau of the CES on the direction of strategic developments in the modernisation of official statistics, and ensure that there is a maximum of convergence and coordination within the statistical “industry”.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

9. The main activities and outputs of the HLG for the period up to the end of 2015 are:

- To frame a collective strategy on developments related to the modernisation of statistical production and services, and formulate and disseminate new ideas and proposals in this field.
- To organise an annual workshop with the leaders of all relevant expert groups, to help the HLG to identify key priorities and tasks to implement the vision and strategy.
- To determine a yearly list of key priorities and their timeframes and allocate them to relevant expert groups. The resources will be drawn from consenting members of the CES.
- To make the results of its work public via a newsletter and other communication tools.
- To develop necessary standards to support the modernisation of official statistics, such as the Generic Statistical Information Model.
- To actively promote relevant standards, methods and tools.

V. TIMETABLE

10. These Terms of Reference are valid for a period of 3 years (January 2013 to December 2015), after which they will be reviewed by the CES Bureau:

- The results of the first implementation project to be agreed and resourced by selected CES members, the development of the Generic Statistical Information Model, should be released before the end of 2012;
- The HLG encourages CES members to make the necessary organisational changes to facilitate enhanced international collaboration, and therefore demonstrate their commitment to the vision. The first signs of this should be visible by the end of 2013;
- The first practical results (applications and methods) of shared development and active collaboration activities overseen by the HLG should become available by the end of 2014;
- CES plenary sessions will review progress annually - 2013-2015.

VI. METHODS OF WORK

11. The HLG will meet physically at least once per year, for 1-2 days, back-to-back with the autumn meeting of the CES Bureau. In-between these meetings, it will work mainly via electronic communication and telephone or video conferencing but it may also meet physically as necessary, usually on the margins of other meetings.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

12. The HLG members should be at the level of heads of national statistical organisations and chief statisticians of international organisations. An appropriate geographical balance in the membership of the HLG will be ensured.

13. The members of the HLG undertake to devote the necessary time to adequately discharge their duties.

14. The members of the HLG will be approved by the CES Bureau, and will select from amongst themselves a Chairperson and, if deemed necessary, a Vice-Chairperson. If a member leaves the HLG, a new member may be co-opted until the time of the next review by the CES Bureau, when a new member is formally approved.

15. The membership of the HLG as at 1 January 2013 is as follows:

- Mr Gosse van der Veen (Netherlands) Chairman
- Mr Brian Pink (Australia)
- Mr Enrico Giovannini (Italy)
- Mr Eduardo Sojo Garza-Aldape (Mexico)
- Mr Ki-Jong Woo (Republic of Korea)
- Ms Irena Križman (Slovenia)
- Ms Katherine Wallman (United States)
- Mr Walter Radermacher (Eurostat)
- Ms Martine Durand (OECD)
- Ms Lidia Bratanova (UNECE)

16. The chairpersons of the Organising Committee on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (MSIS), the Steering Group on Statistical Metadata (METIS) and the Sharing Advisory Board participate as observers.

17. The HLG may invite additional persons to participate in some or all of its activities, depending on priorities and interests, where their contributions would be of benefit to the work of the group. These persons shall be representatives of other national or international organisations which demonstrate their commitment to actively contribute to the work of the HLG, and support the implementation of the strategy.

18. The HLG will be supported by a Secretariat Team led by the UNECE Secretariat and comprising the three HLG observers, and other members as necessary. This team will be responsible for drafting texts for HLG approval, preparing HLG meetings, promoting HLG activities and outputs, overseeing projects, administering agreements, and other tasks as directed by the HLG.

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