

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

Work Session on the Communication of Statistics
(Geneva, Switzerland, 18-20 June 2014)

INFORMATION NOTICE No. 1

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. The meeting will be held from 18 June to 20 June 2014 in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, starting at 9.30 a.m.
2. The objective of the meeting is to exchange experiences and best practices on the communication and dissemination of statistics. The meeting will address the challenges faced by statistical organizations to communicate effectively with all their audiences and stakeholders. Attention will be focused on statistical literacy, communication with respondents, evaluation of communications campaigns, good practices in electronic publications and quick wins on low and zero budgets.

II. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

3. The work programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive themes:
 - (i) Statistical literacy
 - (ii) Communication with respondents
 - (iii) Good practices in electronic publications
 - (iv) Evaluation of communications campaigns
 - (v) Quick wins on low and zero budgets.
4. Detailed explanatory notes on the nature of topics (i) – (v) and the names of session organizers are provided in Section VII below. A detailed agenda will be prepared **in May** and published on the meeting website.

III. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

5. The target audience of the meeting includes managers and experts responsible for communication and media relations in national and international statistical organizations.
6. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the meeting. All delegates must be accredited by the competent authority of their country or international organization. All delegates attending the meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas must be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of Switzerland in the country in which the delegates reside, with reference to the UNECE Work Session on the Communication of Statistics. For visa support letters, please contact the UNECE Secretariat (vadim.isakov@unece.org).

IV. REGISTRATION AND CALL FOR PAPERS

7. Participants are requested to fill in the attached Conference registration form, which will also be available on the website at <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.06.dissemination.html>. The registration form should be sent to the UNECE secretariat (vadim.isakov@unece.org) by **31 March 2014** so that it may be processed well in advance of the meeting.

8. Papers and presentations about any of the topics on the agenda are hereby requested. **Participants intending to submit a paper should take note of the deadlines and requirements explained below.**

9. The following deadlines and requirements apply to the submission of papers and associated presentations:

- The intention to submit a paper should be communicated to the UNECE Secretariat by **31 March 2014** by completing the attached form. **Please also provide an abstract describing the topic of your paper.**
- Final papers should be emailed to vadim.isakov@unece.org at the UNECE Secretariat by **30 April 2014** at the latest. The Steering Committee will select the papers for the work session and notify the authors of the selected papers by e-mail.
- Authors are required to give a presentation on their paper highlighting the main issues and using a presentation format of their choice (PowerPoint slides, PDF presentation, Prezi, videos, etc.). Please email the presentations to vadim.isakov@unece.org by **9 June 2014** so they can be installed on the projection equipment. The length of time for a presentation is 10-15 minutes. Presentations will not be made available to delegates before the meeting, unless requested by the presenters.

10. Papers should be submitted in **Microsoft Word** (.doc) or **Rich Text File** (.rtf) formats. The recommended length for each paper is up to five pages of text (3 000 words).

V. ACCOMMODATION

11. Delegates are requested to make their own accommodation arrangements. Information about accommodation options in Geneva can be found at the following link: <http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch>. Further information about the meeting venue will be provided in a second information notice to be published on the meeting website in **April 2014**.

VI. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

12. The working language of the meeting will be English. All documents should be submitted in English.

13. Meeting documents will be made publicly available on the website of the UNECE Secretariat at: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2014.06.dissemination.html>. Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website (available from late May) and bring their own copies to the meeting. Written papers posted on the website before the meeting will not be distributed in the conference room.

VII. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE AGENDA

14. Topic (i): Statistical literacy

Session organizers: Kerstin Haensel (Federal Statistical Office of the Federal Republic of Germany) and Corien Ooms (Statistics Netherlands)

Statistical literacy is a term used to describe the ability of an individual or a group to understand statistics. For many years researchers have been discussing this interdisciplinary topic for instance in fields of mathematics, statistics, pedagogies, psychology or linguistics. Statistical literacy implicates many abilities: it is mathematical know-how, the ability to understand the figures correctly and to distinguish between valid and misrepresented data. Furthermore it enables you to assess the information that the figures provide and finally to understand what the data tell about society.

Official statistics had been occupied with the output figures for a long period - but started more and more to reflect that the ability to understand statistics is the prerequisite for a successful communication with our users. So several initiatives had been put into practice to increase statistical literacy in all fields of societies: For scholars and students, for journalists, for decision makers in politics and businesses and overall for the general public.

Potential topics may include:

- Cooperation projects with schools, universities or any educational institutions
- Tailor-made services or trainings for journalists or other user groups to improve statistical knowledge
- Websites or statistical information targeted to educational institutions, e.g. schools or universities
- Any applications that help to improve statistical knowledge among the users, e.g. explanatory videos, blogs, discussion boards or animated graphs.

