

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2022/2023 Bureau  
Geneva, Switzerland, 15-16 February 2023

Item 3 (d) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL GROUP FOR THE  
MODERNISATION OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

**Prepared by the Secretariat**

*In February 2020, the Bureau extended the mandate of the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) until end of 2022 and approved the governance structure for the Group. The paper presents updated terms of reference for the continuation of HLG-MOS work.*

***The Bureau reviewed and approved the proposed terms of reference for 2023-2025 and the updated governance structure.***

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In the past, several existing international groups were involved in expert-level discussions on specific aspects of the modernisation of official statistics, such as methodology, information technology, software tools, and enterprise architecture, but there was no overall coordination of these activities. This is why in 2010, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) decided to set up a forum at the level of chief statisticians: the group that is now the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS).

2. HLG-MOS provides a strategic vision for the modernization work and regularly updates its implementation strategy to stay abreast of the latest developments. The first vision was adopted by CES in June 2011. The terms of reference were reviewed in 2013, 2017, and 2020. The mission, values and vision were updated in 2018 and 2022.

3. The current terms of reference reflect a confirmation of the role and responsibilities of HLG-MOS based on experience gained so far.

**II. MANDATE**

4. HLG-MOS reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). It therefore derives its legitimacy and mandate from this body. It prepares annual progress reports about recently accomplished and planned work, to inform and solicit comments from CES and its Bureau.

5. HLG-MOS defines its mission, provides a mid- and long-term vision, identifies priority areas and decides on the overall strategy. The activities under HLG-MOS are supported by a governance structure. This structure includes the Executive Board, expert groups, projects, and expert meetings. The current (2023) structure is presented in the Annex.

6. HLG-MOS identifies concrete tasks or activities to support its work that could be undertaken by groups of experts. Depending on the resources available and the capacity of the UNECE secretariat, up to four of such Modernisation Groups can be active. Their mandate and focus are revised regularly. The Groups are usually set up for a period of at least three years. After having verified the interest by a sufficient number of CES member countries and the availability of resources, HLG-MOS may establish new sub-groups.

7. HLG-MOS identifies two annual projects to expedite work in emerging areas. These projects are chosen from proposals submitted to and approved by the Executive Board after having verified the interest by a sufficient number of CES member countries. Projects can normally be extended by maximum one year.

8. HLG-MOS oversees up to four regular Expert Meetings to share and discuss emerging issues and innovative practices, and to identify topics for future work in cross sectional topics of statistical production. It can mandate workshops to share the work and get input in current activities.

9. HLG-MOS tasks the Executive Board with implementation and monitoring the work programme of the HLG-MOS groups and projects, and with identifying and proposing new activities. HLG-MOS oversees its work and provides leadership and direction to the Executive Board. The role of the Executive Board is presented in the Annex.

10. These terms of reference are valid for a period of 3 years (January 2023 to December 2025), after which they will be reviewed by the CES Bureau.

### **III. OBJECTIVES**

11. The mission of HLG-MOS is to oversee development of models, frameworks, and sharing of information, tools and methods that support the modernisation of statistical organisations. The aim is to improve the efficiency of statistical production processes, and the ability to produce outputs that better meet user needs. HLG-MOS will discuss and collaborate with other bodies involved in related work, both within and beyond the official statistics community. Within the official statistics community, it will take a leadership and coordination role.

12. HLG-MOS will oversee and steer the work of relevant CES expert groups, and will coordinate and give leadership where needed, to other relevant international expert groups and United Nations regional commissions. It is responsible for stimulating development of standards and guidelines with global impact and overseeing activities undertaken in collaboration.

13. The objectives of HLG-MOS are:

(a) To promote common standards, models, tools and methods to support the modernisation of official statistics;

(b) To drive new developments in the production, organisation and management of official statistics, ensuring effective coordination and information sharing within official statistics, and with relevant external bodies;

(c) To advise the CES Bureau on the direction of strategic developments in the modernisation of official statistics and ensure that there is a maximum of convergence and coordination within the community of official statistics.

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

14. Each year in November, HLG-MOS decides on priority projects for the next year and activities undertaken by its sub-groups.

15. The main activities and outputs for the period up to the end of 2025 are:

(a) To frame a collective strategy on developments related to the modernisation of statistical production and services, and to formulate and disseminate new ideas, proposals and projects in this field;

(b) To organise annual workshops and meetings with representatives of relevant expert groups and projects, to help identify key priorities and tasks to implement the vision and strategy;

(c) To determine an annual list of key priorities and their timeframes, and allocate them to relevant expert groups or projects. The resources will be drawn from consenting CES members;

(d) To make the results of its work public via the UNECE website or a wiki site and other communication tools;

(e) To maintain and support implementation of the necessary standards and models to support the modernisation of official statistics;

(f) To actively promote relevant standards, methods and tools.

#### **V. TIMETABLE**

16. The results of annual collaborative activities and projects in key priority areas will be released at the end of each year.

