

**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

First meeting of the 2004/2005 Bureau  
Washington, D.C. (United States), 18-19 October 2004

Item 8: Seminar on improved  
data reporting

**CES SEMINAR ON IMPROVED DATA REPORTING**

**Note prepared by the United States**

**BACKGROUND**

1. Prior to the June 2004 Conference of European Statisticians plenary session, member countries and the international organizations were invited to select future seminar topics to be discussed as “foundational” and “emerging” issues. Based on electronic survey results, the topic of improved data reporting, with specific subtopics of electronic reporting and decreasing burden on respondents, was proposed as a foundational issue.

2. As part of its annual plenary session in 2005, the Conference of European Statisticians will host a one-day seminar on this topic. The first outline of the seminar will be discussed at the Bureau Meeting in Washington in October 2004. After agreement on proposed subtopics and issues, the Bureau will recommend an organizer for each session, with the United States responsible for the seminar overall. Possible session organizers, based on earlier expressions of interest, include Statistics Finland, the UK’s ONS, Statistics Lithuania, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, Statistics Sweden, and OECD.

3. Following the practice of previous years, the members of the organizing committee will present one of the invited papers in their session or take the role of discussant, and define other author(s) and/or nominate candidates for discussants. (Some potential roles are outlined here. If this outline is viewed favourably by the Bureau, recommendations for invited papers for sessions (ii) and (iii) would be particularly welcomed.) All invited papers and discussants will be identified before the end of the calendar year.

**DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE SEMINAR ON IMPROVED DATA REPORTING**

(i) Best Practices in Electronic Reporting Using the Internet (Finland)

Issues:

- For which types of surveys does the Internet option provide the most benefit for the statistical agency or respondent?
- What are the infrastructure requirements and associated costs to support a shift to Internet reporting?
- What are the technical challenges agencies face when offering electronic reporting?
- What is the impact on response? On timeliness of filing and data release?
- What is the impact on data quality?

Invited papers: Finland  
Sweden

(ii) Other Avenues for Electronic Reporting

For options such as electronic data interchange (EDI), computerized self-administered questionnaires, email, touchtone data entry, and voice recognition, the issues are similar:

- For which types of surveys does the option provide the most benefit for the statistical agency or respondent?
- What are the infrastructure requirements and associated costs?
- What are the technical challenges agencies face?
- What is the impact on response? On timeliness of filing and data release?
- What is the impact on data quality?

### (iii) Cognitive and Usability Testing and Marketing in Support of Internet and Other Electronic Reporting Options

Issues:

- How does questionnaire design vary for electronic vs. paper reporting? Is length an issue? Complexity?
- What are best practices for working with potential respondents when developing Internet or other electronic reporting options, including developing and testing questionnaires?
- How can electronic response be encouraged through marketing, advance contact, and other methods?
- What are the data integrity and privacy issues and how are these and their associated perceptions addressed?

### (iv) Reducing Respondent Burden

Issues:

- How can data requirements be realigned to reflect record-keeping and accounting practices?
- How can data sharing and administrative records be used for “passive” reporting?
- What legal mandates exist for burden reduction?
- What are the tensions between reducing burden and effects on data quality?
- What is the impact of incentives on response rates and data quality?
- What actual burden reductions have occurred through current electronic reporting practices?

Invited papers: Australia  
Lithuania

\* \* \* \* \*