15. Topic (ii): Communicating with respondents

Session organizers: Frances Comerford (Central Statistics Office, Ireland) and Ida Repovz-Grabnar (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia)

This session will focus on the methods and ingenuity of statistical agencies to collect data with minimum / acceptable non-response. It will seek to examine both successful tools for collecting respondents' data and to what extent the official statistics can meet their needs for data. Papers might also examine respondents' feedback to advanced communication policy with them and the role of administrative record holders for statistical production.

Potential topics may include:

- Communication with respondents versus collecting data
- Respondents as stakeholders in statistical process
- Developing dialogue with respondents with specific dissemination policies for different target groups of respondents
- Paper or online questionnaires: what is more acceptable?
- Differences in communication approach concerning businesses, persons and agriculture holding
- Challenges that respondents have with statistical reporting and possible solutions to help the respondents
- What can statistical agencies offer in exchange for respondents' data.

16. Topic (iii): Good practices in electronic publications

Session organizers: Michael Levi (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) and Terri Mitton (OECD)

Information technologies are not changing what we do. Rather, they are changing the way we do it. Nowadays many statistical organisations are making Statistical Yearbooks and a wide variety of other products available as e-publications and mobile or tablet apps. Switching to e-pub can drive efficiencies and provide opportunities for

Statistical Organisations to reach a broader audience than our traditional readership. But, as the saying goes, "Behind every silver lining ..."

There are many challenges that must be faced when making content available online. As statistical material is made available to a broader audience, sometimes the titles and text must be revised to be understood by non-expert users. Content must be visually engaging to capture the users' attention. It is also necessary to adapt the publication content and formats to changing technologies and to multiple platforms.

This session is an opportunity to share and reflect on experiences on the theme creating of e-publications. We are particularly interested in case studies and lessons learned in this area.

Potential topics include:

- Successes in developing e-pubs and mobile apps
- Examples where e-pubs or mobile or tablet apps are making an impact on the users
- Best practices and challenges with electronic publishing
- Ensuring the quality of the electronic versions (who and how)
- Connecting with the audience is still the aim, but do the internet and mobile devices facilitate "distribute online first and publish later?"
- Barriers and benefits of open data or dissemination via Application Program Interfaces (APIs).

17. Topic (iv): Evaluation of communications campaigns

Session organizers: Ellen Dougherty (U.S. Department of Agriculture)

Even in statistical organizations, whose primary business is counting and measuring, it can be difficult to quantify the value and impact of communications and outreach efforts. Yet such evaluation is critical for many reasons, from gaining organizational support to improving future efforts by learning how to work better and more effectively. Beyond the quantitative (e.g., number of news releases issued, number of "hits" on a website, or number of posts on social media), is it possible to effectively measure changes in behavior or understanding that may come about as a result of an organization's communications efforts? How do organizations evaluate the effectiveness of public communication campaigns overall, as well as specific strategies or tactics employed during such campaigns?

Potential topics may include:

- Beginning with the end in mind: Designing communications campaigns with measurable goals
- Tools for tracking, measuring and evaluating communications: What works?
- Using survey research to evaluate communications campaigns
- Deriving meaning from web and social media analytics
- Acting on lessons learned: Incorporating evaluation results into future campaigns.

18. Topic (v): Quick wins on low and zero budgets

Session organizers: Lukasz Augustyniak (Eurostat)

The world of official statistics is faced with a number of challenges. Among them are a constantly growing demand for new data, increased competition from private data providers and severe budget constraints.

In view of this situation, statistical organisations have two options: either to cut back on parts of the existing statistical production to accommodate the new statistical needs of users or to increase cooperation between institutions and seek money saving, joint solutions. On a smaller scale, each branch or department is faced with similar problems involving financial cuts or freezes and decreasing staff numbers.

In this session we will discuss ways of meeting the challenges by sharing best practice in the area of communication. You are welcome to send in your ideas of how you deal with the crisis, no matter what their scale, big or small, they will all be helpful to other conference participants!

Potential topics may include:

- Presenting ideas and solutions introduced as a result of lower budgets in your organisations
- Sharing best practice in the area of communication – both external and internal. What worked well and what did not?
- Ensuring that managers, senior and mid-level, effectively communicate with staff is crucial for managing change. What initiatives can help them in this task?
- As the importance of engaging staff grows in times of difficulties, what initiatives can be suggested in this area to make sure that employees feel connected to the organisation?

VIII. FURTHER INFORMATION

19. For further information, please contact:

Mr. Vadim Isakov
Statistical Information and Methodology Unit
Statistical Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
1211 GENEVA 10, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 917 3401
Fax: +41 22 917 0040
E-mail: vadim.isakov@unece.org