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Items for discussion and decision: business registers

Report of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2016/220, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers. The report summarizes recent developments regarding the work of the Wiesbaden Group, as presented at its 25th meeting, held in Tokyo in November 2016. In the present report, the Wiesbaden Group proposes to develop international guidelines on statistical business registers, building on the Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe in 2015 and incorporating consideration of the circumstances of developing countries through review and global consultation. The Commission is invited to comment on the proposal for these international guidelines and on the progress made by the Wiesbaden Group, including its updated terms of reference.

* E/CN.3/2017/1.



I. Introduction

1. The Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers is a city group under the United Nations Statistical Commission. In the spirit of the United Nations city groups, it relies mainly on the active engagement of the participating delegates, providing a forum for the exchange of views and experiences regarding the development, maintenance and use of statistical business registers. The Wiesbaden Group considers conceptual and methodological issues in relation to the use of statistical business registers and the development and implementation of good practices with regard to their production, and its work supports a more integrated approach to structural economic statistics through discussion and development of the role of business registers in data collection and data integration as well as in the production and dissemination of statistics.

2. The Wiesbaden Group, which was established in 1986 as the International Roundtable on Business Survey Frames, held its first meeting in Ottawa in 1986. Following its 20th meeting, held in Wiesbaden, Germany, in 2007, it was renamed the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers. The change of name was made to conform to the naming convention for United Nations city groups, and also to reflect the changing role of statistical business registers, which, increasingly, provide the backbone for the production of economic statistics and are considered to be sources of statistical information in their own right.

3. The present report, in section II, describes the main outcomes of the 25th meeting of the Wiesbaden Group; section III presents proposals to review and possibly amend the Guidelines for Statistical Business Registers adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe in 2015 in order to arrive at globally endorsed guidelines; and section IV provides the core points of the updated terms of reference of the Wiesbaden Group. Points for discussion are given in section V.

II. Report of the 25th meeting of the Wiesbaden Group

A. Introduction

4. The 25th meeting of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers was held from 8 to 11 November 2016, in Tokyo, hosted by the Statistics Bureau of the Government of Japan. The meeting gathered 77 participants from 41 countries and 6 international organizations, including those who participated in the workshop on statistical business registers for developing countries, co-organized by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Statistics Division in collaboration with the Japanese Statistics Bureau. For colleagues around the world who were not able to attend the meeting, live streaming was available during this meeting, which consisted of seven general sessions and one special session.

B. Session 1: county progress reports

5. It is a tradition for the Wiesbaden Group to open the meeting with a review of recent developments in the framework of business registers in each member country

and organization. The session was chaired by Japan and devoted to the country progress reports. A total of 33 reports were presented; a total of 53 reports were submitted in advance of the meeting.

6. The country progress reports were prepared using a template made up of four parts: (a) the first providing general information on the statistical business register in the country; (b) the second presenting a summary of the progress and important developments in the past year; (c) the third presenting future plans for the register; and (d) the fourth presenting main challenges to the development, maintenance and use of the registers. At the 24th meeting, each country was asked to present its entire report orally. At the meeting in Tokyo, however, each country was asked to present only “the main challenges” set out in the report in order to save time for the other sessions.

7. In his summary, the Chair explained that almost 70 per cent of the reports were submitted by countries in Europe, which suggested the need to increase country coverage from other regions in order to achieve a better geographical balance. He also listed the main topics carried out or planned, such as the increased use of administrative data, implementation of statistical units such as enterprises and enterprise groups on statistical business registers, profiling, the implementation of latest classifications, effective use of the geocoding, methodological issues, quality issues, business demography and technological issues.

8. This session provided an important opportunity for experts in business registers from around the world to exchange up-to-date information on their ongoing and planned projects aimed at improving the construction, maintenance and use of business registers.

