

Mandate and governance of the Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics

A. Mandate

1. The Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics is a statistical entity of the United Nations Statistical Commission, to be mandated, at the fiftieth session of the Commission, to provide coordination and guidance for the development of business and business-related statistics. These statistics provide information on the structure, economic activity, competitiveness and performance of businesses. In this regard, emphasis is placed on the ability of the Committee to meet new challenges and respond to policy and users' needs, including with regard to globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability. The Committee will take a broad approach to business statistics, in the compilation of which the integration with international trade is fundamental. Therefore, the inclusion of international trade in the name and the mandate of the Committee is to advance and promote the integration of business and trade statistics, although it does not cover all conceptual and technical aspects that characterize the statistical domain of international trade, including certain aspects of the regulatory framework.
2. This broad approach will allow for the identification and differentiation between categories of firms, such as exporter/non-exporter, foreign-owned/domestically owned, market/non-market, in statistical business registers, and, as such, requires the development of guidance and best practices in: economic profiling; classifications; data sources on businesses; business registers; and data management. The approach must also provide evidence and support analysis in other areas, such as: research and development; innovation activities; information and communication technology usage; measurement of price indices; and the environmental and social responsibility activities of businesses.
3. In order to achieve these goals, the Committee will adopt an integrated economic statistics approach based upon an enterprise-centred perspective in the execution of its mandate. An integrated approach to economic statistics calls for: the use of the System of National Accounts (SNA) as the conceptual organizing framework for economic statistics; the adoption of appropriate institutional arrangements as an enabling environment for integration; and the use of an integrated statistical production process based on common registers the use of common definitions and classifications and the integration of survey and administrative data sources.¹ While SNA will be the central organizing framework used to define business units, it is important to note that other frameworks, notably those used in the area of business demography and entrepreneurship statistics, where concepts such as births, marriages and deaths are central, will also form an important part of this integrated approach. An integrated approach to business and trade statistics means that their compilation is, to the largest extent possible, integrated and harmonized with economic, socio-demographic, environment and multi-domain statistics.²
4. Within this broader context of an integrated economic statistics framework, the objective of the Committee is to strengthen the basic business statistics needed for the overall improvement of economic statistics and for responding to emerging needs. In order to achieve this objective, the programme of work of the Committee will focus on the following five strategic areas:

¹ See Guidelines on Integrated Economic Statistics, United Nations publication, 2013, Sales No. E.12.XVII.7.

² Economic Commission for Europe, "Classification of Statistical Activities, Rev 1", 2009.

(a) Coordination: promote coordination integration and complementarity of programmes in business and trade statistics undertaken by international organizations and countries and provide a strategic vision in this area;

(b) Methodology and concepts: advance the methodological and conceptual work in business and trade statistics, including statistical business registers, by identifying and prioritizing issues that need to be addressed, establishing appropriate mechanisms to address those issues, monitoring progress made, reviewing proposed solutions and submitting recommendations to the Statistical Commission for approval;

(c) Capacity-building: promote the implementation of latest international statistical standards and best practices in business and trade statistics in countries through the formulation, when possible, of system-wide and integrated implementation strategies;

(d) Data: promote the development and improvement of data information systems related to business and trade statistics at the national, regional and international level, in line with international statistical standards and international recommendations and advise on new areas of development, as needed, such as big data;

(e) Communication/promotion and statistical response on emerging issues: engage with users of business and trade statistics (for example, in the academic, business and government sector), particularly in the developing world, with a view to promoting the use of the statistics and identifying emerging areas; and engage prominently at the level of the international agenda by articulating a coordinated statistical response from an examination of business and trade statistics, in particular in high-priority areas, such as globalization, digitalization, well-being and sustainability and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. In elaborating its work programme, the Committee shall identify the most promising avenues to foster the expansion and integration of business, notably with trade statistics, in order to increase the quality and relevance of official statistics with respect to the needs of users.

6. The Committee has an umbrella function in providing overall vision, coordination, prioritization and direction in the field of business and trade statistics and their integration. The Committee will ensure that it works in a complementary manner with existing or new groups covering business and trade statistics and it will also coordinate its activities and findings with related groups and bodies, such as those working in the areas of national accounts and other economic statistics, labour and other social and demographic statistics and environment and multi-domain statistics.

7. Within its mandate, the Committee will regularly provide a detailed report on its workplan, including its activities, for the consideration of the Statistical Commission and report on the progress in its implementation.

