

Annex I

Terms of reference of the Working Group on Data Stewardship

(Amended version of 21 October 2021)

I. Objectives

1. The primary objectives of the Working Group on Data Stewardship are as follows:

(a) To enhance knowledge and provide recommendations with respect to data stewardship that include approaches to data governance, equity and inclusion, sharing and collaboration and the overall conceptual framework for data stewardship and can be applied to a wider data ecosystem, taking into consideration the different starting points of national statistical offices;

(b) To promote the commitment of the statistical community and other stakeholders to working on the implementation of data governance in the national statistical system, in particular through the coordination role of national statistical offices;

(c) To promote sharing and collaboration with respect to data, whether public-public or public-private, allowing the regular use of public interest data for the generation of official statistics, while preserving confidentiality and privacy;

(d) To improve the performance of national data ecosystems through the expansion of methods and access inspired by a data stewardship approach.

II. Membership

2. The Working Group will consist of representatives from national statistical offices and other stakeholders, including international and regional organizations and civil society organizations. The Co-Chairs will be representatives of national statistical offices. The Working Group will comprise country representatives from all regions.

3. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat will serve as the secretariat of the Working Group.

III. Organization and conduct of the work

4. The Working Group will work through electronic exchanges and periodic meetings, whenever possible. Where feasible, the meetings will be conducted in conjunction with other meetings being held throughout the year.

5. The Working Group will conduct its work in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, inviting experts, as appropriate, from civil society, the private sector and academia and other professional bodies to contribute their knowledge and experiences to the work.

6. The Working Group will continually review the different workstreams defined under the Work Group and ensure appropriate integration to advance with greater speed in the development of specific topics, and will convene forums and workshops in which specialized or emerging new topics are discussed in depth.

IV. Expected duration

7. The Working Group will operate under the auspices of the Statistical Commission and will report to it annually, seeking its guidance.
8. The mandate and functioning of the Working Group will be reviewed by the Statistical Commission as needed.

V. Proposed activities

9. In line with its mandate, the Working Group will carry out the following activities:
 - (a) Coordinate further consultations on the role of national statistical offices as data stewards, supported by the secretariat;
 - (b) Review the definitions, terminology and methodological developments and issues related to data stewardship, including data governance, equity and inclusion, sharing and collaboration and the overall conceptual framework, as well as how to conduct and institutionalize this approach through agreements, such as agreements for data-sharing, with an emphasis on safeguarding privacy;
 - (c) Develop recommendations on approaches to data stewardship for national statistical offices, including strengthening their capacities as data service providers.
10. Based on further guidance given by the Statistical Commission, the Working Group will update its activities and deliverables according to an annual workplan to be presented each year to the Commission for approval.