C. Session 2: roles of Statistical Business Registers

9. The second session, chaired by Eurostat, focused on new experiences and new developments in statistical business registers, going beyond the classical role of serving the producers of business statistics. It was agreed that several factors were advancing new uses and new roles for statistical business registers, including:

- (a) Need for improved efficiency;
- (b) Need to investigate and better understand the effects of globalization;
- (c) Challenges from private producers of information;
- (d) Possibilities offered by new technologies and access to big data.

10. A few main directions were indicated for the new roles of statistical business registers. For newer registers, the current role was to become the unique survey frame (backbone) for business statistics. In the case of more mature statistical business registers, there was a trend to go beyond providing frames for the traditional users, such as business statisticians, to become service providers, targeting new users and offering new services, including for certain non-statistical purposes. A role for statistical business registers as sources of information for analytical purposes was also pointed out. Integration with other registers and the creation of more (or less) complex systems was mentioned in most of the presentations, including their integration with social and other administrative

registers. Several presentations underlined ongoing developments using geocoding and testing web-scraping techniques.

11. The large number of presentations and the animated and interactive discussion between the panel and the audience clearly showed that many activities were being undertaken to modernize statistical business registers in order to make them more efficient and more able to meet the different kinds of needs and requirements. Most of these developments deserve further follow-up and, possibly, dedicated sessions at future international forums with the aim of analysing and mainstreaming relevant trends and providing guidance on best practices.

D. Session 3: administrative data/agencies/units

12. Business registers are usually dependent on administrative data from sources such as tax authorities. Over the years, the Wiesbaden Group has recognized the importance of developing new ideas on how to leverage its own administrative sources while continuing to examine potential new sources that could improve the operation of the business register. The main objective of session 3 was to examine how cooperation with administrative data suppliers could improve the coverage and quality of business registers, including the proper identification of units within the register.

13. The session, which was chaired by the United States of America, focused on a range of issues, including: the use of new administrative sources; improvements to existing sources or joining different data sources; the use of new variables from existing sources and the improvement in frequency of data from administrative sources; modernization of administrative systems that have led to new sources of data or improvements; improvements in matching techniques that have led to improvements in the use of administrative sources; better methods or systems for properly identifying units (for example, enterprise, firm or establishment) within the business register; and cooperation between statistical agencies and other agencies on the development of the business register.

E. Session 4: quality and coverage

14. The fourth session was devoted to the various aspects of maintaining, analysing and reporting of the quality of statistical business registers. The presented papers dealt with specific aspects or general strategies of register maintenance, the embedding of register maintenance in statistical processes or with quality indicators and their presentation. The session was chaired by Germany.

15. The presentations proved once again that the session about quality is a “classic” topic of the Wiesbaden Group, which always provides a clear perspective of how quality work is changing and developing over time. Quality work needs sound and solid methods. At present, it is less likely that quality work is carried out as “homework” by the register department of a statistical office; rather it is done in close working contact with the users and the sources of the statistical business register. Increasingly, the nature of quality work requires active participation, and

possibly coordination, in an overall quality-oriented architecture of business statistics and national accounts.

F. Session 5: technology

16. Session 5, chaired by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, consisted of six presentations. The criteria for the papers in this session were broad in order to encompass any technological development relating to statistical business registers. The papers reflected this diversity, ranging from the results of an experiment to refine matching rules to papers on the redevelopment of statistical business register systems based on new technology.

17. A ground-breaking new theme was the use of a “data lake” and of an unstructured data approach to building new register systems. Papers by the Netherlands and Switzerland showed interesting developments in this direction, both of which were about moving away from a single register computer system to a more service-oriented approach, where data are stored in a central repository and a range of services is used to provide business register functionality.

18. The matching of administration records is still important in countries with no unique identifier, and this was the second theme that emerged at the session. Results were presented on the tuning and refinement of the matching systems. Another perennial issue with register quality is time-stamping of variables, and a project was presented that enabled accurate timestamping and historic variable tracking. Furthermore, a new editing system with new user interface was presented, as well as a paper on automatic coding.

