

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2021/2022 Bureau  
Geneva (online), 13-14 October 2021

Item IV(b) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**PROPOSAL FOR FOLLOW-UP TO THE CES SESSION ON “OFFICIAL  
STATISTICS FOR CLIMATE ACTION”**

**Prepared by the Steering Group on Climate Change-Related Statistics**

*The CES 2021 plenary session discussed the role of NSOs in providing statistics for climate action and addressing the large information needs in a coherent and sustainable way. The Conference recognized the increasing need for climate change-related statistics and data, and the key role national statistical offices must play in meeting this need. The Conference noted that producing climate change-related statistics and data requires systemic approaches, linking various statistical fields, innovation, collaboration across the national statistical system, and effective communication with users.*

*The document 13/Add.1 describes progress on key activities of Eurostat, IMF and OECD in climate change-related statistics since the 2021 CES plenary session.*

*The Bureau approved the proposal for follow-up to the session.*

## I. BACKGROUND

1. In February 2020, the CES Bureau conducted an in-depth review of the role of the statistical community for climate action based on a paper prepared by the CES Steering Group on Climate Change-Related Statistics. The paper presented an overview of international activities related to climate change statistics and data, a description of country practices, and a number of identified issues and challenges. Among the conclusions, it was noted that NSOs could play an essential role in national climate change information systems, but the statistical community has to step up its efforts and engage more actively in the complex landscape of data for climate action.

2. In October 2020, the Bureau supported the follow-up activities proposed by the Steering Group. The UNECE Expert Fora on climate change-related statistics should continue to provide a platform for sharing experience on climate change-related statistics, including on experimental approaches. In terms of focus areas, the Bureau recommended to prioritize (i) climate change adaptation, (ii) green finance and green investment, and (iii) more broadly, linkages between climate change and the economy. The CES Bureau concluded that a broader discussion is needed on how to respond to environmental policy information needs in an integrated manner, and decided to discuss “Official statistics for climate action” during the 2021 CES plenary session.

## II. DISCUSSION AT THE 2021 CES PLENARY SESSION

3. The discussion was organized by the Steering Group on Climate Change-Related Statistics. G. Peterson (Canada) chaired the session. The discussion was informed by papers from the Netherlands, Eurostat, IMF and OECD, and UNFCCC.

4. The following points were raised by the Conference:

(a) The Paris Agreement requires all countries to submit every five years nationally determined contributions (NDCs) including information on planned mitigation and adaptation actions. Countries should regularly track progress in NDC implementation while they have flexibility in how the targets are set, and on the indicators chosen to track progress. This information is critical to drive policies, set targets, engage the broader public and assess progress. The scope, depth and frequency of reporting under the Paris agreement require strong institutional arrangements. Common statistical guidance for tracking NDCs would allow to harmonise approaches and improve comparability between countries. Currently many countries are reassessing their reporting arrangements which is an opportunity for statistical offices to get involved;

(b) The national statistics systems (NSS) have an essential role to play as they already have much of the needed information and can provide it in a holistic way. NSOs may take the leadership within NSS by helping policymakers to identify relevant indicators and measurement approaches, bringing together data produced by other organizations, tapping into new data sources, and developing funding bids for data;

(c) Collaboration within NSS and with other organizations is crucial to provide a complete picture of climate action, well-being, sustainable development and the general situation of the country. Such collaboration may not be easy and requires finding a common language. Of particular interest are interactions between the economic activities and climate, and the economic and social consequences of climate policies;

(d) Key avenues to strengthening climate change-related statistics and the role of NSOs are improving timeliness, frequency, accessibility, granularity, geographical coverage and international comparability of data to the level needed by policy makers, analysts and the public at large. User needs should be central to this work;

(e) Some countries produce quarterly emissions of greenhouse gases to provide data with better timeliness and frequency. Other countries do not see the value in infra-annual estimates and consider other information needs more urgent;

(f) International cooperation is critical to develop and reconcile international standards, manuals and frameworks, and coordinate capacity development programmes. Common classifications and definitions facilitate cooperation and allow for harmonizing measurements and reporting. Many joint international activities are already in place, but more should be done. The activities should be aligned with the updates of international statistical standards;

(g) Several new international activities have been mentioned. Among others, OECD is expanding collection of information on climate-related policy instruments and financing, and an International Program for Action on Climate is launched on the initiative of France. Eurostat is expanding climate change-related statistics in relation to the European Green Deal and

reviewing how these statistics meet the evolving user needs. IMF has launched the Climate Change Dashboard and is preparing a concept note on a possible new Data Gaps Initiative (DGI) under G20, with climate change as one of four priorities. In March, the United Nations Statistical Commission has approved the Ecosystem Accounting in the System of Environmental-economic Accounting (SEEA). UNSD plans to submit the Global Set of Climate Change Statistics and Indicators to the 2022 UN Statistical Commission for adoption. These initiatives may use different ways of communicating climate change-related statistics catering to different audiences, but the underlying data should be as coherent as possible;

(h) Co-investment by international organizations and groups of countries in tools, platforms, and methodologies should be explored to use scarce resources better and accelerate progress, especially in the context of using alternative sources of data, including Earth observation data. Further engagement with the geospatial community, financial community and central banks is needed. Standardising reporting by corporations will help to show the contribution of the private sector to climate action.

