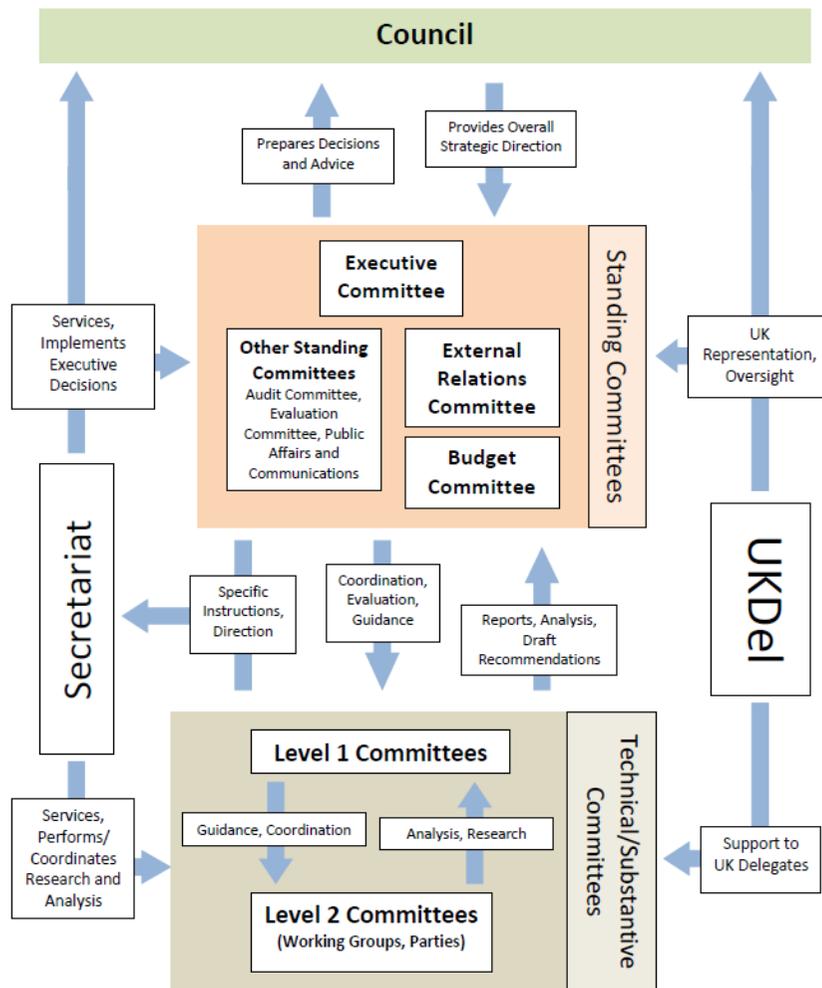


The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations in a nutshell

OECD

The 34 members of OECD provide its funding – currently 7% by UK. Gaining membership is a complex process that can take a long time. It involves a series of examinations to assess a country's ability to meet OECD standards in a wide range of policy areas and overall economic standards (e.g. GDP per head threshold). Membership confers pseudo legal obligations, in the case of GSS, mainly participation in committees and working groups, and supply of data.



OECD has permanent staff, its 'secretariat', who support and execute the work of technical committees. One of these is the Committee on Statistics (CSTAT). It meets formally once a year, bringing together the most senior statistical representatives from member states to agree work plans. As the committee only meets once a year, a bureau that includes a subset of members meets more often.

The National Statistician is the UK representative. She is currently the chair of the committee and by extension the bureau. The committee and bureau determine an overall strategy. This strategic direction is then implemented by working groups manned by the secretariat and statisticians from member statistical systems.

The top international priority for the GSS is engagement with the ESS. However, the OECD is one of the next most important international statistical fora. The UK actively engages with the OECD to make sure UK perspective is taken into account when OECD develop international guidelines for statistics.

It is important that GSS members taking part in statistical work with the OECD are aware that the UK has a permanent ambassador from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the OECD known as UK Del. This ambassador sits on the OECD council from which overall OECD strategy flows.

See diagram. CSTAT is a level 1 committee

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations in a nutshell

UN

Almost every sovereign state is a member of the UN and its general assembly. The mandate for activities undertaken is driven from the general assembly. The UN is best known for peacekeeping and humanitarian aid through the work of its security council. But there is also an economic and social council (ECOSOC) and this accounts for 70% of UN human and financial resources. It is important that the GSS engages with the UN through its statistical structures explained below, because it is the most inclusive international organisation and therefore the international statistical standards it develops can have the greatest mandate and reach.

High level

The UN Statistics Commission and its executive, the UN Statistics Division are part of ECOSOC. The statistics commission has 24 members that rotate with membership lasting 4 years. UK is a member until end 2012. The commission meets once a year for four days. It is the highest decision making body for international statistical activities especially the setting of statistical standards, the development of concepts and methods and their implementation at the national and international level.