19. This is a time of great change in technological capability for business registers, which will enable Member States to improve functionality and provide a greater service, using more register-based statistics.

G. Session 6: business demography and data products from the business registers

20. The production of business demography statistics and other data products from the statistical business registers has become one of the recurrent themes discussed at the meetings of the Wiesbaden Group. This reflects two major facts: the changing role of the register in the statistical production processes, with increasing scope for compiling statistics directly from the register; and the relevance of business demography as input to the policy debate on economic growth.

21. At session 6, chaired by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), national statistical offices reported on their experiences related to the production of business demography statistics from the register and on efforts to link the statistical business register to administrative data sources, including customs, population, education, insurance or tax registers and statistical surveys, in order to compile business demographics with additional dimensions (for example, the profile of the business owner) or other relevant business statistics (including trade statistics by characteristics of the trading enterprise). Ultimately, these practices point to the realization of a new statistical data system in which the

statistical business register is the backbone of an integrated system for the production of business statistics — a system that, in addition to reducing production costs, also deploys a novel approach to responding to users' requests. In this context, data matching, harmonization of metadata, unique business identifiers, comparability and coherence of data were among the main challenges discussed.

22. Other complementary perspectives were offered by: Austria, which shared the results of an experiment involving the application of an algorithm on statistical business registers to determine the ownership relationship between enterprises; Japan, which illustrated an innovative attempt to link the economic census to information taken from websites on restaurants to generate detailed statistics on entries and exits; and Mexico, which explained how mobile computing devices (involving digital cartography and satellite images) were used for data collection during economic censuses to geolocation establishments and develop, via a follow-up data collection, statistics on enterprise survivals, deaths and births.

H. Session 7: globalization and profiling

23. Economic globalization is expanding in industrialized countries. In this context, getting relevant measurement of the growing role of large and complex multinational enterprises in economic activities poses a number of challenges to statisticians. To overcome those challenges new approaches have to be implemented, such as profiling of business activities, which allow for better identification and better understanding of multinational enterprises. Statistical business registers have to be upgraded accordingly. Indeed, statistical business registers should include new statistical units that are relevant in the context of globalization, such as “enterprise groups” and “enterprises”. In addition, better coordination and harmonization across statistical business registers of different countries have to be encouraged. Indeed, interoperability between statistical business registers facilitates data exchange and allows statisticians to obtain a more relevant and coherent picture of the multinational enterprises and their affiliates.

24. Session 7, which was chaired by France, was organized in two parts, one on the profiling activities and the second on global identifiers and global group register. On profiling activities, the experiences reported by the national statistical office related different issues depending on the stage of maturity of their tools to undertake profiling methods. Some national statistical offices needed first to determine the criteria for selection of the particular enterprises to be profiled. Others needed to integrate the structural information of large and complex multinational enterprises into their statistical business registers in order to improve content and quality before starting profiling. More mature systems can improve the information on multinational enterprises with regard to their involvement in global economic activities by identifying the units actively engaged in any of four specific types of international activities: manufacturing service providers; merchandising; factory-less goods producing; and holding of inventories abroad.

25. At the second part of the session, there was a discussion on the global Legal Entity Identifier initiative, which provides unique identification of legal entities participating in financial transactions across the globe. This initiative was launched in 2011 by the Group of 20, which called on the Financial Stability Board to provide

recommendations for a global legal identity identifier and a supporting governance structure. This led to the development of the Global Legal Entity Identifier Foundation, which supports the implementation of the Global Legal Entity Identifier system and which uses Local Operating Units that issue Legal Entity Identifiers to companies and institutions. Eurostat and the United Nations Statistics Division are undertaking a joint project to create a global group register, building on the experience gathered from the European Group Register while using the services of the Global Legal Entity Identifier Foundation. The main challenge in creating and maintaining a global group register will be the sharing of microdata due to confidentiality concerns.

