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Background document
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**THE “WYE” GROUP
ON STATISTICS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT
AND AGRICULTURE HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Terms of Reference

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THE “WYE” GROUP ON STATISTICS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Terms of Reference

I. Background

1. In June 2005, the IWG.AGRI Task Force on Statistics on Rural Development and Agriculture Household Income completed its work with the submission of the handbook entitled *Rural Households' Livelihood and Well-being: Statistics on Rural Development and Agriculture Household Income*. The handbook was subsequently published to the UNECE website (www.unece.org/stats/rural), with print copies available by 2007.
2. As a result of their collaboration on the handbook, statisticians, and economists in national statistical offices, especially in North America and Western Europe, and in multilateral institutions have an established, shared interest in improving methods for collecting data on the rural environment, communities, and farm and non-farm households. Such information is becoming of increasing importance as policy for agriculture broadens, as rural issues rise up the political agenda, and as the structure of farming and rural areas evolves.
3. At a final meeting of the Task Force in Paris in June 2006, it was agreed that it would be desirable to establish a new framework under which discussions of implementation of the handbook's method could be carried out, with the possibility of revisions as indicated to the handbook itself.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE CITY GROUP

4. The city group has as its main objective the promotion of the refinement and adoption of international standards in statistics for rural areas and agriculture household incomes. Within this broad mandate, the city group would
 - consider challenges to consistency of adoption of comparable methods of data collection across countries,
 - give special focus to the application and value of the data standards in developing countries, especially as it may support the construction of indicators for the Millennium Development Goals,
 - assess and explore the potential for the use of improved statistics as policy-relevant indicators and in empirical analysis of policies for farm and rural households, natural resources, and regional economic development, and

- determine the need for any changes or updating to the handbook and, if indicated, organize and execute the revision.

III. OUTPUT

5. The main outputs will be

- proceedings from periodic meetings that reflect interests in the implementation of consistent methods for rural data collection and their use in policy analysis
- revision of the 2005 handbook, if deemed appropriate

IV. MEETINGS

6. The city group will meet annually, at members' own expense, to share new knowledge. As was the practice for the Task Force, members will take turns hosting the meetings on a cost-recovery basis. Meetings will also be held in the margins of international statistical conferences. Electronic discussions would continue throughout the year.

V. COMPOSITION OF THE CITY GROUP

7. The city group will be chaired by members on a rotating basis with the United Kingdom serving as the first chair and hosting a meeting in 2008. The group will include 15-20 working experts from national statistical offices, ministries of agriculture, universities, and research institutes (United States, Canada, Italy, Netherlands, Mexico, China, e.g.) and international organizations (FAO, World Bank, Eurostat, OECD). The individual participants are nominated in their personal capacities as recognized experts.

VI. TIME FRAME

8. The work program suggested by the city group would continue until spring 2011, allowing time both for the ongoing discussion of implementation and the revision of the handbook, if any.