#### 5. The Conference:

(a) Recognized the increasing need for climate change-related statistics and data, and the key role national statistical offices must play in meeting this need. Producing such data requires systemic approaches, linking various statistical fields, innovation, collaboration across the national statistical system, and effective communication with users.

(b) Underlined the importance of timely data and the critical role of the System for Environmental-economic Accounting (SEEA).

(c) Called for strengthening of international collaboration to develop classifications and manuals, and link different standards to ensure comparable data across countries. The work should take into account the global and regional indicator sets and other ongoing initiatives. Co-investment in relevant tools and data sources is needed.

(d) Asked for a close collaboration with the policy process, including for developing guidance on using statistics for reporting under the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement.

(e) Considered necessary to discuss the use of statistical and geospatial data for climate change (possibly at the 2022 plenary session).

(f) Supported the work of the CES Steering Group on Climate Change-Related Statistics and asked the Bureau to discuss the follow-up to this session and decide on further steps at its next meeting.

### **III. PROGRESS ON OTHER WORK BY THE STEERING GROUP**

6. In addition to the organization of the CES session, from October 2020 to September 2021, the Steering Group has conducted the below activities to address the issues identified by the in-depth review and the recommendations of the CES Bureau.

## **A. Improve sharing of experience and highlight the ongoing efforts**

7. In October 2020, the Steering Group proposed conducting an annual exercise of collecting and sharing information about countries' new achievements and plans to strengthen the exchange of good practices in climate change-related statistics. This exercise was meant to complement the annual UNECE Expert Forum and the [wiki with good practices](#) on climate-change related statistics maintained by the UNECE Steering Group on Climate Change-Related Statistics.

8. In May 2021, the Steering Group sent a short questionnaire about recent achievements and plans to all the countries and international organizations participating in the CES work.

9. Information about the work of 23 countries and 4 organizations who responded was presented to the September 2021 Expert Forum in a background document "[Climate Change-Statistics in Practice 2021](#)" and will be published on the wiki with good practices on climate-change related statistics. The exercise is planned to be repeated annually.

## **B. Measuring climate change adaptation**

10. Measuring climate change adaptation is particularly challenging. Vulnerability, exposure and adaptation actions vary between and within countries and regions and over time. What matters for climate change adaptation is highly context-specific, and it is not possible to have a fully harmonized, internationally agreed set of statistics and indicators.

11. In August 2020, the Steering Group conducted a survey to find out what NSOs do in this area. Most of the 26 countries that responded reported that they already undertake some statistical activities related to climate change adaptation, such as producing statistics, linking and disseminating data from other producers or supporting monitoring of national adaptation plans.

12. At the beginning of 2021, a small subgroup chaired by Italy, including also Mexico, Netherlands, UNFCCC, UNSD, UNECLAC, Midsummer Analytics and UNECE was created under the Steering Group to brainstorm on how to provide useful support for NSOs and make collective progress in measuring adaptation. The group proposed collecting case studies with practical examples of statistical activities related to measuring climate change adaptation relevant in different country contexts to share experience and enable mutual learning.

13. The subgroup has developed a case study [template](#) including a set of keywords to tag the examples, which provides a structure for the collection but allows to share a variety of approaches. The template and the first example of a case study prepared by the Netherlands were presented in the 2021 Expert Forum. The subgroup will invite all the countries to submit their case studies describing contexts, tools and methodologies, including experimental approaches and practical solutions using available statistical information.

## **C. Green finance and green investment**

14. At the beginning of 2021, a subgroup chaired by Luxembourg, including Netherlands, the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at the University of Cambridge and UNECE was created under the Steering Group to brainstorm how the Steering Group can contribute to monitoring green and climate finance.

15. First, the group noted many ongoing activities related to measuring and monitoring green finance, such as the Network for Greening the Financial System; the ECB Statistics Committee Expert Group on Climate Change and Statistics; the ECB/Eurostat Task Force on the statistics on sustainable finance and climate related risks under the Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments Statistics (CMFB); or the IMF Climate Change Indicators Dashboard.