I. Special session: follow-up to the Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers

26. Austria, which chaired the task force of the Economic Commission for Europe on the drafting of its Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers, reported the results of a survey that it conducted in September 2-16 on the actions taken by the statistical offices with respect to the implementation of the Guidelines. The questionnaire was sent to the members of the Wiesbaden Group and to members of the Economic Commission for Europe/OECD/Eurostat Expert Group on Business Registers. Answers were received from 33 countries.

27. The answers to the questionnaire revealed that, although only a year had passed since the publication of the Guidelines in September 2015, they were already widely recognized and used in the business register domains in many statistical offices, including for training purposes, for analysing the compliance of national statistical business registers with the international recommendations and for reference in the development or review of national registers. Some countries have already produced partial or complete translations of the guidelines. The replies received also showed that in nearly all countries work is being carried out to develop and improve the national business registers, particularly in delineating statistical units, the use of administrative data sources, the strengthening of the backbone role of the statistical business registers and increasing the quality of the registers. Translation into languages other than English and Russian, more practical examples, especially for use in less developed statistical systems, and the expectation of regular updates of the guidelines were expressed as wishes for the future.

III. Guidelines for Statistical Business Registers

28. The Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers were prepared at the request of the Conference of European Statisticians during the period 2012-2014. These Guidelines, which aim to help countries by providing practical guidance and recommendations on the establishment and maintenance of statistical business registers, were discussed at the plenary meeting of the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2015. The following issues were raised at that meeting: (a) the Guidelines were found to be comprehensive and helpful in supporting countries to maintain and improve their statistical business registers; (b) it was noted that the

Guidelines will be important for other regions; and (c) one area for future work would be elaborating best practices for coordination with other organizations that provide data for business registers, such as central banks. The Conference of European Statisticians endorsed the Guidelines of the Economic Commission for Europe at its meeting in June 2015, and also welcomed the initiative to seek the endorsement of the Guidelines at the global level by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

29. Prior to the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians, an electronic consultation on the Guidelines was carried out in March and April 2015. All 46 responding countries and organizations not only supported the endorsement of the Guidelines, but also provided useful comments, which can be revisited during the process of seeking the endorsement of the Guidelines by the United Nations Statistical Commission. A global consultation will need to be organized to collect views from all States Members of the United Nations, in particular those with less developed statistical systems. The global review and corresponding amendment of the Guidelines into global guidelines could be carried out within the Wiesbaden Group, managed by its Steering Group, and supported by the United Nations Statistics Division. The Wiesbaden Group therefore proposes to develop the existing Guidelines adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe into global United Nations guidelines and to submit the new guidelines to the Commission for endorsement at its fiftieth session in 2019.

IV. Updated terms of reference of the Wiesbaden Group

30. As mentioned in the introduction, the Wiesbaden Group provides a forum for the exchange of views and experiences regarding the development, maintenance and use of statistical business registers. It supports the development and implementation of sound methods and good practices in national statistical offices for the establishment, maintenance and improvement of statistical business registers. Section IV provides the core objectives of the group. The full version of the updated terms of reference of the Wiesbaden Group is given in the annex to the present report.

31. The Group has the following objectives:

- (a) To provide a forum for exchanging good practices in developing, maintaining and using statistical business registers and support joint initiatives;
- (b) To discuss and clarify conceptual issues and support the developments of new methods and techniques related to statistical business registers;
- (c) To develop the role of statistical business registers as the backbone of statistical production by providing a common architecture for data collection, data integration and dissemination;
- (d) To discuss and develop the role of statistical business registers in integrating data from administrative sources, other statistical registers or surveys for the production of economic statistics;

(e) To discuss ways to meet the challenges of economic globalization in terms of the production of statistical business registers as well as the growing need for comparable international statistics;

(f) To support the implementation of relevant international recommendations and good practices on statistical business registers.