In practice

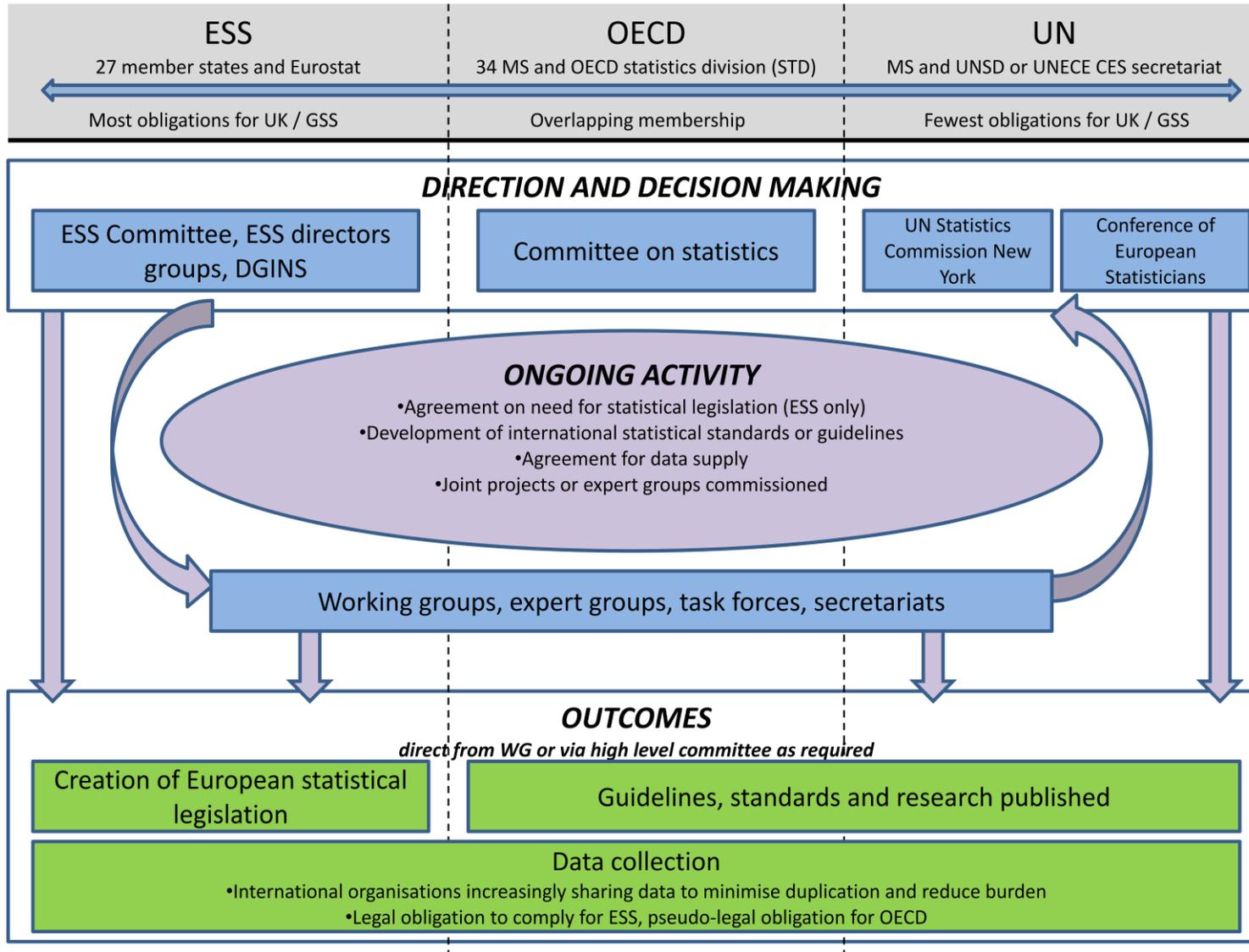
ECOSOC has other subsidiary bodies including five regional commissions. One of these is the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Despite the name, the 50+ members include non-European countries such as USA, China and Australia. Membership is less well defined than the OECD and other UN members are welcome to participate. All OECD members participate in UNECE.

UNECE has domains of work, one of which is statistics. An annual Conference of European Statisticians (CES) brings together senior statisticians from member states. The format is similar to OECD CSTAT and helps direct the work of the UNECE statistics secretariat and working groups.

CES has a bureau of eight member states and representatives from the IMF, Eurostat, OECD and world bank. The bureau meets separately during the conference, and an additional two times during the year. It is the executive arm of the conference and the UK, through Jil Matheson, is currently a member. The bureau directs what subjects will be covered during the conference, and which statistics will be included among four annual in depth statistical reviews. These in depth reviews are directed by working groups manned by relevant experts from member NSIs.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations in a nutshell

Annex 1: International statistical development



The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations in a nutshell

Annex 2: Membership

