

OECD Expert Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange

Conclusions from the meeting in Paris on 14-15 April 2008

The OECD Expert Group on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange met on 14-15 April in Paris. The purpose of the Expert Group is to identify ways of improving OECD's data collection and data sharing activities with member countries, and to promote the development and use of SDMX standards and guidelines for this purpose. The Expert Group meetings also provide an important opportunity for member countries to discuss and influence the development of SDMX standards, guidelines and tools.

69 people attended this meeting: in addition to participants from 22 OECD member countries, there was attendance from all 5 accession countries, from one more enhanced engagement country, from 3 more observer countries and from many international organisations: UN/ECE, Eurostat, IMF, ECB, BIS, UNICEF, UNCTAD and UNIDO.

Agenda, papers, presentations and a list of participants are available at:
<http://www.oecd.org/std/research/exchangeexpertgroup/2008>

General

There has been considerable progress with implementations; many countries and organisations showed their results and plans. But more is needed.

There is still a lack of authoritative Data Structure Definitions and Metadata Structure Definitions, and participants wished to see ways to speed up development of Data Structure Definitions in an orderly fashion.

Conceptual model

The conceptual model presented by OECD and Sweden had not managed to make large progress since last year, but participants still found this very important. **Eurostat, OECD and UNESCO are called on to complete the Education Data Structure Definition based on the conceptual model. The goal is to reduce the number of individual requests/tables from NSOs by developing DSDs that integrate several tables into one structure making it more logical, better connected to neighbouring domains and easy to adjust to changing needs.**

Registries

There is a need to have a central and robust registry to host all Data Structure Definitions and Metadata Structure Definitions, or at least to refer to those registered elsewhere.

It was proposed that Eurostat could have this role; Eurostat will be considering this possibility.

Push or pull

Some EU countries prefer to push their data to Eurostat and have Eurostat give access to other IOs via pull mechanism.

OECD and Eurostat should seek agreement on how this is done.

ISO standard process

It is now or never for correcting problems with v/2.0. Once it is fixed as a real standard, it cannot be changed for several years

Participants were urged to give any comments and criticism they may have in the coming 2 months.

Content oriented guidelines:

Countries recognise the importance of the Content oriented guidelines, which are now out for comment in an enhanced version. They have already been taken into account in solutions of many organisations

Comments are needed before end of May 2008.

Countries called on international organisations to really harmonise codelists, e.g. on countries and currencies. Whereas the so-called pivot or Rosetta lists with codes of several international organisations are recognised as an important step forward, this is not enough.

User guide

The proposal from Eurostat and OECD to add a statistical thread side by side with the technical thread was welcomed. There should be a draft addition in 2008.

It was proposed to revive the Advocacy Group to work on this.

Eurostat and OECD are already committed, and all countries and organisations are invited to contribute.

Training and advocacy

There is a general need for more training, especially hands-on workshops. Some countries (Mexico) and organisations (Eurostat) are already very active, but OECD needs to start internal training.

The meeting discussed how training should be organised world-wide. It was made clear that Eurostat offers training also to non-member countries through their technical assistance program.

There was great interest in having an SDMX world conference in January-February possibly organised by OECD.

An SDMX survey

There was support for a survey to be carried out among countries and organisations to show:

- Implementations
- Plans
- Problems experienced or perceived

OECD was ready to draft such a survey.

It was the general opinion that it should be World-wide, provided it would be supported by all sponsors.