16. Second, the group asked the NSOs in the region about the statistical activities and information demands related to green finance, and organized a discussion about the topic in the 2021 Expert Forum based on the survey results.

17. From 23 countries who responded, 9 NSOs reported having undertaken some activities related to green finance. Further 5 countries did not have any activities but noted demand for such work. The priorities for international work on green finance noted by the NSOs were focused around two topics: developing definitions and taxonomies, and identifying statistics and data sources. The Expert Forum noted that monitoring green and climate finance is a new important topic for NSOs and provides an opportunity to test existing frameworks, develop new approaches and answer the user needs better. It was concluded that the Expert Forum should continue discussing the topic of green finance with a specific focus on climate finance. A glossary with definitions, methodological guidelines and a review of existing initiatives would be helpful for NSOs.

18. Detailed summary of NSOs' responses on green finance is presented in the Expert Forum background document "[Climate Change-Related Statistics in Practice 2021](#)".

#### **D. 2021 Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics**

19. The annual Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics was held from 31 August to 3 September 2021. The conclusions of meeting sessions are summarized below.

##### ***Setting the scene***

(a) Recognizing and embedding requirements for the reporting under the Paris Agreement in official statistics will enhance the countries' institutional arrangements and readiness to participate in the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) in a sustainable manner.

(b) International guidance is needed to set the right priorities for future activities in climate change-related statistics. Further work will be needed to provide guidance on the involvement of NSOs in the post-Paris Agreement setting.

(c) The Expert Forum should continue discussing the topic of green finance with a specific focus on climate finance. A glossary with definitions, methodological guidelines and a review of existing initiatives would be helpful for NSOs.

##### ***Measuring climate change vulnerability and adaptation***

(d) Improving measuring adaptation requires collective – global and regional – efforts to develop and agree on concepts, definitions and methods, understand the data needs and share context-specific experiences and responses. There is a need to experiment, adopt iterative approaches and provide practical solutions starting from available statistical information.

Collaboration between practitioners, policy makers, researchers and statistical offices is needed.

(e) There is an urgent need to increase the coherence of the EU and global sectoral policies in the area of nature based solutions and to develop and agree on quantitative and measurable indicators for monitoring, assessment and monitoring progress of nature-based solutions implementation and its effectiveness.

(f) In the long-term perspective, an international reference handbook on climate change adaptation activities will be needed to facilitate compiling comparable data.

(g) Many more case studies describing contexts, tools and methodologies are needed. The Expert Forum invited countries to share their work using the template developed by the Steering Group.

### ***Carbon footprint and consumption-based emissions***

(h) The Expert Forum encouraged countries to start activities on producing carbon footprint and consumption-based emissions and share their experience on the UNECE good practice wiki and through the Expert Fora.

(i) The Expert Forum invited NSOs to produce high-quality Input-Output tables and environmental extensions needed for the environmentally extended multi-regional input-output (EE-MRIO) modelling.

(j) The Expert Forum recommended that international organizations should define an international structure (similar to that of the OECD Regional-Global Trade in Value Added initiative) in charge of the integration of a common methodology to compile energy uses and environmental pressures (emissions, material, etc.) by activities consistent with MRIO tables and guaranteeing its regular update.

(k) The Expert Forum invited all countries to collaborate with the international EE-MRIO projects.

### ***Good practices in producing, disseminating and using climate change-related statistics***

(l) The Expert Forum welcomed the presented examples of innovative work and encouraged countries to use the examples as inspiration to improve availability and quality of climate change-related statistics and indicators. Countries are invited to continue sharing their work through the Expert Fora and the good practice wiki.

(m) Cross-sectoral coordination and guidance on priorities in environmental-social statistics are needed at international level to advance linking environmental, economic and social information and maximize the value of existing data for climate change-related statistics.

(n) An effective dissemination strategy for climate change-related statistics can involve leveraging existing publications, including publications devoted to SDGs.

(o) Systematic use of indicators to measure progress towards climate objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of national and international climate action is essential to gain feedback on the relevance of the indicators and improve the related statistics and accounts.

#### **IV. PROPOSAL FOR FURTHER WORK TO FOLLOW-UP ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE CES SESSION**

##### **A. A Task Force on the role of NSOs in achieving national climate objectives**

20. The Steering Group is proposing to set up a new Task Force on the role of NSOs in achieving national climate objectives.

21. In 2014, the CES Recommendations defined the role of the statistical offices in supporting greenhouse gas inventories and producing other climate change-related statistics, and listed many ways in which NSOs could increase their involvement in providing climate-related data. With the adoption of the Paris Agreement and its Work Programme, these recommendations remain valid, but it is now possible to explore new opportunities and identify concrete ways in which NSOs can contribute to meeting national climate change objectives.

