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Conference of European Statisticians

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Agenda item 10 (b)
Programme planning documents for the Statistics subprogramme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Programme of Work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical subprogramme for 2021

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The draft Programme of Work of the UNECE Statistics subprogramme is prepared in a new format in line with the change of the UN budget planning from biannual to annual budgets, which started in 2020. The new approach aims to simplify the presentation of the work programme, and to use a 'storytelling' approach focusing on the most significant achievements expected in 2021.

The text is an excerpt of the UNECE Programme of Work. The Secretariat has prepared this draft following strict guidance and a template for presentation from the Programme Management Officers in Geneva and New York. The Secretariat was requested to focus on one, most significant achievement expected in 2021. The 2020 round of Censuses was selected as this achievement and agreed by the Programme Officers.

The Programme of Work is submitted to the Conference of European Statisticians for adoption and for recommending it to the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for approval.

I. Introduction

1.   The present document sets out the draft programme of work of the UNECE statistics subprogramme for 2021. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) is invited to adopt it and recommend to the Executive Committee (Excom) for approval. Any subsequent additional, discontinued or carried over outputs will be reflected in UN Umoja system used by the Secretariat for planning, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the programme.

2.   The draft programme of work applies a results-based management approach, a broad management approach which establishes logical relationship between the hierarchical results (deliverables – objectives – impact) known as 'results chain', the resources (human and financial) known as 'inputs' and the external factors (strategic, governance, operational, financial) which can prevent from achieving the objective.

3.   The objective, the most significant planned result and the deliverables in the draft programme of work correspond to those contained in the ECE proposed programme budget for 2021. The objective of the subprogramme is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In attaining its objective, the subprogramme builds on cross-sectoral collaboration with other subprogrammes in relevant ECE nexus areas where multiple SDGs converge[1]. This type of collaboration enables the subprogramme to maximize existing synergies, increase the efficiency of its work and have a multiplying effect on the impact of its actions to support countries to implement SDGs. The deliverables of the subprogramme fall into the following main categories: (a) facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies; (b) generation and transfer of knowledge, including technical cooperation projects, training events, seminars, workshops, and publications; (c) other substantive deliverables, and (d) communication deliverables.

4.   The details of the proposed publications are provided in the Annex.

II. Objective

5.   The objective, to which this subprogramme contributes, is to advance official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to ensure the coordination of statistical activities in the ECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians (CES).

III. Strategy

6.   The strategy of the subprogramme is based on the implementation of the core interlinked functions, namely: (1) streamlining of international statistical work in the ECE region by promoting dialogue at the Conference of European Statisticians and expert meetings; (2) methodological work to develop and promote guidelines and recommendations to enhance quality of statistics; (3) statistical capacity development of ECE member states with less developed statistical systems, in particular to measure SDGs; and (4) maintenance and development of the ECE statistical database. ECE statistical work is strongly anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for a follow-up and review of the achievement of the goals and targets based on evidence, informed by high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated data. Through its work, the subprogramme will contribute to the ECE nexuses on measuring and monitoring SDGs, and on the sustainable use of natural resources. The work conducted under this subprogramme deals mainly with statistical methodology and capacity-building, and the main national partners are National Statistical Offices of member States.

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[1] The ECE nexus areas are as follows: 1) Sustainable use of natural resources; 2) Sustainable and smart cities for all ages; 3) Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity; and 4) Measuring and monitoring SDGs.

7.   To contribute to advancing official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards SDGs, and to ensure the coordination of statistical activities in the ECE region under CES, the subprogramme will continue to promote methodological work to develop statistical models, guidelines and recommendations to enhance quality of statistics, and to promote the use of official statistics. This will be done through regional and country-specific initiatives aimed at disseminating the statistical models, guidelines and recommendations, and promoting their use. Closer partnerships will be built between geospatial experts and statisticians to support integration of statistical and geospatial information. The activities will be coordinated and implemented in cooperation with statistical departments of other regional entities such as the Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the European Free Trade Association, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Economic Commission, as well as international specialized agencies active in the region.

8.   To support the development of member States' statistical capacity, the most prominent activity that the subprogramme will focus on will be to facilitate the exchange of experiences in the field of population and housing censuses and provide support to countries in planning and conducting their census. All member States were requested to conduct at least one census in the decade between 2015 and 2024 (ECOSOC Resolution 2015/10), which was also called "2020 census round". The majority of the countries in the ECE region will conduct the census in 2021. The support provided by ECE is expected to result in an increasing number of countries that will conduct their census adopting innovative and efficient approaches, in compliance with the *CES Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing*.

