

United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians

Draft

Terms of Reference

Mission

Promote the networking and coordination of statistical programs and good practices for the system of economic statistics.

Enable the global statistical system and thereby facilitate the regional and national statistical systems to pivot in producing integrated socio-economic, environmental, and geospatial data and statistics.

Facilitate global partnership with academia and private sector in co-investment and co-production for shared and trusted use cases.

Promote the experimentation and testing of inclusive working methods, data solutions and methodological frameworks with the objective of leaving no one behind.

Mandate

1. The United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians¹ facilitates the networking, coordination and communication between the national, regional and global organizations in the system of economic statistics and promotes global partnerships with academia and the private sector for a responsive system of economic statistics that functions efficiently in response to changing user demands.
2. The Network ensures proper mechanisms are in place to gather, document and inform all the actors in the system of economic statistics about the data and analysis needs to respond with effective policies to the current and future socio-economic, environmental and geospatial issues. The Network is a forum to enable a coherent, comprehensive and an agile approach across the system of economic statistics and to address key current and future socio-economic and environmental issues.
3. The Network enables horizontal coordination to ensure that the entire suites of Committees of experts and statistical groups in the system of economic statistics are leveraged to address data priorities. The Network scales up the good practices that have been established by countries, regional and international organizations.
4. This Network accelerates innovation and change by facilitating continuous sharing of national and regional experiences and following agreed principles of networking, co-investment, governance, and experimentation for the system of economic statistics.

¹The United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians is referred to the 'Network' in the rest of the document

5. The Network's main task is to identify broad horizontal priorities, common thematic areas and use cases across the existing Committees of experts and statistical groups for experimentation and testing of new conceptual and data solutions based on problem statements building on global and regional use consultations

Key activities and functions:

1. The key activities and functions of the Network are summarized along four work streams:
 - *Networking: Collaboration and user consultation*
 - The Network undertakes global and regional user consultations on emerging issues and priorities for the research agenda; network NSOs and their data centers, and strengthen analytical and data management capabilities in the system of economic statistics, and; promote a whole-of-system approach and strong partnerships with academia and the private sector.
 - The Network prepares an annual global user consultation report and identifies key priority areas and emerging issues.
 - *Transforming and challenging: Statistical infrastructure and operations, and data solutions*
 - The Network promotes collaborative actions on global co-investment and co-production for global statistical infrastructure, operations, and data solutions, as well as leverage efficiencies and limit duplication of effort through the prioritization of global use cases for co- investment and co-development.
 - The Network identifies and receives co-investment and co-development proposals, facilitates collaboration between the actors in the system in the implementation of the proposals, and reports on the progress of development initiatives.
 - *Enabling: Institutional arrangements and governance*
 - The Network promotes better working methods and better coordination and collaboration among groups for the system of economic statistics that are inclusive of the actors the system and fosters the effective functioning of the

system. The Network identifies common thematic areas and use cases across the existing statistical and data groups for experimentation and testing of new conceptual and data solutions based on problem statements.

- The Network convenes meetings with the chairs of all statistical groups and Committee of Experts to align the priorities of the agenda of the system of economic statistics determined by the recurrent global and regional consultations.
- *Experimenting, integrating and documenting: Statistical framework and methods*
 - The Network promotes working methods for the continuous and iterative update of global statistical standards through the experimentation and testing of methodological changes in countries, and pursues a broad integration framework with multi-dimensional and broader measures of progress for the system of economic statistics.
 - The Network will not oversee detailed working items for Committees of experts and statistical groups but will deal with those from a strategic and global level to ensure the overall relevancy, effectiveness, coherence and unduplicated approach to address global priorities.

Membership and level of representation

1. The Network membership of representatives from countries and agencies builds on the strength of diversity and seniority of representation and intends to demonstrate the operational power of a global response through co-investments and co-production of NSOs, and regional and global agencies.
2. The Network is country-led and co-chaired by a member of a developed and a developing country.
3. High-level representation of influential economic statisticians is necessary to ensure the strategic role of the Network in identifying priorities based on user needs, develop a strategic vision and cultivate a whole-of-system approach to address them.
4. Members of the Network comprise high-level economic statisticians from national governments and international and regional organizations with a broad and in-depth horizontal knowledge of the priorities and issues in the system of economic statistics in its broad definition (including social and environmental dimensions). In addition, members are selected so as to ensure equitable regional country and agency representation.

