I. Introduction

1. The UNECE High-level Group for the Modernization of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) was created by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in 2010. It comprises the heads of national and international statistical organizations, and has a mandate to reflect on and guide strategic developments in the ways in which official statistics are produced.

2. The HLG-MOS launched a number of initiatives to develop models, frameworks and tools to support the goal of standards-based modernisation. As a result, a de-facto community of statistical organisations interested in modernisation developed. Within this community, a rapidly growing resource in terms of intellectual capital and intellectual property has developed. As this community and its assets grew, so did the need to ensure clear governance, rights and responsibilities.

3. The Statistical Modernisation Community (referred to as “the community” in the text below) was created in response to this need. It is open to any organisation responsible for the production of official statistics. It is a mechanism for voluntary collaboration between organisations, a “collaboration of the willing”. It is overseen by the HLG-MOS. To become a partner in the community, an organisation must publicly endorse this statement of intent.

4. The purpose of this statement of intent is to establish a framework for enhanced collaboration between official statistics organisations, providing a basis for the development, sharing and maintenance of the joint products of the community. The aim is to ensure an open inclusive approach to modernisation activities, while at the same time giving potential partners a sense of the level of engagement expected. As different organisations are at different stages of maturity in terms of statistical modernisation, the community should support and be relevant to both the least and the most mature.

II. Premise

5. Working collaboratively, we can marshal resources to develop better solutions to complex problems and opportunities. Our development program can respond as fast as the fastest amongst us - allowing us to modernise quickly and cheaply. We can draw on the breadth and depth of skill across the community and maintain our momentum over the longer term. Belonging to an international community reduces the risks of new developments for individual organisations through additional scrutiny and testing.

III. Principles

6. Organisations wishing to be partners in the community agree to apply the following principles:

(i) The community is a semi-formal alliance, open to any organisation working in the field of official statistics (sub-national, national, international, thematic) that endorses this statement of intent.

(ii) Partners in the community are expected to actively support the goals of the community. That support may take various forms, including:

- In-kind support - For example staff time and expertise spent on community activities, hosting of community events, or provision of infrastructure, products or services
- Financial support - Organisations may provide financial support through a central trust fund administered by the UNECE, payable on the basis of invoices issued by the UNECE.

There is no fixed level for support, but, as a guide, in-kind or financial support in the region of 0.05% to 0.1% of total organisation budget is considered reasonable. This support should not be an additional burden on community organisations. It reflects a pooling of resources that would otherwise be dedicated to organisation-specific modernisation activities, in a way that allows organisations to benefit from economies of scale. All kinds of support are considered as renewable on an annual basis, valid from the day of allocation onwards. A summary of the support received will be reported annually to the community.

(iii) The resources available to the community will be used to support standards-based modernisation through international collaboration. Specific activities will include the development of tools, methods and standards, and will be aligned with the vision and strategy of the HLG-MOS, endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians. The HLG-MOS will oversee these activities. It will report to the Conference every year on the outcomes, and seek guidance on future directions. Priorities for the coming year will be set by a plenary meeting of the community every November, which will also review outcomes of activities over the previous year. Representatives of expert groups that do not report to the HLG-MOS, but are involved in statistical modernisation activities, will be invited to take part in these meetings, to ensure coordination and alignment of priorities.

(iv) Community activities will be limited to a maximum duration of one year, after which they will be reviewed. At this point, the community may close the activity or commission follow-up activities. All community activities will focus on delivering concrete outcomes.

(v) All community activities are voluntary. Organisations can engage in those activities which align best with their specific requirements. This helps to ensure that activities remain demand-driven. In return for supporting these activities, partners in the community can expect to benefit from the outcomes of all community activities. Activities should be designed to foster common results and sharing of outputs.

(vi) Partners in the community undertake to share experience and expertise, and to work together in an open, flexible and mutually beneficial manner.
(vii) Partners in the community agree to collaborate in ensuring continued consistency and compatibility of community products.

(viii) Sub-groups of the community may aspire to more specific agreements for deeper collaboration in certain specific and concrete activities. These agreements may be either between individual organisations on their own initiative, or in the form of manifests, which are open to all partners in the community that wish to engage in enhanced collaboration on certain activities. Community manifests will be considered as annexes to this statement of intent.

(ix) The community is the “owner” of products developed or produced as a result of community activities and projects.

- Models, frameworks and similar methodological documents will be made publicly available, at no charge, under a creative commons license
- Other products, such as software developed by or for the community, will be available to the community. The preferred format is open source code (within the community), free of charge (to the community), with intellectual property protected under a “copyleft” license such as the GNU Public License version 3 (http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html)
- The community will provide upgrades, patches and new releases of joint products, and related new documentation, as necessary
- The design phase of products should be open to inputs from the community. Statistical software and services should comply with the Common Statistical Production Architecture
- Organisations are responsible for their own use of community products, including any local customisation. Local customisations and derivatives of products inherit the same intellectual property rights and restrictions as the products on which they are based. Bilateral support provided by one organisation to another is on a voluntary basis
- Community owned products can be made available to statistical organisations that are not partners in the community either for free, or on a not-for-profit basis.

(x) The community may endorse other products which are made available to the community, but where ownership and/or intellectual property is retained by the producer.

(xi) Partners in the community can expect preferential access to software developed within the community, as well as access to shared knowledge resources, such as catalogues of current and planned capabilities and services.

(xii) This statement of intent, any related manifests, and lists of organisations that endorse them, will be maintained by the UNECE Secretariat, and published via the Internet.

(xiii) The UNECE Secretariat will support and facilitate the work of the community and the HLG-MOS. It will ensure logistical support for community activities. It will act as the knowledge broker for the community, providing a hub for information such as investment plans, which will support and inform collaboration within the community.

IV. Process

7. The text of this statement of intent, as well as a list of organisations that endorse it, is published on the UNECE HLG-MOS wiki (http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/hlgbas). Any organisations meeting the criteria in principle (i) that wish to join the community should inform the UNECE Secretariat (support.stat@un.org) in writing, confirming that they endorse the statement of intent.

8. Organisations may leave the community at any time, by providing 30 days notice in writing to the UNECE Secretariat. If an organisation decides to leave the community, it can keep for its own use community owned products (as defined in principle (ix)), but it will not automatically have free access to updates or new versions of these products, and should not share them with third parties.