17. A review, and, if necessary, revision of the key models and standards for statistical modernisation will be conducted on a regular basis.

18. CES plenary sessions will annually review the progress of work under HLG-MOS.

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

19. HLG-MOS will meet at least once per year, usually back-to-back with other events. If needed, in-between meetings, it will work mainly via electronic communication and telephone or video conferencing. The continuous oversight is delegated to the HLG-MOS Executive Board that will monitor progress and alignment with the HLG-MOS mission, vision and priorities and meet on a monthly basis and when needed ad-hoc.

#### **VII. MEMBERSHIP**

20. The HLG-MOS members are at the level of heads (chief statisticians) of national and international statistical organisations. An appropriate geographical balance in the membership of HLG-MOS will be ensured.

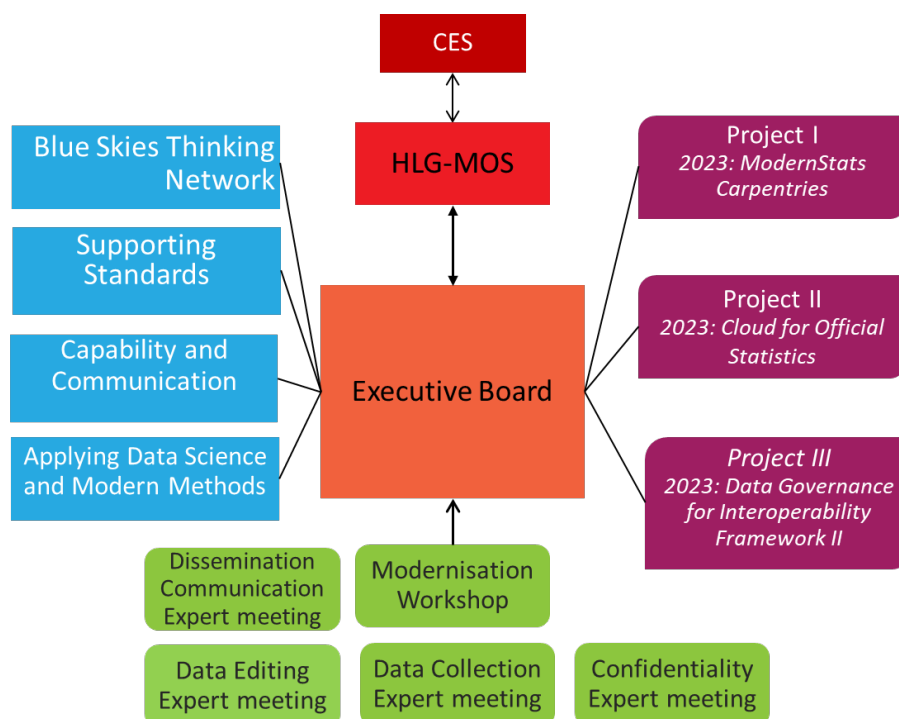
21. The members of HLG-MOS undertake to devote the necessary time to adequately discharge their duties. Members will contribute according to their capacity sufficient in-kind or financial resources to execute the annual work programmes.

22. The members of HLG-MOS will select from amongst themselves a Chair for the term of two years. The term as a Chair is renewable for another two years.
23. The membership of HLG-MOS as of January 2023 is as follows:
  - (a) Anil Arora (Canada) – Chair;
  - (b) David Gruen (Australia);
  - (c) Pádraig Dalton (Ireland);
  - (d) Gian Carlo Blangiardo (Italy);
  - (e) Graciela Márquez Colín (Mexico);
  - (f) Angelique Berg (Netherlands);
  - (g) Mark Sowden (New Zealand);
  - (h) Dominik Rozkrut (Poland);
  - (i) Hoon Han (Republic of Korea);
  - (j) Ian Diamond (United Kingdom);
  - (k) Mariana Kotzeva (Eurostat);
  - (l) Paul Schreyer (OECD);
  - (m) Lidia Bratanova (UNECE).
24. Members of the CES Bureau may participate in HLG-MOS meetings as observers.
25. HLG-MOS may invite additional persons to participate in some or all of its activities, depending on priorities and interests, where their contributions would be of benefit to the work of the Group. These persons shall be representatives of other national or international organisations which demonstrate their commitment to actively contribute to the work of HLG-MOS and support the implementation of the strategy.
26. UNECE will provide the secretariat for HLG-MOS.

## ANNEX

### UPDATED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE HLG-MOS ACTIVITIES AND ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

#### I. 2023 STRUCTURE



#### II. HLG-MOS EXECUTIVE BOARD

27. The HLG-MOS Executive Board was established in 2013 for the strategic and financial management of ongoing HLG-MOS activities and projects. HLG-MOS has tasked the Executive Board with implementation and monitoring the work programme of the HLG-MOS groups and projects, and with identifying and proposing new activities. The Executive Board reports to HLG-MOS that oversees its work and provides leadership and direction. The 2019 HLG-MOS meeting strengthened the role of the Executive Board and the Blue-Skies Thinking Network (BSTN).