32. The Wiesbaden Group discusses topics that have direct or indirect effects on different areas of economic statistics, and, when relevant, experts from those areas may be invited to contribute to its work. It is recognized that the Wiesbaden Group has a dual role: (a) to facilitate the exchange of experiences and new developments at an advanced level; and (b) to act as a global forum. The Group should also address the needs and interests of countries with less developed statistical systems.

V. Points for discussion

33. The Commission is invited to express its views on:

(a) The progress made by the Wiesbaden Group as reported at its 25th meeting;

(b) The proposal to establish United Nations guidelines for statistical business registers based on the Guidelines for Statistical Business Registers of the Economic Commission for Europe;

(c) The updated terms of reference of the Wiesbaden Group.

Annex

Terms of reference of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers

I. Background

1. The Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers is a city group under the United Nations Statistical Commission. In the spirit of the United Nations city groups, it relies mainly on the active engagement of the participating delegates, providing a forum for the exchange of views and experiences regarding the development, maintenance and use of statistical business registers. It discusses conceptual and methodological issues in relation to statistical business registers and the development and implementation of good practices in their production. The Wiesbaden Group supports the development of statistical business registers for economic statistics by discussing and developing their role in data collection and data integration as well as in the production and dissemination of statistics.

2. The Wiesbaden Group, established in 1986 under the name International Roundtable of Business Survey Frames, held its first meeting in Ottawa in 1986. Following its 20th meeting in Wiesbaden, Germany, in 2007, it was renamed the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers, to conform to the convention of naming of the United Nations city groups. The change of name also reflected the changing role of statistical business registers, which are increasingly providing the backbone for the production of economic statistics and considered sources of statistical information in their own right.

II. The roles of the statistical business register

3. The statistical business register plays a central role in the production of economic statistics, both in terms of the way the statistics are produced and in terms of the quality of the statistics that draw on information from it.

4. Traditionally the main function of the statistical business register has been to provide a population of statistical units from which frames and samples for surveys can be drawn. This continues to be an important role. A high-quality statistical business register with good coverage and updated information is an important prerequisite for producing coherent and high-quality economic statistics. Today, however, the statistical business register also fulfils other important roles. The registers have become crucial for the use and integration of information from administrative registers and other sources, which plays a growing role in the production of official statistics. It is also possible to use statistical business registers for analytical purposes and for answering questions of interest. In addition, a well-developed statistical business register with a comprehensive coverage of enterprises and other statistical units and information about their characteristics can be used as a source of statistics in its own right.

5. The statistical business register can provide a common architecture for data collection and data integration, data processing and dissemination, and it thus

facilitates the development of efficient statistical production processes and coherence across statistical outputs. The statistical business register, as a unifying tool, is therefore also pivotal in modernizing national statistical systems in order to produce official statistics more efficiently and in an integrated way. A high-quality statistical business register and continuous maintenance and development of the register are also required in order to meet evolving user demands for relevant, coherent, detailed and timely economic statistics in the future.

III. The work of the Wiesbaden Group

6. The Wiesbaden Group discusses all issues concerned with the different stages of production of the statistical business register, including data sources and data integration, the coverage of the register, its quality, the statistical units, production and maintenance of the register and its various uses.

7. Data sources and data collection methods are crucial for the coverage and quality of the statistical business register, including its timeliness. In this context the Wiesbaden Group addresses the use of information from surveys and censuses, ways of electronic reporting by respondents and profiling of large and complex units, including multinational enterprise groups. The Group discusses the use of administrative registers and their potential for improving the quality and coverage of statistical business registers and reducing response burden. The Group also discusses how to establish cooperation with administrative register holders to facilitate data-sharing and the direct use of administrative data for updating statistical business registers or for validating information in the registers obtained from other sources (for example surveys or censuses). This also includes discussion of legal and confidentiality issues.

8. To serve its purposes, the statistical business register should ideally cover all economic units that are active and resident in the country. The Wiesbaden Group discusses ways to improve the coverage of registers for the various sectors of the economy. Economic globalization, in particular the activities of multinational enterprise groups, possesses specific measurement problems. The Wiesbaden Group therefore supports international cooperation that facilitates better measurement of globalized activities.

