

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For information

Third meeting of the 2006/2007 Bureau
Geneva, 12-13 February 2007

Item 7f of the Provisional
Agenda

**PROGRESS REPORT OF THE COMMON METADATA FRAMEWORK TASK
FORCE**

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

BACKGROUND

1. The Task Force on a Common Metadata Framework (CMF) was established in 2004¹, with terms of reference approved by the Bureau ([CES/BUR.2004/44](#)). The Task Force's objective is to organise available information about statistical metadata into a framework for use by national statistical organizations in their development of metadata systems. It is expected that international statistical organizations would also benefit from this work.
2. A report on this work was last provided to the Bureau in February 2005 ([CES/BUR.2005/29](#)), at which time the Bureau acknowledged progress in developing the CMF and supported further work on it. A report on progress since that date is below.

PROGRESS IN 2005 / 2006

3. Based on approved proposals, the framework is structured in four parts:
 - A) Corporate Context
 - B) Metadata Concepts, Standards, Models and Registries
 - C) Metadata and the Statistical Cycle
 - D) Implementation.
4. To generate the most recent content, the agenda of the Joint UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Metadata (METIS), held in April 2006, was based around the four parts of the framework. In preparation for this meeting, the Task Force drafted Part A of the framework. This provides a detailed description of the corporate context of metadata, to facilitate the understanding of metadata systems and provide national statistical offices with a basis to establish a corporate business case.

¹ The membership of the task Force includes: Graeme Oakley and Alistair Hamilton (Australian Bureau of Statistics), Miroslava Brchanova (Czech Statistical Office), Alice Born (Statistics Canada), Søren Netterstrøm (Statistics Denmark), Gary Dunnet (Statistics New Zealand), Bo Sundgren (Statistics Sweden), Max Booleman (Statistics Netherlands), Daniel Gillman (US Bureau of Labor Statistics), Juraj Riecan and Jessica Gardner (UNECE), Jana Meliskova (expert invited by UNECE), Denis Ward (OECD), Marco Pellegrino (Eurostat).

5. The work session was attended by representatives from 49 national statistical offices and international organizations. The presented papers and subsequent discussion generated significant input to the framework.

6. In considering how to progress the framework in the future, the Work Session participants made the following recommendations:

- (a) The framework shall be a living/evolving reference to standards, concepts, and best practices. An editorial board shall be created to ensure future maintenance of the framework.
- (b) The framework should be published in an electronic form on the UNECE website, with some parts published in print (after the public and editorial group review).
- (c) The framework shall comprise two types of information:
 - i. Text that is written for the framework as its integral part;
 - ii. Selected and edited contributions by countries (good practices).
- (d) It is important to add a general introduction, and provide “packaging” to link individual parts of the framework.
- (e) In order to attract broader readership, each item of the framework should comprise a general overview, avoiding overly detailed technical information, with links to more technical and detailed papers.
- (f) Linked contributions may relate to multiple parts of the framework.
- (g) All material included in the framework should be accessible without restriction.
- (h) Drafts will be made available for public review. After two rounds of review they will be left stable within the framework for some (reasonable) time.
- (i) The draft framework shall be updated using contributions from METIS 2006.
- (j) The editorial board should be open to all inputs within and outside the framework of METIS and ensure collaboration with other relevant groups.

7. In August 2006 the UNECE launched the Common Metadata Framework website (<http://www.unece.org/stats/cmef/>). The site consists of:

- a description of each part of the framework
- a HTML version of the Part A Corporate Context document
- links to relevant documentation from METIS 2006.

8. The website is already a valuable resource to staff in national statistical offices and it will continue to evolve with further input from the Task Force and METIS participants. To facilitate review of content, contributions and ongoing discussion between statistical offices and international organizations, a METIS mailing list has been established.

ONGOING AND FUTURE WORK

9. Since the April 2006 METIS Work Session, the editorial board has been established:

Part A: Graeme Oakley (Australia); Bo Sundgren (Sweden) and Jana Meliskova,
Part B: Paul Johannis (Canada); Daniel Gillman (United States); Alice Born (Canada),
Part C: Gary Dunnet (New Zealand),
Part D: Max Booleman (Netherlands).

10. The editorial board will use teleconferences, email and other appropriate communication tools to conduct their work, with virtual meetings to be held at least twice per year.
11. The editorial board has coordinated a review of parts A and B of the framework. Part A can be considered as finalised. Part B requires continuous updating to reflect new developments in metadata concepts and standards. The terminology is represented by the SDMX Common Metadata Vocabulary (MCV). MCV may need to be reviewed and extended in its role as a component of the Common Metadata Framework, from the general viewpoint of official statistics.
12. A proposal for a revised structure of Part C has also been reviewed and accepted. The editorial board will coordinate the preparation of a draft of this part, for presentation and discussion at the next METIS Work Session in April 2008. The new structure of Part C is:
 - C1. Positioning Statistical Metainformation Systems in the Statistical Cycle
 - C2. Definitions - cover what is meant by 'survey'
 - C3. Understanding the cycle
 - C4. Architectures, Business and System Design, and Integrating Processing Tools
 - C5. Organisational and cultural issues
 - C6. Links to useful case studies, previous METIS papers, other resources.
13. Examples of implementation of statistical metadata systems were collected for Part D. More examples shall be collected and added to the website on an ongoing basis, using the expertise of the editorial board.
14. The next METIS Work Session is currently scheduled for April 2008. In preparation for this meeting, the UNECE proposes to survey METIS participants to gather feedback on the application and relevance of the framework. A report on the results of this survey will be presented at the METIS Work Session.

CONCLUSION

15. It can be generally concluded that the Task Force on a Common Metadata Framework for National Statistical Offices (METIS) has fulfilled its role by accomplishing the majority of its original goals. The editorial board established at the April 2006 Work Session can take over the responsibility for coordinating the future work on finalising parts C and D, reviewing Part B, and regular maintenance of the Framework on the Internet. This work will be conducted on an ongoing basis, with annual reviews conducted by the editorial board, and reports made at the biannual METIS Work Sessions.
16. The editorial board shall cooperate with metadata experts in national statistical offices, OECD, Eurostat, IMF, UNECE and other interested international organizations. In addition, the UNECE Secretariat shall host the website and serve as a secretariat for this activity.

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