28. The Executive Board assesses new projects and activity proposals by the Blue Skies Thinking Network, the Modernisation Groups or submitted by colleagues from within the community of Official Statistics for endorsement by HLG-MOS. It seeks support and resources from interested organisations. It can request the Blue Skies Thinking Network to evaluate the proposals. The Executive Board coordinates the modernisation groups and advises them on the inputs they should provide to ensure the successful completion of annual work programmes.

29. Following the completion of a project, the Executive Board monitors, evaluates and where necessary, oversees the implementation or use of the project results. It assesses the need for any follow-up activities and advises HLG-MOS accordingly.

30. The Board is comprised of senior managers (for example, equivalent to deputy chief statistician level) from national and international statistical organizations, with the authority to commit resources of their organizations to support the HLG-MOS activities. It invites on a

regular basis as observers the chairs of the modernisation committees and BSTN, as well as the HLG-MOS project managers to ensure coordination and give access to broader perspectives on modernisation activities.

31. The Executive Board has a target membership of approximately 10 people that undertake to devote the necessary time to adequately discharge their duties. The list of members is confirmed by HLG-MOS, taking due account of the representation of different regions, expertise and stakeholder groups. The Board can co-opt temporary members with relevant knowledge and experience for specific projects.

### III. MODERNISATION GROUPS

32. HLG-MOS guides the following sub-groups that work under its supervision:

(a) The **Supporting Standards Group** provides support for the implementation and use of the various “ModernStats” models (such as GAMSO, GSBPM and GSIM) through a range of activities which include development, promotion and maintenance of the models. Currently, this group is chaired by Hungary. The group has plenary meetings every month via web conferences. The group may have additional meetings or organise a sprint workshop to expedite the work progress, as necessary.

(b) The **Capability and Communication Group** supports the corporate areas of statistical organizations through providing guidelines on communication, competency profiles, training, management issues, and other methods for increasing the efficiency of statistical organizations (for example lean management). The group is cochaired by Ireland and Poland.

(c) The **Applying Data Science and Modern Methods Group** was established in 2022. The group focuses on developing, implementing, promoting, supporting and facilitating the implementation of data science and modern methods initiatives needed for statistical modernization of business processes.

(d) The **Blue Skies Thinking Network** is the ideas factory of the ModernStats community. It is led by an innovation manager and consists of a core group comprised of around 12 members from various NSOs and international organisations. The core team aims at having both in-depth and broad knowledge of innovation related aspects, and of sufficient heterogeneity to allow for a variety of expertise and views. The core group draws from a flexible pool of resources to assist in the evaluation of proposals. The group is chaired by the Netherlands.

### IV. PROJECTS

33. The work under HLG-MOS is also carried out through annual projects. The priority projects are selected annually following a combined top-down and bottom-up approach. The projects are approved by the Executive Board and endorsed by HLG-MOS. The outputs of priority projects from a previous year and the priority projects selected for the next year are part of the annual reports to the CES Bureau.

34. List of current and past projects:

- 2023: Cloud Usage for Official Statistics
- 2022-2023: Meta-Academy & ModernStats Carpentries
- 2022-2023: Data Governance for Interoperability Framework

- 2021-2022: Input Privacy-preserving Techniques I & II
- 2021: Synthetic Data Guide
- 2019-2020: Machine Learning I & II
- 2018-2019: Strategic Communication Framework I & II
- 2017-2018: Data Architecture Project I & II
- 2016-2017: Data Integration Project I & II
- 2016: Implementing ModernStats Standards
- 2014-2015: Common Statistical Production Architecture I & II (CSPA)
- 2014-2015: Big Data for Official Statistics I & II
- 2013: Frameworks and Standards for Statistical Modernization
- 2012: Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM).

## V. EXPERT MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

35. Four regular expert meetings and three regular workshops are organized under the authority of HLG-MOS. Expert meetings are a platform to share and discuss emerging issues and innovative practices, and to identify topics for future work in cross sectional topics of statistical production. The aim of the workshops is to share the work of Modernisation Groups and to get input in their current activities. HLG-MOS can mandate additional ad-hoc expert meetings and workshops if the UNECE Secretariat has sufficient resources. The regular meetings and workshops take place every two years as in person events. In in-between years, online events may be organised. They are organized by Organisation Committees with national experts and UNECE provides secretariat services. Current regular meetings and workshops:

- (a) Expert Meeting on Dissemination and Communication of Statistics;
- (b) Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Collection;
- (c) Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Confidentiality;
- (d) Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Editing;
- (e) ModernStats World Workshop (Supporting Standards Group);
- (f) Workshop on Human Resource Management and Training for NSOs (Capability and Communication Group);
- (g) Workshop on the Modernisation of Official Statistics (Executive Board).

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