9.   Past results in these areas include the fact that ECE member countries over the last few years have increasingly developed and adopted innovative methods to conduct their population and housing censuses, also thanks to the exchange of experiences and increase of statistical capacity obtained by attending the expert meetings and workshops organized by the ECE Statistical Division. While in the 2010 census round only 35 per cent of the ECE countries conducted a census adopting an innovative method (using register data), information collected in 2019 showed that for the 2020 census round the percentage is expected to increase to about 55 per cent. The result for beneficiaries of the use of innovative methods to conduct their census is improved cost-efficiency, coverage, accuracy, comparability and timeliness of dissemination of the census results.

IV.   Programme performance in 2019, against planned result: More countries using common models to modernise the production of official statistics

10.   A planned result for 2019, which is streamlined international statistical work in support of monitoring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as referred to in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019, was fully achieved, as evidenced by six new statistical areas reviewed in depth by the Bureau of the CES in 2018-2019. The Bureau of the CES regularly reviews selected statistical areas in depth. The aim of the reviews is to improve coordination of statistical activities in the ECE region, identify gaps or duplication of work, and address emerging issues. The reviews focus on strategic issues and highlights concerns of statistical offices of both a conceptual and a coordinating nature. The reviews often lead to new methodological work for the benefit of all ECE Member States.

11.   To be able to monitor the progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an unprecedented amount of data and a large number of new and/or further disaggregated indicators need to be produced. As resources are constrained, this can only be achieved by rationalizing the production of statistics and by using new data sources. To prevent duplication and to establish synergies between producers of official statistics, the subprogramme has established the High-level group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS). Various modernisation standards and models were
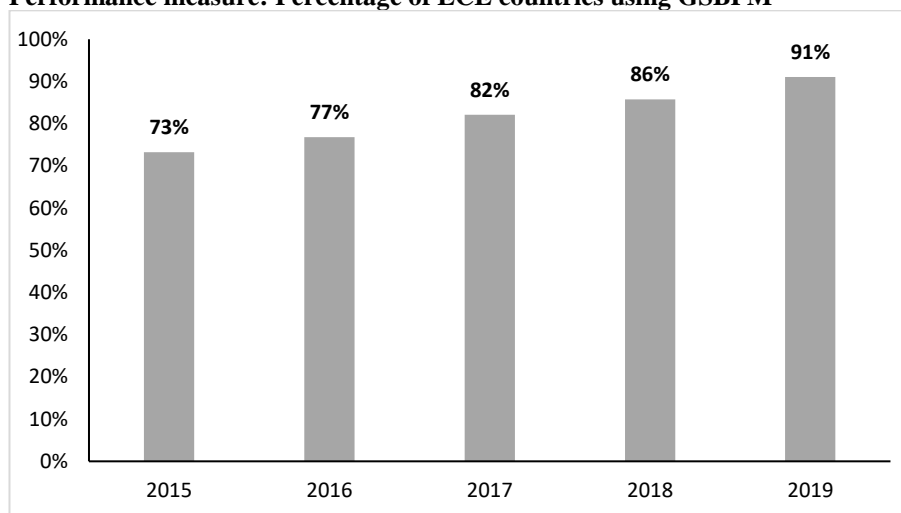
developed under the subprogramme by the HLG-MOS. Examples are, the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations (GAMSO) or the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA). They all provide a common language and tool to map all activities within and between statistical organisations to a common model. Implementing these models makes possible to identify resources involved and reveals duplication of activity or areas where efficiency gains can be achieved. It allows for statistical organizations to collaborate and facilitates exchange of information and the sharing of statistical services.

12.   This work contributed to the advancement of official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and to ensure the coordination of statistical activities in the ECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians, as demonstrated by the fact that in 2019, 51 countries (91% of the total) are using the GSBPM model to modernise their statistical systems, including Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan that started using the model in 2019. Usage in other UN regions continues, making it the global model for modernizing statistical production. This contributes to more timely and further disaggregated statistics being available to policy makers, businesses and the general public. The model can be used for multiple purposes and multiple ways. For example, the Central Statistics Office of Ireland uses GSBPM to map their staffing across various domains in their office, but also aligned their training program with it and applied GSBPM to the activities of their national SDG platform in 2019.

