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**SUMMARY OF OECD TRADE-IT NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS**

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## **SUMMARY OF OECD TRADE-IT NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS**

1. This note provides a summary of the results of the OECD Trade-IT network questionnaire.
2. During the December 2001 OECD Trade Experts meeting it was agreed as an action point to establish an informal group of specialists to exchange of information pertaining to the management of Trade data. A questionnaire was circulated among participants in April 2002 to gauge the level of interest in participating in the network and to identify the goals of such a group.
3. The overall stated aim of the group at this first stage is to provide a forum to:
  - Identify common problems in the development and maintenance of Trade database applications.
  - Propose shared solutions to common problems.
  - Provide a means for sharing know-how on specific issues.
  - Share specific Trade-related application technology.
  - Identify possibilities for synergies for future joint ventures in developing new software.
  - Discuss the feasibility and gauge levels of interest for sharing Trade data and application in the long term.

The group would then determine the feasibility of these aims and the expectations of the group with regard to the exchange of technology, know-how and data. It is important to ensure than aims and expectations are kept to a realistic and practical level.

4. The questionnaire collected data on the following topics:
  - Trade-IT Network goals and main areas of interest.
  - Current status of Trade Application in the participants organisations (Planning migration to new platform; In process of migration; No changes planned etc.)
  - Trade Application software used by participant organisations (Platform; Database Technology; Operating system; Vendors).

The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish the common areas of interest; to identify with trade application status in particular those organisations who are planning to redevelop their software (requirement for advice, mutual assistance) and to identify common areas of technology and common vendors.

### **I. Results of Trade-IT questionnaire survey**

#### *Response to the questionnaire.*

5. Of the 26 meeting participants contacted, 20 replied and expressed interest in taking part in the Trade-IT Network.

Replies were received from the following member country agencies and international organisations:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- National Bank of Belgium
- Statistics Canada
- CEPII - France
- Hungarian Central Statistics Office
- Statistics Iceland
- Central Statistical Office of Ireland
- ISTAT - Italy
- Statistics Norway
- Central Statistical Office of Poland
- Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic
- Swiss customs
- HM Customs and Excise - UK
- US Census Bureau
- European Commission
- Eurostat
- International Trade Centre (ITC)
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
- World Trade Organisation (WTO)

*See Annex 1 for list of contacts*

***Confirmation of Trade-IT Network goals and main areas of interest.***

6. General comments on the questionnaire (Number of responses in parenthesis)
  - Share software solutions(12)
  - Sharing data and/or Discuss feasibility for sharing Trade data in the long-term (9).
  - Coordinate with software vendors(2)
  
7. The following specific goals and areas of interest were expressed as individual comments on the questionnaires:

***Sharing technical know-how:***

- Share algorithms and analytical methods
- Share experiences Merchandise Price Indexes system.
- Share automated validation/editing practices for data collections
- Share in new solutions developed by other organisations.
- Share experiences and feedback of different software products (environments, platforms)
- Share experience in performance issues
- Share experiences of problems in development tools
- Share specific Trade-related application technology.
- Share in new solutions developed by other organisations.
- Sharing know-how
- Propose shared solutions to common problems.
- Exchange info software issues
- Sharing experience on hardware and software for web-based applications.

***Sharing common experiences/lessons learned***

- Sharing statistical problems (classifications, mirrors, holes)
- Sharing problems experienced in sharing data.
- Share problems related to handling large volumes of data.
- Identify common problems in the development and maintenance of Trade data applications

***Ideas for forum***

- Internet site for exchanging ideas
- Establish repository of troubleshooting problems and solutions.
- Provide means for sharing know-how on specific issues.

***Common projects***

- Exchange practical experience and knowledge on IT solutions
- Participate in projects to develop new tools (where possible)
- Identify potential for future joint ventures in developing new software.
- Distributive database management
- Willingness to participate in common software for Trade.

***Other***

- Investigate 'standard' products i.e. B2020
- Quality issues (understanding Mirror statistics and Triangular Trade)
- Discuss Quality management issues.

***Trade Application status***

8. Response to the question regarding the status of individual Trade Applications indicated the following:

- No major changes planned in the near future (10 replies).
- A major application migration or redevelopment is planned (6 replies).  
Specifically, these are:
  - o migration from a mainframe to a relational database environment;
  - o migration from a mainframe to a client-server environment;
  - o migration from a mainframe to a client-server + web environment;
  - o redevelop the mainframe application;
  - o migration to operational data warehouse;
  - o migration to SQL server and ASP .net.
- A software upgrade is planned (3 replies):
  - o SAS Upgrade
  - o Migrate to latest version of SAS and Windows 2000. Redesign application.
- Interface changes are planned (3 replies)
  - o interface upgrade, dissemination.
  - o internet, OLAP access
  - o Internet access.
- A review of the data capture process is planned (1 reply).

***Technical Environment***

9. This section also includes OECD information.

**II. Platforms:**

10. The platforms used by the Trade applications can be classified as follows (Number of replies in parenthesis):

- Client-Server (14)
- Mainframe (8)
- Web-based.(2)

*Client-Server accounts for 58% of Trade application platforms, Mainframes for 33%.*

**III. Database Technology**

11. The primary database technologies used by the participant organisations Trade applications are as follows:

- Relational (16) - Oracle (8), Sybase (2) , MS SQL Server, DB2, Ingres, MS Access, ADABAS (1)
- SAS(2)
- Multidimensional (1) – Oracle EXPRESS
- IDMS (1)

*Relational database technology accounts for 83% of current Trade applications.*

12. Secondary database technology used

- SAS (3)
- Beyond2020 (2)
- Business Objects (1)
- Multidimensional - Oracle Express. (1)
- Comext(1)
- MS Access (1)

**IV. Operating System**

- HP Unix (8)
- NT or Windows (9)
- IBM OS390 (2)
- Others (1) VME, Compaq, VMS

*Operating systems split mainly between Unix (40%) and Windows (45%).*

**V. Vendors**

- Microsoft (11)
- SAS (6)
- Oracle (7)
- HP(3)
- CA,IBM,ICL,B2020,Sybase,Fujitsu (1)
- Macromedia, Sybase, Business Objects and Open Source (MySQL, Perl, PHP, Apache)

**VI. Conclusions and next steps:**

**A. Conclusions.**

13. Given the interest shown in particular in sharing software solutions and sharing data, the group will focus on these issues and attempt to leverage common expertise.

**B. Next steps.**

- Circulate Report and list of contacts list
- Circulate Inventory of participant organisation software - participants can contact each other directly on specific issues where there is a 'software match',
- Circulate a regular (6 monthly) bulletin of updates to members (example – OECD's Statistics online OLAP pilot project using UN Trade database model)
- Include Trade IT topic on OECD internet Electronic Discussion Group (TradeNet).
- Schedule Trade-IT session at next OECD trade experts meeting (Feb 2003).
- Investigate feasibility of joint UN/OECD "World Trade" database.

**Annex 1. List of contacts**

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