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**Items for discussion and decision: international statistical classifications**

Background document

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## **Terms of reference for the Standing Task Team on ISIC and CPC**

Prepared by the  
Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications

# **Terms of reference for the Standing Task Team on ISIC and CPC**

Last update: 12 January 2025

## **Background**

1. The United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its 54<sup>th</sup> session in 2023: *“endorsed the establishment of standing task teams to facilitate the ongoing maintenance, updating and implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC), and requested the Committee to formulate a proposal for a regular revision cycle of these classifications and the development of a research agenda for future revisions for consideration by the Commission”*.
2. In response to the above request, the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classification (UNCEISC) at its meeting in October 2023 agreed to set up one consolidated standing task team on ISIC and CPC (STT-ISIC-CPC), which will be a permanent task team reporting to the Committee for the ongoing maintenance and revision of both ISIC and CPC.
3. The STT-ISIC-CPC will report to the UNCEISC. Once operational, this STT-ISIC-CPC will supersede the former task teams on the revision of ISIC (TT-ISIC) and CPC (TT-CPC).

## **Objectives**

4. The establishment of a standing task team for the maintenance, update and implementation of ISIC and CPC is necessary to support the regular revision of these classifications, including the development of a new and modernised approach to the maintenance and revision of ISIC and CPC, and the monitoring of classification issues that emerge between revisions and pursuing the resolution of issues placed on a research agenda, leading to the next revision. The standing task team on ISIC and CPC will be tasked with developing an implementation and maintenance strategy and research agenda for ISIC and CPC. The STT-ISIC-CPC is established in order to achieve the following objectives:
  - a) Maintain ISIC and CPC as international standards.
  - b) Make ISIC and CPC revision process more predictable and transparent as per the recommendations of the Committee.
  - c) Keep ISIC and CPC responsive to new user needs and emerging trends.
  - d) Make ISIC and CPC more accessible and easier to use for their users.

- e) Seek continuous improvement in the alignment of ISIC and CPC with each other and with other statistical frameworks and regional and national industry and product classifications.

### **Scope of Work**

- 5. The STT-ISIC-CPC will carry out the following tasks:
  - a) Develop a strategy for establishing revision cycles for ISIC and for CPC, and determine the feasibility of, and time span for a regular revision cycle including synchronizing the revisions of both classifications.
  - b) Engage in the maintenance and update of the new ISIC and CPC.
  - c) Conducting broad global consultations and analyzing results.
  - d) Carry out a revision of ISIC or CPC when it is deemed necessary.
  - e) On a continuous basis, conduct research on pending and emerging issues on ISIC and CPC, and assess their impact on ISIC and CPC and provide recommendations to address those issues.
  - f) Assist in the implementation of the new ISIC and CPC after the revision process is completed.

### **Expected output**

- 6. The STT-ISIC-CPC will produce the following deliverables:
  - a) The STT-ISIC-CPC will submit a strategy paper to the UNCEISC for approval that describes the recommended revision cycles for ISIC and CPC, including recommendations on the procedures, stages and milestones for implementing a regular revision cycle.
  - b) The STT-ISIC-CPC will work on a research agenda on new, pending and emerging issues, issue guidance notes or determinations to add clarification on existing ISIC and CPC content and answer user driven questions, and assess the need for a new ISIC/CPC revision on a regular basis, and report regularly to the UNCEISC
  - c) The STT-ISIC-CPC will establish a timeline for the revision process, consult with countries and other stakeholders on ISIC and CPC issues, discuss and decide on changes to ISIC and CPC, and produce a revised ISIC and CPC, including the structure, explanatory notes, correspondence tables, and other supplementary materials deemed necessary.

- d) The STT-ISIC-CPC will develop and carry out an ongoing implementation strategy for a revised ISIC and CPC to facilitate implementation in countries, to include:
  - i. Developing manuals, handbooks and other classifications tools (such as additional correspondences, alphabetical indexes, discussion forum; registry, classification hotline, and modern IT tools and platforms) to facilitate the dissemination and use of classifications in support of the implementation of ISIC and CPC in countries.
  - ii. Supporting the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in carrying out technical cooperation projects, training seminars and workshops in respective regions and countries on the use of ISIC and CPC, in collaboration with regional and national stakeholders.
- e) The STT-ISIC-CPC will continually review and discuss inquiries from ISIC and CPC users and contribute to a registry of case laws that includes: a) rulings on changes to the official ISIC/CPC publication, b) interpretations of ISIC/CPC codes and their scope, c) corrections to errors in ISIC/CPC publications, and d) other decisions and remarks that are helpful to ISIC/CPC users.

### **Composition of the STT-ISIC-CPC**

- 7. The success of this standing task team depends on active participation from a wide range of geographic regions and economic contexts. Therefore, emphasis is placed on ensuring a composition of geographically balanced membership under the guidance of the UNCEISC and its Bureau. As a standing task team, membership will be fluid as members cycle off and replacements are added upon confirmation by the Chair (or Co-Chair of the STT-ISIC-CPC). Countries are encouraged to nominate practitioners and users in the area of industry and product classifications from any level of their institutions where such expertise is found. While the size of the team is not specified, the number of members should be sufficient to ensure equitable distribution of assignments, but not so large as to impede decision-making. The STT-ISIC-CPC may exercise discretion to create sub-groups as needed.
- 8. The Business Statistics Section of UNSD serves as the Secretariat of the STT-ISIC-CPC.

### **Organisation of work**

- 9. The STT-ISIC-CPC will communicate through email, Wiki, an online platform for discussion, and virtual meetings. The Chair (or Co-Chairs) will convoke and preside meetings of the STT-ISIC-CPC in consultation with UNSD and the UNCEISC Bureau.