13.   For 2019, the need to further integrate and align the various models was identified as a key area of focus. Several countries participated in this work and the first offices have started to implement multiple models in an integrated way. The concept of sharing tools using CSPA was also restated in 2019, making sharing statistical services even easier. This led to ten more services being shared in the public CSPA catalogue and made available for use by any statistical organization. Many more services are in preparation to being shared in the near future.

Figure 1
Performance measure: Percentage of ECE countries using GSBPM

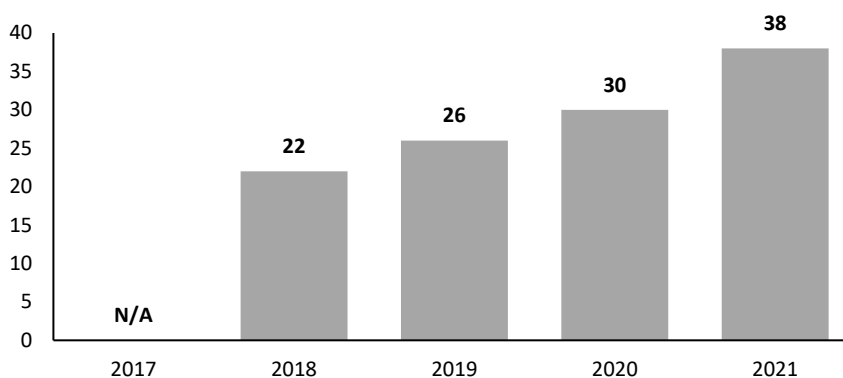
V.   Planned results for 2021

A.   Result 1: Increasing the number of countries producing improved statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals (result carried-forward from 2020)

14.   The subprogramme will continue the work related to statistics for sustainable development, in line with its mandate, and will assist countries in setting up national reporting

platforms on statistics for sustainable development, which is expected to be demonstrated by the performance measure for 2021 below. For 2020, a proxy performance measure is indicated, to reflect that the General Assembly, in its resolution 74/251, approved a programme narrative at the subprogramme level that is composed solely of the objectives.

Figure 2
Performance measure: Number of national reporting platforms on statistics for Sustainable Development Goals in use by member States

B. Result 2: conducting a new population and housing census which provides cost-effective and better-quality results

15.   The subprogramme has been working to support member States in the planning and conducting of the population and housing census of the 2020 round. Conducting a census is requested by ECOSOC (resolution 2015/10) and is one of the targets of the 2030 Agenda (target 17.19). Between 2012 and 2015, the subprogramme coordinated the preparation of the new *CES Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing in the ECE region*. The Recommendations provide guidance to countries on census methodology and survey content, so that the census results produced are relevant and comparable across countries. Since 2015, the subprogramme organized annual expert meetings, capacity building workshops, and created an online platform to facilitate the exchange of experiences and provide support to countries in planning and conducting their census.

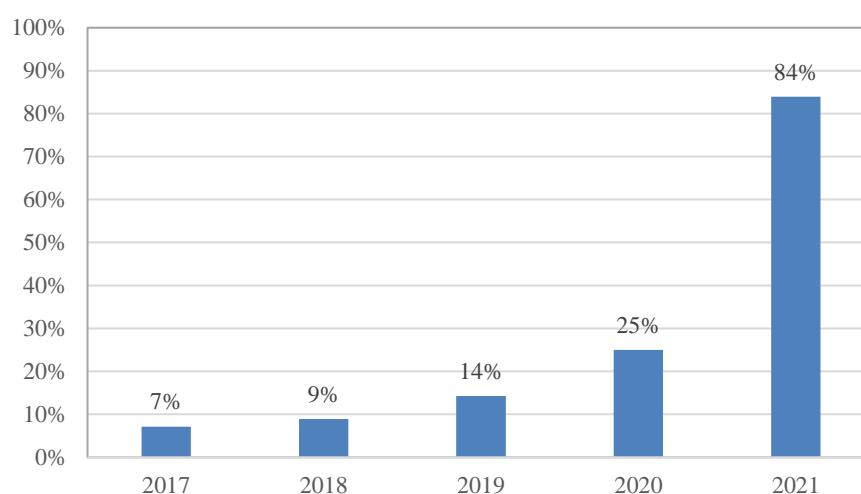## C. Internal challenges and response

16.   A challenge observed in some ECE member States was to inform a national statistical institute of the benefits of conducting the census by adopting innovative methods in compliance with the CES Recommendations, in terms of improved cost-efficiency, coverage, accuracy and timeliness of dissemination of the results. The response by ECE includes facilitating the exchange of experiences among countries, which allows member States to learn from the experiences of other countries on the benefits of censuses conducted in compliance with the CES Recommendations.

