

## **Terms of Reference for the UNCEBD Task Team on Scanner Data**

**(Revised 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025)**

### **1. Background**

The statistical community has the obligation of exploring the use of new data sources, such as scanner and web scraped data, to meet the expectation of society for enhanced products and improved and more efficient ways of working. The Task Team on Scanner Data was set up in 2017 with the aim of increasing the use of scanner data in national statistical systems. Scanner data has been used for the calculation of consumer price indices alongside other alternative data sources such as web scraped data and administrative data. The Task Team has been through several iterations since 2017. The current aim for the Task Team (as refreshed in 2024) is to enable and expand the practical usage of these data in consumer price statistics. Future work will look to develop the wider usage of these data (for example, in household expenditure statistics). In line with the overall mandate of the UNCEBD, the Task Team will achieve this through expanding available guidance materials and promoting training and sharing of experience.

### **2. Objectives**

To guide, develop, and promote the practical usage of alternative data sources (including scanner, web scraped and administrative data) in consumer price statistics, the specific objectives of the Task Team are as follows:

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- Repository of information. Provide guidance on the end-to-end methods and processes of using these data. The guidance should reference existing literature where possible.
- New guidance material. Provide methodological guidance for those topics where existing literature does not exist or does not fully capture the different range of possible options for consideration.
- Practical implementation. Provide practical guidance on the implementation of these methods and processes in a live production setting.
- Training. Provide a full suite of training materials to supplement the guidance produced above.

These objectives will be supported by two underlying principles:

- Timeliness. Ensure that any content produced by the Task Team in line with the above objectives remain up to date with current discussions in the field. For this objective, the Task Team will be supported by a Secretariat function which will be responsible for maintaining the existing published content.
- Informed choice. Provide a range of options for these topics, so we should not recommend a single “best” approach – instead colleagues will be encouraged to review the options and decide what is best for their particular situation.

### 3. Scope of Work

1. **Standards and frameworks:** Publish and maintain guidance on utilising new data sources in the production of consumer price statistics. Guidance to be structured in a form most applicable to support NSOs, including but not limited to an evergreen handbook, approaches to reproducibility, example code, etc.
2. **Capacity building:** Publish and maintain training content aligned to the handbook guidance, covering the end-to-end process of using these new data sources in the production of consumer price statistics.
3. **Research and innovation:** Identify gaps in the existing literature and publish additional guidance as appropriate.
4. **Collect feedback from the community:** Present the work of the Task Team via established networks and conduct surveys to help shape guidance and support the planning of future workstreams.

### 4. Composition and Membership

#### **Task Team Membership:**

The Task Team is currently composed of more than 25 experts representing NSOs, policymakers, UN agencies, academia, private sector experts, non-profit organizations, and other relevant stakeholders with expertise in using these alternative data sources in consumer price statistics.

#### **Membership Criteria:**

Membership is open to individuals with a demonstrated background in using these alternative data sources in consumer price statistics.

#### **Leadership Structure:**

The Task Team is currently chaired by Tanya Flower from the Office for National Statistics, responsible for strategic direction, reporting, and facilitating communication with the UNCEBD Bureau. Each sub-group is led by a workstream lead, responsible for the specific workstream deliverables. The workstream leads are as follows: Serge Goussev from Statistics Canada, Federico Polidoro from the World Bank and Collin Brown from Statistics Canada.

The Task Team is supported by a Secretariat based at the Brazilian UN Regional Hub on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics.

Together the chair, workstream leads and secretariat lead form the Task Team Steering Group.

#### **Terms of Service:**

The Task Team is divided into 4 sub-groups:

- Classification workstream
- Training workstream
- System architecture workstream
- FAIR workstream

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Task Team-Chair**

- Lead regular meetings and Task Team activities.
- Report progress to the UNCEBD Bureau.
- Facilitate external partnerships and collaboration.

### **Members:**

- Participate in Task Team meetings and sub-groups.
- Contribute to drafting guidance on utilising new data sources in the production of consumer price statistics.
- Lead or contribute to the delivery of trainings, materials, and webinars.

### **Secretariat Support:**

UNSD serves as the secretariat of the Task Team providing administrative support, coordinating communication, and facilitating reporting between the Task Team and the UNCEBD Bureau.

## **6. Method of Work**

### **Meetings:**

The Task Team Steering Group meet virtually every month. The different sub-groups have different frequencies of meeting virtually depending on current deliverables, but generally at least once every couple of months.

### **Communication:**

Task Team communicates via email and uses the collaborative platform such as the dedicated UNSD Wiki.

### **Decision-Making:**

Decisions are made through consensus.

### **Reporting:**

The Task Team provides progress updates to the UNCEBD Bureau, with an annual report detailing achievements, challenges, and future goals, as input to the UN Statistical Commission report.

## **7. Deliverables and Milestones**

### **Key Outputs Achieved in 2024:**

1. Published an e-handbook (wiki) on using alternative data sources (ADS) to produce consumer price statistics. This was delivered in May 2024:  
<https://unstats.un.org/wiki/display/GWGSD/>

2. Prepared the first training course “Alternative Data Sources to compile CPI: an overview” and published to the temporary learning platform. Additional training content was also prepared for Alternative Data Sources acquisition, and bilateral price indices. Content is also being drafted for the remaining training courses.
3. Presented at the Ottawa 2024 conference on the work so far and new material for classification and training: <https://stats.unece.org/ottawagroup/meeting/18> (see links in Session 5 and Workshop Session)

**Key deliverables expected (January 2025 - December 2025):**

1. Ongoing maintenance of the e-handbook
2. Publish guidance on potential methods available for classifying scanner data to produce data ready for price index compilation via the e-handbook
3. Publish the training courses on the UN learning platform
4. Present on result of systems architecture survey
5. Present proof of concept data catalogue and publish initial guidance on the handbook relating to FAIR (FAIR data meets the principles of findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability).

**Success Indicators:**

Indirect/global indicators

- Increasing use of countries implementing alternative data sources in the calculation of consumer price statistics

Direct/Task Team indicators

- Number of training courses delivered
- Number of visitors to the e-handbook website
- Number of data sets added to the FAIR data catalogue

## **8. Budget and Resource Allocation**

**Funding Sources:**

The Task Team works on voluntary basis and travel by experts are funded by their agencies.

Potential partnerships and donor-support can be explored for future activities. Resources will include staff time, technical support to countries, and travel for in-person meetings.

## **9. Duration and Review**

**Timeline:**

Task Team operates on a one-year programme, with extension based on the activities and deliverables identified by the group.