

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2014/2015 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 21-22 October 2014

Item 5 (b) of the Provisional
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF A TASK FORCE ON
VALUING UNPAID HOUSEHOLD SERVICE WORK**

Note by the Secretariat

*This document presents the terms of reference of the Task Force on Valuing Unpaid Household Service Work. **The Bureau approved the terms of reference of the proposed Task Force on Valuing Unpaid Household Service Work.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. In November 2010, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of time-use surveys, which led to the establishment of a Task Force on this topic. The Task Force developed the *Guidelines for Harmonizing Time-Use Surveys* that were published in 2013¹. Subsequently, the CES Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for further work based on the issues raised in the Guidelines and in the related discussion at the CES plenary session. In January 2014, the Bureau supported the proposal to prepare guidelines on valuing unpaid household service work, and requested the Secretariat to consult with CES members about setting up a task force for this purpose.
2. According to the *Guidelines for Harmonizing Time-Use Surveys*, unpaid work is one of the areas where information from time diary surveys is necessary for informed policymaking, and for which other sources do not provide adequate data. Lack of information on unpaid household service work might lead to a policy conclusion that an increase in services, such as childcare or long-term care provided by the government or private sector, increases the quantity of goods and services produced in a country. In fact, this would simply reflect that the production of the same service takes place in another institutional sector instead of the household sector. Some countries have started to value these activities through a Household Satellite Account, which provides important information on the economy and society.
3. Placing monetary values on activities carried out in the household is not straightforward since the work is unpaid and often produces intangible services. Related measurement challenges include the question of multitasking as, for example, it is possible to prepare a meal, keep an eye on a small child and help an older child with their homework at the same time. Furthermore, there is a question about the borderline with household service work and leisure as, for example, some people would regard gardening as a chore while others may see it as a leisure activity.

¹ Available at www.unecce.org/publications/time_use_surveys.html

4. Several countries have experience in compiling Household Satellite Accounts, and this has been reviewed internationally.² However, there is currently no general agreement on the methodological choices in resolving the measurement challenges. The relevant international guidance dates back for more than a decade. It is therefore necessary to revisit the existing national experience and provide guidelines on these issues. Further need for updated guidance emerges from the “Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization” adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in October 2013. The Resolution provides operational concepts, definitions and guidelines for distinct forms of work which have implications on the classification and analysis of activities related to unpaid household service work.

II. MANDATE AND REPORTING

5. The work of the Task Force is conducted within the framework of CES and its Bureau. The Task Force will be created for a period from November 2014 until June 2017. A final report will be submitted to the Bureau at the end of the work.

III. OBJECTIVE

6. The objective of the Task Force is to develop guidelines on valuing unpaid household service work.

IV. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

7. To achieve its objective, the Task Force will undertake the following activities:

- a) Prepare an inventory of the approaches used for valuing unpaid household work in Household Satellite Accounts;
- b) Analyse the different national approaches;
- c) Identify the practices to be recommended and their implications for data collection;
- d) Draft guidelines on valuing unpaid household service work.

8. In pursuing these activities, the Task Force will take into account relevant international initiatives, such as those of the ILO and OECD on measuring volunteer work, and the potential data collection through international survey programmes such as EU-SILC.

V. TIMETABLE

9. The activities of the Task Force are planned for the period from November 2014 to June 2017, according to the following tentative timetable:

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| November-December 2014 | Launching the Task Force – confirming the countries and organizations interested to participate in its work |
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² Eurostat (2003), *Household production and consumption: proposal for a methodology of Household Satellite Accounts*; United Nations (2000), *Household accounting experience in concepts and compilation vol. 1 household sector accounts, Vol. 2 Household satellite extension*.

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| January-March 2015 | Discussion of work plan to identify the concrete activities and the scope of the guidelines |
| April-September 2015 | Preparing an inventory of the methods used in national Household Satellite Accounts |
| October-December 2015 | Analysis of the different national approaches |
| November or December 2015 | Face-to-face meeting to agree on the recommendations to be included in the guidelines and on the distribution of the drafting work |
| January-April 2016 | Drafting of the guidelines |
| April-June 2016 | Consultation of the draft guidelines within the Task Force and wider expert network |
| July-September 2016 | Revision of the draft guidelines based on the consultation; submission of the full draft to the CES Bureau |
| October 2016 – January 2017 | Revision and editing of the guidelines to take into account comments by the Bureau |
| February 2017 | Electronic consultation of the draft guidelines among CES members |
| March-June 2017 | Finalisation and submission of the guidelines to the June 2017 CES plenary session for endorsement |

V. METHODS OF WORK

10. The Task Force will primarily work via email and telephone conferences. At least one face-to-face meeting will be organized. For the preparation of draft documents, the Task Force will use the wiki infrastructure available at UNECE.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

11. The following countries and international organizations have expressed their interest in participating in the Task Force: Azerbaijan, Canada, Czech Republic, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, United Kingdom, CIS-Stat, Eurostat, ILO and OECD.

12. UNECE acts as Secretariat to the Task Force.

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