UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

RUSSIAN FEDERATION FEDERAL STATE STATISTICS SERVICE

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

# Inception Workshop for the project Strengthening research and studies for improved quality of SDG statistics in Central Asia

8-10 May 2019

United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

## Concept note

### I.  Background and rationale

Evidence-based decision-making for and tracking progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires the availability of high-quality data and statistics, including SDG indicators that are disaggregated along all relevant dimensions. The "Collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community", adopted by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics at its fifth session in December 2016, recognizes the need for the transformation of national statistical systems in the region into learning organizations with requisite skill sets as indispensable for delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, through its Statistics Division, Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and Subregional Office for North and Central Asia (SONCA), the Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and the National Research University Higher School of Economics (NRU HSE) are initiating the implementation of the project "Strengthening research and studies for improved quality of SDG statistics in Central Asia" through the organization of this inception workshop.

The project brings together the experience and knowledge assets of ESCAP in strengthening the capability of national statistical systems across Asia and the Pacific through training and related capacity development work; of Rosstat as a national statistical office at the forefront of statistical capacity building for the SDGs and member of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG); and of NRU HSE as a leading internationally-oriented educational institution providing programmes and courses in economics and social sciences in the Russian language. The aim of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the countries of Central Asia to produce data for priority SDG indicators through the development of training material, including in the Russian language, and the

subsequent design and delivery of training courses through face-to-face and/or e-learning modalities. In this context, the project implementation plan foresees in the organization of two training sessions and a concluding event in 2019.

## II. Objectives

The objective of the inception workshop is to agree on project priorities through presentations and discussion on the following issues:

- For which thematic areas (e.g. goals and/or targets) and/or specific SDG indicators are countries in most need of training?
- What is the need for training related to the use of non-traditional data sources, such as geospatial information and big data, and possible new techniques such as small area estimation for the compilation of, especially disaggregated, SDG indicators?
- Who are in most need of training? Say, managers or methodologists? Should training be pitched at the basic, intermediate or advanced level?
- What are preferred training modalities? To what extent is their need for face-to-face versus remote / e-learning courses? For face-to-face training, in-country or subregional?
- What are countries currently doing to train staff in the production of SDG indicators? Do they have training material, experience and/or lessons to share?

## III. Participants

The inception workshop is designed for senior staff members of national statistical offices, in particular SDG focal points, and planning ministries.

Invited countries include Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

## IV. Workshop design and contents

The workshop will consist of presentation and discussion sessions. Participants are expected to provide insights into the status and opportunities for improved quality of their national SDG indicator frameworks.

*Day 1*
- Presentations by the organizers on their respective work on SDG data and statistics and the aims of the project
- Country presentations covering such topics as:
  - National SDG indicator frameworks and their role in decision-making and monitoring processes
  - Data sources/collection and indicator compilation and dissemination processes

- o Challenges and capacity gaps, such as related to formulating indicator concepts and definitions; indicator computation and disaggregation; data sources and data availability
  - o Recent and ongoing efforts to strengthen capacity, including through training

*Day 2*
- Country presentations (cont.)
- Presentations by selected international organizations, as custodian agencies of specific SDG indicators, on their ongoing training and related capacity strengthening efforts, with focus on ongoing and planned work in the countries of Central Asia and the availability of training material and/or courses in the Russian language

*Day 3*
- Discussion on the basis of country presentations to determine:
  - o Common capacity gaps and training needs
  - o Priorities with respect to indicators, thematic areas, data sources, techniques, etc.
  - o Target audience(s)
  - o Training modalities
- Way forward
- Next steps

## V. Pre-workshop requirements

Participants will be requested to provide relevant country information prior to and/or deliver presentations at the workshop as per (a) template(s) to be provided by the organizers.

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