B. Governance

8. The major elements of the governance arrangements are shown in the diagram below. The description of the governance follows the diagram and covers the managerial functions, roles and responsibilities of the various groups and organizations involved. The boxes within the shaded large box represent the bodies of the Committee or projects under the Committee's responsibility. Technical expert groups and city groups are shown outside the shaded box, when they were established by bodies other than the Committee and have their own governance and reporting structure. Nevertheless, when their

programmes of work overlap with that of the Committee, the Committee may coordinate with these external bodies as mandated by the Statistical Commission.

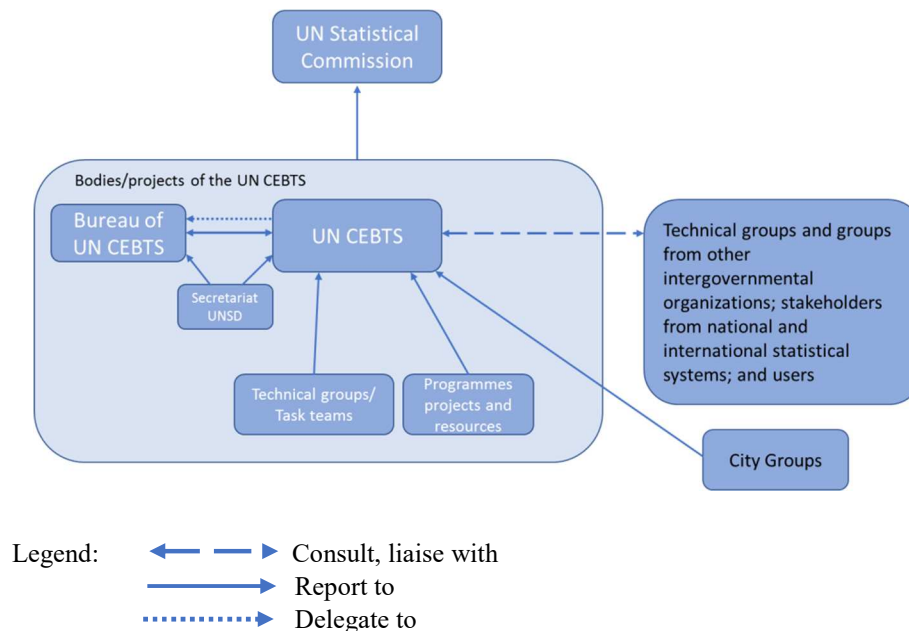
United Nations Statistical Commission

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

Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics

10. The Committee of Experts is a country-led intergovernmental body, comprising members from Member States and international organizations, which is responsible for carrying out the mandate outlined in section A above. The Committee is also responsible for reporting the progress of its programme of work to the Statistical Commission.

Governance structure of the Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics



11. Within each area of its work programme, the Committee will undertake specific activities, engaging existing city groups and/or other expert groups and establishing new technical groups, as needed, to carry out its activities. For large projects, such as the development, updating or implementation of international standards, it may be necessary to develop project management frameworks for adoption by the Committee.

12. Broadly speaking, the Committee will undertake the following tasks in respect of the programmes under its responsibility:

(a) Strategic planning, programming and monitoring: develop and monitor a strategic multi-year framework and annual work programme of the Committee that reflect its ongoing priorities and objectives, including: providing strategic direction for its activities; ensuring the complementarity and

proper coordination of its activities; agreeing on governance arrangements; formulating the workplans of technical groups and projects, including communication strategies and budgets; assigning or negotiating the tasks of the technical expert groups and groups from other intergovernmental organizations; tracking progress; and ensuring adequate and effective review of technical matters;

(b) Reporting: reporting to the Statistical Commission on the workplans and projects within its mandate; receiving regular reports from the technical groups; and liaising with stakeholders, including managing their expectations and gaining their support;

(c) Resource mobilization: ensuring that workplans and projects are adequately resourced; raising funds from external sources, as needed, for example in the case of special projects; recommending staffing for the projects; and monitoring cash and in-kind budgets.

13. High-level representation will be necessary to ensure the strategic role of the Committee in setting priorities, bringing forward a research agenda, taking decisions on standards and developing a strategic vision.

14. Members of the Committee will comprise high-level representatives from national Governments and international organizations with expertise in business and trade statistics. In addition, members will be selected so as to ensure equitable regional representation.

15. Given the wide range of topics covered by the Committee, as well as the need to keep the size of the Committee manageable in order to ensure in-depth discussion, the members of the Committee will 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 technical groups and projects of the Committee.

