

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2014/2015 Bureau  
Geneva (Switzerland), 17-18 February 2015

Item 5 (e) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON INTERNATIONAL  
GUIDELINES ON STATISTICAL BUSINESS REGISTERS**

**Note by the Task Force**

*Attached are the International Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers (document ECE/CES/BUR/2015/FEB/17/Add.1), prepared by the CES Task Force. **The Bureau discussed the final draft of the Guidelines and decided that the draft can be circulated to all CES members for electronic consultation with a view of presenting it to the CES 2015 plenary session for endorsement.***

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Bureau established the Task Force on Statistical Business Registers (SBRs) in November 2011 to produce a set of international guidelines and recommendations on good practices for SBRs. The Task Force consists of the following countries and organizations: Austria (chair), Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, The African Development Bank, Eurostat, OECD, UNSD and UNECE.

2. In January 2015, the Task Force completed the final draft of the *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers*. Section II of this note summarizes the work of the Task Force. Section III gives a brief overview of the Guidelines. Section IV puts forward the proposal for the Bureau. The Guidelines are provided in document ECE/CES/BUR/2015/FEB/17/Add.1.

**II. PROGRESS OF WORK**

3. During its work 2012-2014, the Task Force held three face-to-face meetings and a large number of audio conferences. Draft chapters and other relevant materials were shared on a common website created for this purpose. Drafts of the Guidelines were presented to the Wiesbaden Group meetings in 2012 and 2014 and to the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Expert Group meeting on Business Registers in 2013. This provided useful comments and proposals on particular challenges, e.g., data sources, coverage of the SBR and definition of units and classifications, which the Task Force addressed in the Guidelines. Feedback from the 2012/2013 UNSD global survey on SBRs was also taken into account. In 2013 Statistics Canada financed an editor of the Guidelines who carried out the first round of editing in February-April of 2014.

4. In the course of preparing the Guidelines, the Task Force identified a number of questions related to the definitions and delineations of enterprises and institutional units in SNA. To ensure

that the Guidelines will be in line with relevant standards, the Task Force submitted a number of questions for clarification to the meeting of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts in September 2014. The ISWGNA response was taken into account in the relevant chapters. A final round of reviewing and editing of all chapters and annexes was carried out from November 2014 to January 2015 to ensure coherence and consistency across chapters.

### III. OVERVIEW OF THE FINAL DRAFT

5. The Guidelines consist of 11 chapters – an introductory chapter followed by ten substantive chapters on the establishment and maintenance of the SBR. The Guidelines include a number of annexes on specific topics, such as characteristics of the statistical units of the register, sector classification of producer units, use of administrative sources, and country examples of good practices for establishing the business register and assuring its quality.

6. The Guidelines focus on providing methodological and practical guidance to countries for establishing and maintaining the SBR. The Guidelines do not, however, resolve a number of emerging issues that will pose challenges in the future. Economic globalisation and the growing complexity of global production arrangements raise questions concerning definitions and identification of the relevant statistical units, and the international comparability of business statistics. At the same time, the SBR plays a key role as backbone in the modernisation of statistical production and integration of economic statistics. There continues to be a need for exploring the use of administrative registers and other new or emerging electronic data sources. The Guidelines, therefore, include proposals for future work in Annex H.

### IV. PROPOSAL FOR DECISION BY THE BUREAU

7. **The Bureau discussed the final draft of the *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers* and agreed on the proposed further steps of work:**

#### Time plan for the remaining work

Date	Activity
February 2015	Incorporation of comments from the CES Bureau members
March 2015	Electronic consultation with CES member countries and organisations
April-May 2015	Incorporation of comments from the CES electronic consultation
June 2015	Subject to the positive outcome of the electronic consultation, submission of the final version of the Guidelines to the 2015 CES plenary session for endorsement
Second half 2015	UNECE will publish the Guidelines in electronic and printed versions

8. In October 2014, the Bureau welcomed the proposal by UNSD to conduct a global consultation of the *Guidelines* and submit them to the UN Statistical Commission, after endorsement by the CES.

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