9. The quality of the statistical business register is crucial and has direct implications for the statistics that draw on the information of the register, up to the gross domestic product of the national accounts. The Wiesbaden Group discusses all dimensions of quality in relation to statistical business registers, including relevance, accuracy, timeliness, punctuality, accessibility, comparability and coherence. The Group shares experiences and best practices on how to measure and improve the quality of the registers, including the development of indicators for the different quality dimensions, the use of new information technology and software to improve quality, the implementation of quality assessment frameworks and associated resource and cost implications.

10. The statistical units are the basic building blocks of the statistical business register. The Wiesbaden Group discusses definitions and delineations of statistical units, including establishments, kind-of-activity units, enterprises and enterprise

groups and how to implement these elements in practice for various types of entities and for different sectors of the economy. This includes a discussion of the different sources for the recording and measurement of statistical units, profiling and alignment with the System of National Accounts (SNA).

11. The production and maintenance of a statistical business register is a complex, ongoing process involving data collection and integration of data from different sources, including subject area surveys, censuses and administrative registers. The Wiesbaden Group discusses strategies and policies for maintaining the registers and strengthening their role as the backbone in the production of economic statistics. This includes production architecture, methods for data-sharing and data integration, use of classifications and how to deal with changes in classifications, how to utilize new software to make the production process more efficient, the development of integrated systems for economic statistics and the use of metadata and business rules in the statistical business register. The Group also discusses production-related issues that are specific to registers in countries with less developed statistical systems.

12. The use of statistical business registers covers a variety of purposes. The Wiesbaden Group discusses the role of the registers in providing population and sampling frames for survey-based statistics and in monitoring and reduction of response burden. The Group also facilitates the sharing of best practices in disseminating the information obtained through the use of statistical business registers for statistical use, including for analytical and research purposes.

13. The Wiesbaden Group also discusses the development of statistics based directly on statistical business registers. For example, business demography may be derived directly from the register, or information from the register may be linked with information from administrative sources or other statistical registers to produce entrepreneurship indicators or longitudinal or geospatial studies. In this connection, the Group discusses issues such as typology and methods and practices for estimation of demographic events (for example on the death and birth of enterprises).

IV. Purpose and objectives of the Wiesbaden Group

14. The purpose of the Wiesbaden Group is to support the development and implementation of sound methods and good practices in national statistical offices for the establishment, maintenance and improvement of statistical business registers. To that end, the Group has the following objectives:

- (a) To provide a forum for exchanging good practices in developing, maintaining and using statistical business registers and to support joint initiatives;
- (b) To discuss and clarify conceptual issues and support the developments of new methods and techniques related to statistical business registers;
- (c) To develop the role of the statistical business register as the backbone of statistical production by providing a common architecture for data collection, data integration and dissemination;

(d) To discuss and develop the role of statistical business registers in integrating data from administrative sources, other statistical registers or surveys for the production of economic statistics;

(e) To discuss ways to meet the challenges of economic globalization in terms of the production of statistical business registers as well as the growing need for internationally comparable statistics;

(f) To support the implementation of relevant international recommendations and good practices on statistical business registers.

15. The Wiesbaden Group discusses topics that have direct or indirect effects on different areas of economic statistics. When relevant, experts from these areas may be invited to contribute to the work of the Group.

16. It is recognized that the Wiesbaden Group has a dual role: (a) to facilitate exchange of experiences and new developments at an advanced level; and (b) to act as a global forum. The Group should also address the needs and interests of countries with less developed statistical systems.

V. The activities and outputs of the Wiesbaden Group

17. The main activity of the Wiesbaden Group is organizing the biennial meetings that attract experts in business registers from national statistical offices, international organizations and researchers. While participation in the meetings is on a voluntary basis, participants are expected to contribute at an expert level to the programme of the meetings.

