STEERING GROUP FOR THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ECONOMIC STATISTICS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. BACKGROUND

1. The ESCAP Committee on Statistics at its second session in December 2010 endorsed the “Proposed regional programme for the improvement of economic statistics in Asia and the Pacific”\(^1\) (henceforth referred to as “the Regional Programme”).

2. Considering the ambition, scale, complexity and the timeframe of the Regional Programme, the Committee decided\(^2\) to transform the Technical Advisory Group on the Development of Economic Statistics (TAG), established in 2009, into a Steering Group for the Regional Programme for Economic Statistics (henceforth referred to as the “Steering Group”) to oversee the implementation of the Regional Programme.

3. The present version of the Terms of Reference of the Steering Group has been revised to reflect the outcome of the third session of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics held in December 2012 and the subsequent discussions of the Bureau of the Committee held in February 2013.

II. KEY FUNCTIONS

4. The Steering Group shall:

   a. direct the development of the implementation plan for the Regional Programme;
   b. in consultation with the secretariat, identify the short-term and long-term priorities and establish milestones for the implementation of the Regional Programme;
   c. provide strategic and technical advice to the secretariat on the management of the Regional Programme, monitor progress in its implementation and propose adjustments as required;
   d. ensure coordination with other relevant initiatives in the region, in particular with the Global Strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics by collaborating with the Regional Steering Committee, which oversees the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, 2013-2017; and
   e. contribute to and provide advice on resource mobilization for the Regional Programme.

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2 Decisions of the Committee are contained in the report of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics at its second session, which is available at [http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/2/index.asp](http://www.unescap.org/stat/cst/2/index.asp)
III. COMPOSITION

5. The Steering Group shall comprise economic statisticians from national and international organizations.

6. The selected national statistical offices (NSOs) shall reflect a balanced representation of ESCAP members and associate members spanning ESCAP sub-regions, and various levels of statistical development.

7. The majority of members of the Steering Group shall be NSO representatives.

8. The Steering Group shall include Central Bank and Ministry of Finance representatives in order to incorporate their perspectives and to facilitate collaboration among national stakeholders in the Regional Programme implementation.

9. The Steering Group shall include members representing development partners (global, regional, sub-regional or bilateral) of which the mandates include supporting the development of economic statistics in the Asian and Pacific region.

10. The Steering Group shall include one member of the Regional Steering Committee for Agricultural and Rural Statistics in order to facilitate coordination between the two initiatives.

11. The size of the Steering Group shall be decided by the Bureau and may be changed, as needed, in order to ensure that the group continues to perform its functions effectively and efficiently.

12. For specific tasks, the Steering Group may invite the participation of other experts.

IV. SELECTION OF MEMBERS

13. The Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, having invited ESCAP regional members and associate members and the Regional Steering Committee on Agricultural and Rural Statistics to submit nominations, shall form, with assistance by the secretariat, the Steering Group based on the qualifications of the nominees, the need for balanced representation and the need to ensure efficient and effective functioning of the Steering Group.

14. The Steering Group member countries represented by their respective NSOs shall then coordinate the nomination of one representative from a Central Bank and one representative from a Ministry of Finance, for final endorsement by the Bureau as additional members of the Steering Group. While it is envisaged that the additional membership will be restricted to two, one representative from each type of organization, more than two may be nominated if warranted.

15. The secretariat shall coordinate the nomination of development partners to serve on the Steering Group for the approval of the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics. The final
decision on the participation of the development partners is subject to the size of the Steering Group. The secretariat shall consult regularly with the Partnership for Statistics Development in Asia and the Pacific to ensure that the inputs of the relevant development partners are taken into account in the Steering Group discussions.

16. If an appointed Steering Group member vacates a position, the organization of the vacating individual shall be invited to nominate a replacement. If that organization fails to propose a replacement within a deadline given by the Steering Group, the Steering Group shall recommend the most appropriate replacement to the Bureau.

17. The Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics may review the membership and propose additions or other changes, as needed.

18. Members of the Steering Group shall commit to devote the time necessary for adequate discharge of their duties. Members of the Steering Group will not be considered staff members of United Nations; hence, will not be entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to staff members of the United Nations.

V. METHODS OF WORK

19. Upon formation, the Steering Group, in cooperation with the secretariat, shall prepare a detailed work programme with a clear division of labour and deadlines.

20. It is envisaged that the Steering Group shall review most issues by means of electronic discussion and exchange of emails. The Steering Group shall aim to meet once a year in person. The Steering Group may decide to organize further meetings for discussions on specific issues.

21. In order to ensure efficient functioning of the Steering Group, the Bureau may decide to establish a Coordination Committee comprising of six to ten Steering Group members. The Coordination Committee would facilitate the work of the Steering Group, including through performing the key functions listed in paragraph 4 above in consultation and collaboration with the full membership of the Steering Group.

VI. REPORTING

22. The Steering Group shall submit a written and, if requested, oral report for the information of the Committee on Statistics at each of its formal sessions on progress in the implementation of the Regional Programme. In the intersession years, the Steering Group will report to the Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, as required.

23. The reports of the Steering Group shall be prepared by the secretariat in close collaboration with the Chair of the Steering Group and be reviewed by the members of the Steering Group prior to submission.
VII. CHAIR

24. The Steering Group shall elect a Chair from among its NSO representatives to coordinate its work.

25. The Chair shall serve for a period of two years after which he/she will be eligible for re-appointment.

VIII. SECRETARIAT

26. The Statistics Division of ESCAP will serve as the secretariat of the Steering Group.

27. The secretariat will support the Steering Group in carrying out its functions, as described above.

IX. REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

28. The Steering Group may review these Terms of Reference, as needed, to ensure that it has the required mandate to perform its functions effectively and efficiently. Any revisions to the Terms of Reference shall be subject to the approval of the Bureau of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics.

X. SUNSET CLAUSE

29. The Steering Group shall be in place for the duration of the Regional Programme to ensure continuity in its programme management.

30. Unless the Committee on Statistics decides otherwise, the Steering Group shall expire by the end of 2020.