

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2018/2019 Bureau  
Paris (France), 26 June 2019

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STEERING GROUP  
ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

Note by the Steering Group

*The Bureau is invited to discuss and approve the updated terms of reference of the Steering Group on National Accounts.*

I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 40th session, in February 2009, the United Nations Statistical Commission supported the *Implementation Strategy for the 2008 System of National Accounts* (2008 SNA) proposed by the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA), and “recognized the importance of the role of the Regional Commissions and their advisory committees on the System of National Accounts to facilitate coordination and regional cooperation on the implementation programme”<sup>1</sup>. The *Strategy* also asked that the Regional Commissions should be supported in their work by existing statistical committees or by newly set up Steering Groups. Therefore, in 2009, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) established the UNECE Steering Group on National Accounts. Since then, the mandate, activities and membership have been periodically reviewed by the Bureau.

2. Over the last ten years the Steering Group has played an important role in coordination and advancing the CES work programme in the area of national accounts and globalization. Its main achievements include:

- Organized and followed up on the implementation of the decisions of the meetings of the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Group of Experts on National Accounts;
- Assisted UNECE in developing the *Regional recommendations for the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE)* and in planning activities to support and monitor the progress of the countries towards the goals set in their national implementation strategies for the 2008 SNA;
- Oversaw the preparation of the UNECE Guides *Impact of Globalization on National Accounts* (2011) and *Measuring Global Production* (2015). Launched activities to facilitate the implementation and advancing the research agenda of the guides.

<sup>1</sup> See Statistical Commission, Report on the fortieth session  
doc. E/2009/24-E/CN.3/2009/29 available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc09/Report-English.pdf>

- Provided inputs to the in-depth reviews on global production and exchange and sharing of economic data.
- Ensured coordination of CES activities in the area of national accounts with related work of CIS-STAT, Eurostat, IMF, OECD and other partner organizations.

3. The Bureau is invited to review and approve the updated Terms of Reference of the Steering Group on National Accounts.

## **II. MANDATE**

1. The work of the Steering Group is conducted within the CES work programme. The Steering Group reports to the Bureau on CES activities on national accounts and globalization, as well as on emerging issues in the area and possible ways of addressing them.

2. The Steering Group will regularly consult with ISWGNA to ensure international coordination of work related to the 2008 SNA implementation.

3. The Steering Group will identify new areas where methodological work could be undertaken. In such cases, after having verified the interest by a sufficient number of CES member countries and the availability of resources, the Steering Group will submit proposals to the CES Bureau for review and approval.

## **III. OBJECTIVE**

4. The objective of the Steering Group is to provide direction to the CES work on national accounts and globalization, assist the implementation of the 2008 SNA in the region, advance methodological development and provide a mechanism for following up on the implementation of CES recommendations and guidelines.

5. The Steering Group will:

(a) Coordinate CES work in the area of national accounts, globalization and human capital. Launch and steer research projects, contribute to the 2008 SNA research agenda, oversee the development of guidelines and surveys of best practice and follow up on their implementation. Oversee the work of CES task forces working in these areas;

(b) Promote internationally agreed standards and best practices in national accounts, including measuring globalization, digitalization, wellbeing and sustainability;

(c) Monitor the implementation of 2008 SNA in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE) taking into account the specific regional priorities and needs;

(d) Advise the UNECE Secretariat on capacity building activities in support of EECCA and SEE countries. These activities should be closely coordinated with Eurostat and other regional partners;

(e) Facilitate the sharing of methods, statistical techniques, research, training materials and other resources related to the 2008 SNA implementation.

#### **IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS**

6. The main outputs of the Steering Group on National Accounts in 2019-2023 will be:

(a) Organize and follow-up on activities identified in the research agenda of the Guide to Measuring Global Production, the Guide on Measuring Human Capital and the in-depth review of satellite accounting;

(b) Review progress and outcomes of CES tasks forces working in the area of national accounts and globalization, namely the Task Force on Exchange and Sharing of Economic Data and the Task Force on Satellite Accounts on Education and Training;

(c) Carry out studies on the implementation of CES recommendations and guidelines in all CES member countries;

(d) Continuously review the support needed for EECCA and SEE countries in line with the regional recommendations for the 2008 SNA implementation;

(e) Organize the meetings of the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Group of Experts on National Accounts in the period 2019-2023. Advise the UNECE Secretariat in the preparation of other meetings and workshops related to national accounts and globalization;

(f) Advise the UNECE Secretariat in the preparation of the workshops on 2008 SNA implementation in EECCA and SEE countries foreseen in the UNECE Capacity Development Programmes, and in the organization of special sessions for EECCA and SEE countries at the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Expert Group meetings on National Accounts;

(g) Implement the decisions of the meetings of the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Group of Experts on National Accounts.

#### **V. TIMETABLE**

7. The work on implementation of 2008 SNA and research in areas like globalization and national accounts and measuring human capital is on-going. A number of activities are foreseen under the capacity development projects for the EECCA and SEE countries in the following years. The CES Bureau will review the terms of reference of the Steering Group in 2023.

#### **VI. METHODS OF WORK**

8. The Steering Group will primarily work via email and telephone conferences. The Group will have face-to-face meetings on the occasion of meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts. Additional meetings may be organised at events attended by a significant number of Steering Group members, such as the OECD Working Party on National Accounts.

9. Following the example of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts and the ISWGNA, the Steering Group should aim to reach consensus in its work to the highest extent possible.

## **VII. MEMBERSHIP**

10. The Steering Group is composed of members representing different sub-regions of the UNECE. The group comprises: Canada, Armenia, Netherlands (Chair: Gerard Eding, Statistics Netherlands), Norway, the Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States, Eurostat, OECD, CIS-STAT, UNSD and IMF. If needed, other experts and agencies can also be consulted or invited to contribute to the work of the Steering Group.

11. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Steering Group.

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