D. Expected progress towards attainment of objective and performance measures

17.   This work is expected to contribute towards advanced official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking, which would be demonstrated by 84 per cent of ECE member States expected to conduct a population and housing census in compliance with the CES Recommendations by 2021, resulting for beneficiaries in improved cost-efficiency, coverage, accuracy and timeliness of dissemination of the census results.

E. Performance measures

Figure 3
Percentage of ECE countries having conducted the census in compliance with the CES Recommendations (2016)

Source: UNECE Census wiki

VI. Deliverables to be implemented in 2021

18. The below table lists all deliverables, by category and subcategory, that are expected to contribute to the attainment of the objective stated above.

Table
Subprogramme 3: Deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

	2019 planned	*2019 actual*	*2020 planned*	*2021 planned*
Quantified deliverables				
A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies				
Parliamentary documentation (number of documents)	**81**	**81**	**81**	**81**
1. Documentation for the Conference of European Statisticians	43	43	43	43
2. Documentation for expert bodies	38	38	38	38
Substantive services for meetings (number of three-hour meetings)	**85**	**85**	**85**	**85**
3. Meetings of the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau	13	13	13	13
4. Meetings of expert bodies	72	72	72	72
B. Generation and transfer of knowledge				
Technical cooperation and field projects (number of projects)	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
5. Project on social and economic statistics	1	1	1	1
Seminars, workshops and training events (number of days)	**6**	**6**	**6**	**6**
6. Workshops on social and economic statistics	3	3	3	3
7. Workshops on innovating statistical production	3	3	3	3
Publications (number of publications)	**4**	**6**	**9**	**7**

	2019 planned	2019 actual	2020 planned	2021 planned
8. Publications on cutting across multiple statistical areas	1	1	1	1
9. Publications on social, environmental and economic statistics	3	5	8	6

Non-quantified deliverables

C. Substantive deliverables

Consultation, advice and advocacy: Advisory services for Government officials (staff in the national statistical systems) and other stakeholders of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and South-East Europe on economic, social, demographic and environment statistics, statistics for SDGs, geospatial statistics and institutional issues and modernisation of official statistics (4)

Databases and substantive digital materials: Update and maintenance of ECE Statistical Databases (Population and gender statistics database; Economic statistics database; Transport database; Forestry database) (4)

D. Communication deliverables

Outreach programmes, special events and information materials: Leaflets and other promotional materials (2)

External and media relations: Articles for the "UNECE Weekly" and "EnvStats" newsletters (15)

Digital platforms and multimedia content: interactive digital workspaces (wikis including the ECE Census Wiki https://statswiki.unece.org/display/censuses/UNECE+Census+Wiki); update and maintenance of the website of the subprogramme (1)

Annex

Details of proposed publications and promotional material for 2021

Non-recurrent publications

Item no.	Title	Mandate	Print and/or electronic	Trim size	No. of pages	Original language(s)	Translated language(s) and Source of funding (RB or XB)	No. of copies and language(s)
1	Guidelines on measuring well-being and digitalisation	The mandate is expected to be provided by the meeting of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2020 and reflected in its report.	Print and electronic	A4	150	E		400E
2	Guidance on the measurement of the quality of administrative sources for use in censuses	CES June 2019 plenary session report (ECE/CES/97) para 78; ECE/CES/2019/15 Annex I B.	Print and electronic	A4	80	E	R (RB)	300^E, 200R
3	UNECE Countries in Figures 2021	The mandate is expected to be provided by the meeting of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2020 and reflected in its report.	Print and electronic	A5	150	E	R (RB)	300E, 200R
4	UNECE Conference of European Statisticians Road Map on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals	CES June 2019 plenary session report (ECE/CES/97) paras 34 and 78; ECE/CES/2019/15 Annex I B.	Print and electronic	A4	120	E	R (RB), F (RB)	300E, 200R, 100F
5	Framework on Waste Statistics	The mandate is expected to be provided by the meeting of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2020 and reflected in its report.	Print and electronic	A4	70	E	R (RB), F (RB)	300E, 100R, 100F
6	Strategic Communication Framework	The mandate is expected to be provided by the meeting of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2020 and reflected in its report.	Print and electronic	A4	120	E		300E
7	Statistical Modernisation Monograph	The mandate is expected to be provided by the meeting of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2020 and reflected in its report.	Electronic	A4	150	E		