18. From 1986 until 2008 meetings were organized annually. Since 2008 the Wiesbaden Group has met every second year. The meetings are organized around national progress reports on the development of statistical business registers and include a number of sessions on selected substantial topics. The reports are disseminated on the website of the Wiesbaden Group through the Communication and Information Resource Centre for Administrations, Businesses and Citizens of the European Commission.

19. Participants, including experts and researchers, can attend the meeting of the Wiesbaden Group, although their views may not necessarily represent the official position of their respective countries. Any country can express interest in the work of the Wiesbaden Group and ask to participate in its meetings. As a result of the broad composition of the participants, the topics addressed at its meetings tend to cover a wide range of areas.

20. The most visible outputs of the Wiesbaden Group are the papers and presentations submitted and discussed at the meetings, including country progress reports. The reports of the meetings aim to identify recommendations on sound methods and good practices in maintaining, developing and using statistical business registers. The documents of the meetings are targeted at experts in business registers, but are also relevant for senior managers in statistical offices who may be in the process of developing statistical business registers.

21. The Wiesbaden Group was consulted in the production of the Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe in 2015. Participants at the meetings of the Wiesbaden Group in 2012 and 2014 contributed with substantial inputs and recommendations for the final version of the Guidelines.

22. The Group's website, which is hosted by the United Nations Statistics Division, provides information about the Group's work and previous and upcoming meetings. Papers and presentations of the meetings are available on the websites of the host organization and the Eurostat website of the Communication and Information Resource Centre for Administrations, Businesses and Citizens of the European Commission.

23. The meetings of the Wiesbaden Group are organized every second year by a Steering Group, alternating with the biennial meetings of the Group of Experts on Business Registers jointly organized by the Economic Commission for Europe, Eurostat and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The meetings of the Wiesbaden Group and the Expert Group complement each other. To ensure close coordination of work, and to avoid the duplication of efforts, the Steering Group prepares and oversees the activities of both groups and ensures that the agendas of the meetings are coordinated.

VI. Steering Group of the Wiesbaden Group

Tasks of the Steering Group

24. The Steering Group guides the work of the Wiesbaden Group and ensures coordination and cooperation with other relevant areas of statistics.

25. The tasks of the Steering Group are:

(a) To assist the host of the upcoming Wiesbaden Group meeting on matters relating to the agenda, including organizing the meeting into suitable sessions, drafting of the call for papers and selecting of papers for presentation;

(b) To promote and disseminate the outputs of the Wiesbaden Group;

(c) To take initiatives to follow up on the research agenda on statistical business registers;

(d) To be forward-looking and to identify emerging user needs and new challenges concerning statistical business registers and their role in the production of economic statistics;

(e) To ensure coordination and cooperation with relevant international initiatives and organizations, including the meetings of the Expert Group on Business Registers jointly organized by the Economic Commission for Europe, Eurostat and OECD;

(f) To prepare reports of the work of the Wiesbaden Group for the United Nations Statistical Commission.

26. While the Chairs of sessions at the biannual meetings of the Wiesbaden Group will usually be asked to produce a summary of the discussions and conclusions reached during the sessions, the host organization is responsible for drafting the final report of the meeting.

27. To facilitate participation of developing countries, the Steering Group should examine the possibility of obtaining funding support from regional or international organizations.

Membership of the Steering Group

28. The Steering Group comprises experts from national statistical offices and international organizations and the host organization of the upcoming meeting of the Wiesbaden Group. As of 2017, members of the Steering Group are Austria, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics and United States Census Bureau), Eurostat, OECD, the Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Statistics Division.

29. The Steering Group is usually chaired by a representative of the host organization of the upcoming meeting of the Wiesbaden Group.

30. The Steering Group aims for a broad representation of countries from different regions of the world. The Steering Group is open to participation from interested and committed organizations and may invite experts from national statistical offices, academia and international organizations to contribute to its programme of work.