22. First of all, from the perspective of the global reporting, data is integral to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, which is a pledge and review system with quantifiable pledges and goals measured through indicators (Enhanced Transparency Framework) and assessment of collective progress every five years (the Global Stocktake). However, countries have a lot of flexibility in setting goals, choosing indicators and organizing reporting arrangements. This means there are many opportunities for NSOs to be involved and add value, though their role is not prescribed in any of the Paris Agreement processes.

23. Secondly, from the national perspective, to meet climate objectives, governments must put in place increasingly ambitious mitigation and adaptation policies and they need reliable data to design these policies and monitor their success.

24. Finally, the Paris Agreement calls for the governments to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps for enhancing global climate action and achieving global climate objectives. Producing timely and relevant climate change-related statistics is key contribution of NSOs towards addressing this call and increasing public awareness of climate related issues.

25. An umbrella Task Force could analyse opportunities for NSOs involvement in meeting national climate change objectives and showcase what the statistical system already offers to support climate action. In particular, the Task Force could consider:

- Use of official statistics for the reporting of climate data and information under the Enhanced Transparency Framework
  - Potential involvement of NSOs in the institutional set-up of the Enhanced Transparency Framework
  - Statistics and indicators for:
    - National GHG inventory
    - Tracking progress made in implementing and achieving nationally determined contributions
    - Climate change impacts and adaptation
    - Support provided, mobilized, needed and received

- Role of NSOs and of timely and relevant climate change-related statistics in informing and building awareness about climate-related issues among the broad public.
- Official statistics for national climate policymaking beyond the role in the reporting, e.g. for:
  - National adaptation plans – adaptation planning and M&E
  - Monitoring energy transition
  - Monitoring/informing just transition
  - Carbon footprint
  - Monitoring climate finance
- Official statistics for the Global Stocktake
- Role of NSOs in ensuring coherence between SDG, Sendai framework and Paris Agreement reporting

26. For many of the above mentioned areas, some work has already been completed by the Steering Group, the Task Force on the Set of Core Climate Change-Related Statistics and Indicators or other groups and organizations. In such cases, the Task Force would consolidate, build on and aim to fill any gaps identified in that process. In other areas, more work will be needed. The Task Force would pay particular attention to the role of NSOs in measuring climate change adaptation and in responding to the information needs in this area. In doing so, the Task Force will examine whether there are applicable lessons from statistical approaches in other multidimensional and cross-cutting areas, e.g. circular economy.

27. The Task Force will also aim to showcase how the CES Set of Core Statistics and Indicators could be used in the above areas.

28. The work should be aligned and coordinated with corresponding efforts under UNFCCC and its Consultative Group of Experts, with guidance on reporting formats coming from COP26 and with the findings of the Eurostat review of climate change-related statistics.

29. Eurostat and the International Energy Agency have already expressed interest in joining the new Task Force.

## **B. Continue providing platform for producer-user dialogue through the Expert Fora**

30. The Steering Group will continue to provide a platform for producer-user dialogue through the annual Expert Fora. Based on the discussions in the 2021 meeting, the Steering Group will consider the following topics for the next Expert Fora:

- Data revolution for climate change-related statistics – using new data sources and methods
- Implementing climate-related indicators - the CES Set, the Global Set, European Green Deal
- Measuring climate change vulnerability and adaptation
- Role of NSOs in the reporting under the Paris Agreement
- National approaches to measuring SDG 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”
- Monitoring climate finance

- Improving timeliness and granularity of GHG emission estimates, including sun-annual and sub-national emissions

**C. Continue sharing of experience and highlighting the ongoing efforts, including on climate change adaptation**

31. The Steering Group will continue collecting national achievements and plans through the annual “Climate Change-Statistics in Practice” exercise, with a specific focus on the given year’s Expert Forum topics. The collected information will be also published on the good practice wiki.

32. The Steering Group adaptation subgroup will start collecting and analyzing climate change adaptation case studies describing contexts, tools and methodologies, using the developed template. The collection will aim to enable mutual learning and improve understanding of statistical challenges of measuring climate change adaptation and vulnerability. The case studies and conclusions from the collection could feed into the work of the Task Force.

**V. PROPOSAL FOR DECISION BY THE BUREAU**

**33. The Bureau is invited to:**

- **Approve the proposal for the new Task Force**
- **Provide guidance on priorities for future activities in climate change-related statistics**
- **Provide any other comments on the work of the Steering Group**
- **Consider if their country or organization would like become a member of the Task Force**