

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

Meeting of the 2023/2025 Bureau  
Cardiff, UK, 9-10 October 2023

Item III (a) of the Provisional  
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS AND THE STEERING  
GROUP ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS**

**Note by the Steering Group**

*This document presents the combined terms of reference of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Group of Experts and the Steering Group on National Accounts. The Steering Group guides the CES work in this area, including organization of the meetings of the Group of Experts. Previously, the terms of reference were separate as they were approved at different points in time.*

***The Bureau reviewed and approved the terms of reference of the Group of Experts and the Steering Group on National Accounts for the period from 2024 to 2028.***

**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”. 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. An important task of the Steering Group has been to organise regular meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts, initially convened as ad-hoc meetings. In view of the importance of the issues discussed by the Group of Experts, the standing nature of its work, and to ensure the continuity of work, in June 2018 the Conference decided on a resource neutral change of converting the Group of Experts on National Accounts into a standing body under the Conference and adopted its terms of reference (to be reviewed every five years). At the CES recommendation, the ECE Executive Committee approved converting the Expert Group on National Accounts into a standing body in December 2019.

3. This document presents the combined terms of reference of the Group of Experts and the Steering Group on National Accounts for review and approval of the CES Bureau.

## II. MANDATE

4. The Group of Experts on National Accounts supports the implementation of the CES work programme related to national accounts. It facilitates the finalization and implementation of the 2025 System of National Accounts (SNA) and related international statistical standards by promoting best practices, contributing to the development of recommendations and methodological guidance, and supporting capacity building activities in national accounts. The Group of Experts also supports linking the SNA with SDGs, to complement the work on implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the *CES Road Map on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*.

5. The Group of Experts reports to CES. The work is organized in coordination with Eurostat and OECD and other partners to avoid overlap and exploit synergies with related work undertaken in the UNECE region. The Group of Experts works closely with the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) and other relevant international groups to ensure international coordination of work related to the SNA.

6. The work of the Group of Experts on National Accounts is guided by a Steering Group. The Steering Group organizes the meetings of the Group of Experts and advises the Secretariat on the implementation of the CES work programme on national accounts.

7. CES will review the Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts and the Steering Group every five years.

## III. ACTIVITIES

8. The Group of Experts engages in the following main activities:

(a) Facilitate the exchange of experience and best practices to improve the quality and international comparability of national accounts and related economic statistics in CES member countries;

(b) Provide a forum to review the recommendations and methodological guidance developed by the teams of specialists, established by CES in the area of national accounts, globalization and related work on sustainability and wellbeing, with a view of presenting them for endorsement to CES, and follow up on their implementation;

(c) Identify emerging areas where methodological research should be undertaken and bring these issues to the attention of the CES Bureau and the ISWGNA to avoid duplication and achieve synergies;

(d) Support the work towards the 2025 SNA and its implementation in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-East Europe (SEE) by identifying regional priorities and capacity development needs. Provide a forum that supports the exchange of experience and institutional cooperation between the compilers of national accounts, balance of payments and other macroeconomic statistics in the region; and

(e) Support linking the SNA with SDGs, to complement the work on implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the *CES Road Map on Statistics for SDGs*.

9. The main activities of the Steering Group on National Accounts include:

(a) Organize the meetings of the Group of Experts on National Accounts, jointly with ISWGNA and other regional partners;

(b) Follow up on the decisions of the Expert Group on National Accounts and report on the outcomes to the CES Bureau. Propose to the CES Bureau new areas where methodological work could be undertaken and recommend the establishment of task forces and conducting in-depth reviews on emerging areas in national accounts and related economic statistics;

(c) Review the need of CES member countries for methodological support or implementation guidance in relation to the 2025 SNA and the research agendas of the CES guidelines and recommendations;

(d) Review progress and outcomes of CES tasks forces working in the area of national accounts and related economic statistics, and monitor the implementation of CES recommendations and guidelines in all CES member countries;

(e) Support and engage with the EECCA and SEE countries in the consultation and implementation of the 2025 SNA, taking into account the specific regional priorities and needs. Support UNECE Secretariat in the planning of regional capacity building activities; and

(f) Consult with ISWGNA to ensure international coordination of work related to the update and implementation of the 2025 SNA.

#### **IV. MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICERS**

10. All United Nations Member States that participate in the work of CES are invited to participate in the meetings of the Group of Experts. The statistical departments of international organizations that are active in the area of national accounts are also invited to attend. In addition, other United Nations Member States, researchers and representatives of academia can participate as observers, in compliance with United Nations rules and practices.

11. The Group of Experts elects its officers (Chair and Vice-Chair) in accordance with the guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies and based on their internationally recognized expertise in the areas relevant for the work of the Group of Experts. In their work the Chair and Vice-Chair are supported by the Steering Group on National Accounts.

12. Any member of the Group of Experts can express interest in participation in the Steering Group. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Group of Experts, in consultation with the Secretariat, present the members of the Steering Group for approval by the CES Bureau. The members of the Steering Group are expected to contribute actively to the work of the group. They should represent the different UNECE sub-regions and the main international organizations active in the area of national accounts, and be recognized international experts in the areas of CES work on national accounts and related economic statistics. The membership of the Steering Group should be periodically reviewed.

#### **V. METHODS OF WORK**

13. The Group of Experts holds annual or biennial meetings. The Group of Experts and the Steering Group aim to reach consensus in their work to the highest extent possible.

14. At its sessions, the Group of Experts reviews the achievements and challenges met since the preceding meeting, proposes to CES and its Bureau future activities and reviews the work and status of the teams of specialists in national accounts.

15. The Steering Group primarily works via email and online meetings. The Group has 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. The Steering Group may invite additional experts to its meetings.

16. The UNECE Statistical Division provides the secretariat for both groups.

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