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ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)
STATISTICS DIRECTORATE

Joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD meeting
on the management of statistical
information systems (MSIS)
(Geneva, 17-19 May 2004)

Topic II: Development of IT strategies in statistical offices

Improvements to the architecture of the Russian State Committee on Statistics (Goscomstat) IT system

Supporting paper

Submitted by the State Committee on Statistics of the Russian Federation*

Summary

1. The paper briefly describes the basic purpose of the corporate IT system in the State statistical apparatus. It describes the basic goals set for the modernization of IT at Goskomstat.

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2. The cardinal requirement of the undertaking is the need not simply to migrate the current system onto new equipment but to set up a qualitatively new system enabling Goskomstat to tackle the tasks facing it amidst continuing social and economic reform.

3. The essential principles underlying the introduction of the new IT system are:

- To position IT as the foundation for the establishment of a single information space for the State statistical apparatus and its use both to cope with the tasks set in the Federal Programme of statistical work and to carry out work for regional clients;

- To use up-to-date information technology and equipment at all stages of the technological process, from the scheduling of statistical observations and data gathering to statistical analysis and presentation to the user;

- The possibility of constant, evolutionary growth.

4. The practical application of these principles depends on:

- A shift to all-in-one technology for data collection, transmission, processing, compilation and the presentation of official statistics;

- The development and introduction of a standard technology and standards for data exchange;

- The use of a compatible metadata system embracing both nationwide classifiers and the Unified Catalogue of Statistical Indicators;

- Improvements to the IT architecture at Goskomstat.

5. The paper describes the current organizational structure, which is a “star” configuration with 89 facilities run from a single centre. From the viewpoint of general management principles and system approach, given wide variations in volume of processed data from one region to the next (there can be 100-fold differences), national and foreign experience, and practical moves to establish Federal Presidential offices, this design and the current set-up cannot be regarded as optimal. Thought is therefore being given to the possibility of an eventual redistribution of functions among the local Goskomstat bodies.

6. A small number of local bodies (7 to 10) could provide the basis for the establishment of interregional data processing centres, which would be responsible for the collection and initial processing (validation) of all incoming information within the areas they covered, transmitting the information to the Goskomstat computing centre, and providing statistical services for users. The remaining local bodies within the area covered by such a centre would in that event do only the minimum necessary to forward information from the district level to the centre (where required), cooperate with the local authorities, provide technical support and so forth. The idea is that such a reorganization would take place gradually in the light of analysis of pilot projects

in a number of regions. One assumption made in IT planning decisions is that of invariance while such changes take place. In practice this means that the system will simultaneously have to allow some areas to operate under the new scheme and others under the old one, while the latter gradually switch to the new scheme.

7. The object of the project, which began in December 2002, is to update and reorganize the technological process and related equipment used in the Goskomstat information system and improve the IT architecture.

8. The construction of data processing centres was selected as a key technology for the creation of the IT infrastructure. It was decided to make the North-Western region, with its centre in St Petersburg, the cornerstone of the project and a pilot project involving the construction of the first data processing centre, to which other facilities in the North-Western region, in Kaliningrad, Vologda, Archangelsk and Pskov, will be hooked up, is now nearing completion there.

9. The design of the Goskomstat data processing centres was developed in the form of a standard decision with a view to subsequent replication at regional facilities.

10. The basic components of a typical data processing centre include a server complex, a data storage system, an operating system for the actual control of IT resources and parts of the centre's infrastructure, and a data security system taking the form of a combination of organizational arrangements and hardware and software defences.

11. The paper describes the infrastructure at such a centre, which must offer the flexibility to support any new business tasks that may fall to the Russian State Committee on Statistics over the longer term.