16. Members are appointed to the Committee for an initial period of three (3) years, which may be renewed.

17. The Committee will have a face-to-face meeting once a year. In special circumstances, ad hoc face-to-face meetings may be organized. In between meetings, electronic discussions will be the preferred method of carrying on consultations.

Chair

18. The Committee will elect, from among its members, the Chair for a period of three years, renewable for one term. The role of the Chair is to develop, in close cooperation with the Bureau and the secretariat, a multi-year strategic framework and an annual programme of work for the Committee, monitor progress of the various components of the programme and set the agenda for the meetings.

19. The Chair will represent the Committee at international meetings and will play a key role in promoting and communicating the work of the statistical community with other communities, namely the scientific, academic, business and policymaking community. She or he will engage the various stakeholders and seek supports for Committee projects.

Bureau

20. The Bureau, which will work under delegated authority from the Committee, is established to assist the Committee with the day-to-day management of its programme of work and the projects under its responsibility. These activities and tasks are organized by task teams, for which members of the Bureau

will be assigned as leads. Decisions taken by the Bureau, under the delegated authority from the Committee, will be reported back to the Committee.

21. The Bureau, under the delegated authority from the Committee, will carry out the activities and tasks in relation to coordination, methodological development, data and data management, statistical capacity-building, promotion and statistical response on emerging issues, in line with the workplans and projects within its mandate.

22. The Bureau of the Committee will consist of members of the Committee at the senior level in national statistical offices and international and regional organizations. The Bureau will include the Chair, the secretariat and senior officials from Member States and international organizations endorsed by the Committee from among its members for a period of three (3) years. Members of the Committee who lead the Committee's task teams will be members of the Bureau. The Chair may also invite other experts, chairs of the city and expert groups to participate in the meetings of the Bureau.

Secretariat

23. The secretariat of the Committee and its Bureau will be the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The secretariat, which will be the main source of logistical and administrative support for the Committee, will receive guidance regarding such support from the Committee and its Bureau. Among the substantive and administrative tasks that the secretariat will undertake are the following:

- (a) Consultation with countries and/or regional and other expert meetings on major substantive aspects of its programme of work, such as methodological standards;
- (b) Management of the Committee's website;
- (c) Preparation of the correspondence with the members of the Statistical Commission and national statistical offices;
- (d) Preparation of reports to the Statistical Commission on behalf of the Committee and its Bureau;
- (e) Provision of other substantive and administrative support to the Committee and its Bureau, as appropriate.

Technical groups/task teams

24. The Committee of Experts will convene technical groups/task teams to carry out its work programme and/or in support of specific projects, for example for normative and methodological matters. Such groups will be bodies of the Committee and, as such, will fall under its overall management and coordination. Task teams, which will be created within the Committee to address specific topics with a limited lifetime (generally, 2 years), will be composed of members of the Committee who express interest in being part of the task teams.

25. The technical groups may include experts in business and trade statistics who are not members of the Committee. These experts will be appointed by the Bureau of the Committee. Appropriate balanced regional representation must be considered in the composition among the members of these technical groups. Technical groups will only be created where existing groups cannot provide the necessary technical support and will be chaired by a member of the Bureau. The technical groups will have limited life spans and focus on selected issues.

City groups

26. Existing city groups may be engaged to work on specific programmes and projects under the responsibility of the Committee. The Committee, while respecting the character and mandate of these groups, will coordinate, within its mandate, its programme of work with those groups, as mandated by the Statistical Commission.

27. Specific tasks and responsibilities of these groups will be agreed upon between these groups and the Committee. The terms of reference for the tasks related to the programmes and projects will be formulated in coordination with every expert group. They will include specifications on deliverables, timelines and work arrangements for monitoring the technical discussions and for reporting recommendations to the Committee. The city groups will report to the Committee on the tasks and responsibilities agreed with the Committee.

Technical expert and inter-agency groups and groups from intergovernmental organizations

28. The Committee will liaise with other relevant technical expert groups and groups from other intergovernmental organizations that are already in existence and have their own mandate, governance and reporting structure. These groups include, the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts and its Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts, the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics, the Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics of the International Monetary Fund, the Technical Advisory Group on Economic Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. For areas in the programmes of work of the aforementioned groups that fall within its scope of work, the Committee will initiate liaison with such groups in order to ensure complementarity between the programmes and to advance an integrated economic statistics approach in the broader area of economic statistics.