5. Given the wide range of topics covered by the Network, as well as the need to keep the size of the Network manageable in order to ensure in-depth discussion, the members of the Network comprise about 30 representatives from Member States and organizations. Depending on the topics on its agenda, additional subject matter experts from Member States and international organizations may be invited to participate in task teams and projects of the Network.
6. Members are appointed to the Network for an initial period of three (3) years, which may be renewed.
7. The Network will have an annual face-to-face meeting at the time of the UN Statistical Commission. In special circumstances, more regular face-to-face and virtual meetings may be organized. In between meetings, electronic discussions are the preferred method of carrying on consultations.

Governance and Management

The United Nations Statistical Commission is the entity that establishes the Network, approves its mandate and work programme and monitors its progress of work. The mandate of the Network is periodically reviewed by the Network itself. The proposed amendments are submitted to the Statistical Commission for endorsement.

Co-Chairs

1. The Network elects two Co-chairs, taking into account the diversity of the Network membership. They serve for a three-year period and are each eligible for re-election for a second three-year term.
2. The role of the Co-Chairs is to develop, in close cooperation with the Bureau and the Secretariat an annual programme of work for the Network and monitor progress of the various components of the programme.
3. The Co-Chairs represent the Network at international meetings and play a key role in promoting a whole-of-system approach and strong partnerships with the various stakeholders of the system of economic statistics to effectively respond to global user needs.
4. The Co-chairs promote an inclusive process through extensive user dialogue and networking and consider the circumstances of all countries especially developing countries, in order to leave no one behind, in the identification of priorities and in the development of approaches and co-investment proposals.

5. The Co-Chairs set the agenda for the meetings and direct the sessions of the Network, including summarizing the discussion of each agenda item as a basis for preparing the report of the session.
6. The Co-Chairs propose the draft minutes of meetings as prepared by the Secretariat, to be approved by written procedure by all the members who attended the meeting.

Bureau

1. The Bureau consists of the two Co-chairs, leaders of the Task Teams and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). As new Task Teams are formed and existing ones complete their work new ones are formed, their leaders will rotate in and out of the Bureau. The members of the Bureau represent the diverse membership of the Network from countries, regional and international organizations. The Chair may also invite other experts, chairs of the city and other Committees/expert groups to participate in the meetings of the Bureau.
2. The Bureau, which will work under delegated authority from the Network, is established to assist the Network with the day-to-day management of its programme of work and the projects under its responsibility. Decisions taken by the Bureau, under the delegated authority from the Network, will be reported back to the Network.
3. The activities and tasks of the Network are organized by task teams, for which members of the Bureau will be assigned as leads and representing the task teams. Decisions taken by the Bureau, under the delegated authority from the Network, will be reported back to the Network.

Secretariat

1. The Secretariat functions of the Network are conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). The secretariat, which will be the main source of logistical and administrative support for the Network, will receive guidance regarding such support from the Network and its Bureau.
2. In direct collaboration with the Co-chairs and following consultation with Members, the Secretariat supports the Co-Chairs in preparing the draft agenda for the meetings of the Network and ensures that all documentation received and approved by the Co-chairs, along with all other necessary information, is made available to its members. It is also responsible for organizing the Network's meetings and for coordination with the agreed host of a given Network meeting.
3. The Secretariat keeps up-to-date the website of the Network. The Website is hosted by the UNSD.

4. The Secretariat prepares the draft report to the Statistical Commission for approval by the Co-chairs.
5. The Secretariat supports the drafting of joint statements as requested by the Co-chairs.

Task teams

1. The Network will convene task teams to carry out its work programme and/or in support of specific projects, for example for use cases and methodological matters, for which specific and time-bound Terms of References (ToRs) will be prepared. The Task teams will be focused on very specific issues and have the objective of quickly devising approaches for :
 - finding solutions for current statistical challenges
 - experimenting with newly developed statistical standards, methods, and working arrangements
 - convening participants through global consultations, conferences and other means to identify broad horizontal priorities and common thematic issues which require solutions
2. The Task teams will be bodies of the Network and, as such, will fall under its overall management and coordination. Task teams, which will be created by the Network to address specific topics with a limited lifetime, will be composed of members of the Network who express interest in being part of the task teams and will meet on a regular intervals to ensure the timely completion of the assigned ToRs.
3. The Task teams will operate in sprints of two to three month periods to complete short projects. These projects will develop an initial strategy or minimal viable product, that will then be provided to other appropriate existing bodies (working groups, committees, etc.) to be fully developed, tested or implemented. The Network will set up appropriate monitoring mechanisms to nurture and follow the further development of minimum viable product. In many respects, the work of the Task Teams is preparatory, and their short and intense life cycle ensures that momentum is sustained to meet clear objectives.