STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Second Meeting of the 2012/2013 Bureau
Geneva, 5-6 November 2012

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

28 January 2013

Approved

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STEERING GROUP ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. The UNECE Steering Group on National Accounts (SGNA) was created by the CES Bureau in 2009 as a follow up to the Implementation Strategy for the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA), adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). The Strategy emphasises the role of UN Regional Commissions in ensuring coordination of the various activities towards the implementation of the 2008 SNA. The Strategy also asked that the regional commissions should be supported by existing statistical committees or by newly set up Steering Groups.

2. The CES Bureau established the SG on National Accounts with an initial mandate of two years. According to the Terms of Reference (ToR), the main purpose of the Group was “to provide advice in coordination of CES activities towards the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the UNECE region, focusing on the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE).” In 2012, the CES Bureau should review the objectives and the membership of the SGNA.

3. Over the past two years the SGNA supported UNECE work on national accounts by: i) developing questionnaires to identify the current status of and the main challenges for the implementation of SNA in the EECCA and SEE region; ii) acting as the organizing committee for the meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts and; iii) providing input for the in-depth review of global manufacturing and formulation of the draft ToR for the Task Force on Global Production (TFGP). The SGNA played an important role in coordinating activities of UNECE and other international organizations in order to avoid overlaps.

4. The Steering Group will continue to have an important role in the on-going work with the 2008 SNA implementation and the new work on Global Production. The composition of the Group should reflect the different sub-regions of UNECE and ensure continuity of work.
II. MANDATE

5. The Steering Group on National accounts reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). It will provide advice to the UNECE Secretariat on activities and projects related to national accounts.

6. The SGNA will regularly consult with the ISWGNA to ensure international coordination of the work related to the 2008 SNA implementation.

III. OBJECTIVES

7. The main role of the Steering Group on National Accounts is to assist UNECE in planning and coordination of the CES activities towards the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the region, including the work on Global Production. It will have an advisory role in the undertaking of research and capacity building projects and in the organization of meetings and workshops on national accounts by the UNECE secretariat.

8. Specific tasks of the SGNA will include the following:

   (a) Finalize the regional set of recommendations for the 2008 SNA implementation in the UNECE countries that are not members of the EU or OECD. The recommendations should take into consideration the three stages of implementation recommended by the ISWGNA and the specific circumstances in the EECCA countries;

   (b) Advise the UNECE Secretariat on the formulation and planning of capacity building activities, with the aim to support the EECCA and SEE countries in complying with the recommendations for the 2008 SNA implementation. The capacity building activities should be closely coordinated with Eurostat and other regional partners;

   (c) Coordinate UNECE work in the area of national accounts and globalization. Launch and steer research projects, development of guidelines and surveys of best practice. Oversee the work of the TFGP;

   (d) Act as an organizing committee for the meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts (organized jointly with Eurostat and OECD) taking into consideration the specific needs of the UNECE member countries. Assist in the preparation of other expert meetings and workshops in the field of national accounts.

IV. OUTPUTS

9. The main outputs of the Steering Group on National Accounts will be:

   (a) Regional set of recommendations for the 2008 SNA implementation in the UNECE countries that are not members of the EU and OECD;

   (b) Proposal for a mechanism to monitor the 2008 SNA implementation in the EECCA countries;

   (c) Assistance in the preparation of capacity building activities aimed at the EECCA and SEE countries;
(d) Review of the report of the TF on Global Production (prior to the ISWGNA and CES Consultation);

(e) Proposal for an agenda for the 2014 meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts;

(f) Promotion of internationally agreed standards and best practices in national accounts.

V. TIME FRAME

10. The work on the 2008 SNA implementation in the EECCA countries is on-going. However, most countries will finalize the planning stage and achieve the first results by the end of 2014. The TF on Global Production will also finish its work in mid-2014. It is proposed that the current Terms of Reference for the SGNA be reviewed by the Bureau in February 2015.

VI. METHOD OF WORK

11. The SGNA will work mainly through e-mail consultations and teleconferences. The Group will also have face-to-face meetings in conjunction with the regular biennial meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts (organised jointly with Eurostat and OECD).

VII. MEMBERSHIP OF THE STEERING GROUP

12. The SGNA should be composed of members representing the different sub-regions in the UNECE. The SGNA comprises: Armenia, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (to be confirmed), United States, Eurostat (to be confirmed), OECD, CIS-STAT, UNSD and IMF. If necessary, other experts and agencies can also be consulted or asked to contribute to the work of the SGNA.

13. The Steering Group will be chaired by Brent Moulton, BEA. The term of the chair will be limited to 2 years.

* * * * *