



Terms of Reference **of the Project Working Group on Statistics**

Preamble

1. At the International Conference on Strengthening Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia and the Future Role of SPECA and the special meeting the SPECA Regional Advisory Committee (Astana, Kazakhstan, 25-27 May 2005), it was decided to establish a SPECA Project Working Group (PWG) on Statistics.
2. The Project Working Group on Statistics is a subsidiary body within the governing structure of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The member countries are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
3. The statistical activities within the SPECA framework are also part of the UNECE Statistical Programme, which is supervised by the competent sectoral committee of UNECE, the Conference of European Statisticians, as well as of the UNESCAP Programme on Statistics, which is supervised by the Committee on Poverty Reduction. For this reason the reports of the PWG will also be presented to and discussed by these UN bodies.

Objectives

4. In line with the overall objectives of SPECA to support its member countries in developing subregional cooperation and integrating their economies into the world economy, the PWG on Statistics shall promote core functions in building up statistical capacity in the SPECA member countries, strengthening their capacities to monitor their demographic, social and economic progress. The activities overseen by the PWG will:
 - facilitate development and cooperation in the field of the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical information in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, adopted by the UNECE in 1992 and the UN Statistical Commission in 1994 in the spheres mentioned above;
 - support the development of the national statistical systems in the region in developing their capacities to produce and disseminate authoritative statistics that responds to user needs; and
 - promote knowledge-based development of the economy and the society, in particular in the use of statistical information, for development and interaction between the SPECA member countries as well as with the world economy.

Participants

5. The PWG on Statistics shall comprise the Heads of the National Statistical Offices in their double capacities as main producers of statistics on the national level and the main coordinator of the national statistical system, as well as the Chief Statisticians of UNECE and UNESCAP.

6. Each participating country shall also nominate, on a permanent or on an ad hoc basis, experts on various aspects in the three activities, mentioned in paragraph 9 and for any additional component following decisions based on paragraph 10.

7. United Nations bodies as well as other multilateral agencies and organizations operating in monitoring development and the enhancement of evidence based decision making in the SPECA member countries are invited to participate in the work of the PWG on Statistics and to nominate liaison officers on matters related to its work.

Programme of work and activities

8. The PWG on Statistics shall develop, agree upon and oversee the implementations of annual work programmes.

9. A major activity in the work programme for the years 2006-2008 is the Project on “Strengthening the Statistical Capacity of the Central Asian Countries to Monitor the Progress towards the Millenium Development Goals (MDG’s)” as approved by UNDESA in April 2006. This project will build upon:

- the work carried out by UNECE from 2004 to 2006 on the new UNECE recommendations for the 2010 round of population censuses;
- the preparation of guidelines for improving the comparability of health status statistics in the UNECE region by ECE in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2004 and 2005;
- the surveys conducted in 2001-2002 and in 2005-2006 by UNECE on national practices in measuring the non-observed economy in national accounts; and
- other relevant standards, surveys of national practices, and methodological work.

10. Additional components, not listed in paragraph 9, may be added by the PWG, provided that

- they fit into the overall framework of SPECA;
- they contribute to the capacity building of official statistics in the SPECA member countries; and
- possible sources for funding these activities have been identified.

Any participant to the PWG may initiate proposals for such activities. The PWG on Statistics shall formulate and agree upon the specific activities to be carried out and seek funding from other resources for their implementation. Recommendations along with agreed investment and project ideas shall be presented to relevant international organizations and international programmes.

Modalities of operation

11. The PWG on Statistics shall elect its officers from among the Heads of the National Statistical Offices of the SPECA member countries.

12. The PWG adopts its Terms of Reference within the overall frame of SPECA.

13. The activities in paragraph 9 will be implemented by the Statistical Division of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in close collaboration with the statistical authorities of the countries concerned, UNDESA and UNESCAP and with the involvement of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT).

14. The implementation modalities for any additional component based on paragraph 10 will be laid down by the PWG on Statistics.

15. The Secretariats of UNECE and UNESCAP will provide secretarial support to the PWG. The Secretariats will facilitate the preparation and organization of the sessions of the Group and will maintain records of its activities.

16. The PWG on Statistics shall hold annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries.

17. Important policy conclusions should be brought to the attention of high-level policy making authorities in the SPECA member countries.

Funding

18. Within the limits defined in the project document “Strengthening the Statistical Capacity of the Central Asian Countries to Monitor the Progress towards the Millenium Development Goals (MDG’s)” as approved by UNDESA in April 2006, the operational cost of activities initiated by the PWG on Statistics as well as the costs of participation of National Representatives and experts in its sessions shall be borne by the United Nations Development Account. The UNECE and UNESCAP shall, within their available resources, provide secretariat support and substantive inputs to seminar, training and meeting activities of the project and the functioning of the PWG.

19. All other cost shall be borne by

- the funding agencies for additional activities based on paragraph 10; and
- the Governments of the participating countries.

Other matters

20. The current Terms of Reference shall be reviewed after 3 years or sooner if the PWG on Statistics and/or the SPECA Governing Council so decide.