

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

For decision

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

Item 7a of the Provisional
Agenda

**TASK FORCE ON CONFIDENTIALITY ASPECTS OF STATISTICAL DATA
INTEGRATION
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Note prepared by Brian Pink, Statistics New Zealand

BACKGROUND

1. In a number of mainly European countries, integration of administrative data sources (particularly register based sources) has been an important part of the national administrative and statistical information infrastructure for some time. In more recent years, a number of other national statistical organisations have also been pursuing the development of new statistical datasets constructed by integrating unit record administrative and/or survey data. These integrated datasets can then be used to compile new official statistics and/or support a range of economic and social research not possible using traditional sources.
2. Integration of unit record data from different sources has been seen to have a number of benefits, including the production of new or enhanced statistical outputs that fill identified information gaps; the production of more disaggregated information for measures where some information currently exists; the ability to carry out policy-relevant research using integrated datasets; the potential to use integrated data to improve or confront existing data sources; and the potential to reduce respondent burden or, alternatively to collect additional information at no extra cost to respondents.
3. At the same time, country experience to date with the process of developing data integration projects has been that they are very resource-intensive; particularly as they require very careful management of privacy and confidentiality in order to try to mitigate any concerns from data suppliers, respondents, the general public and watchdogs such as a Privacy Commissioner or an Ombudsman. In cases, such as where taxation or social security data are being used, the supplier agency can often have legislative requirements that place limits on the use of and access to their data.

DELIVERABLE

4. A draft set of principles and practices which aim to establish a common framework for assessing and mitigating legislative and other confidentiality aspects of the creation and use of integrated datasets for statistical and associated research purposes.

TASKS

5. To produce a draft set of (a) principles and (b) associated protocols/guidelines for addressing confidentiality aspects of statistical data integration projects that

- consider whether these need to vary for individual and business data, and
- are general enough to be able to be adapted by the countries that participate in the Conference of European Statisticians,

and

- to submit a draft proposal for the consideration of the 2007 Conference of European Statisticians (CES);
- if accepted, compile a set of current best practices to guide implementation as a second phase of the project post the 2007 CES meeting.

6. The United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics should be used as a guide on length and style for the presentation of the draft principles and guidelines. This work should also be seen in the context that the 2003 Conference of European Statisticians saw support for research as an important activity of the national statistical offices

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

7. The Task Force membership has been chosen to represent the varying interests of the members of the Conference of European Statisticians. The membership will be Brian Pink (New Zealand) and representatives nominated by the Bureau [**which may include Finland, Canada, Netherlands, US, UNECE and Eurostat**]; Mr Pink will be Chairman of the Task Force.

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8. During the development of the draft principles and protocols/guidelines the Task Force will consult with member countries, representatives of the research community, and selected bodies concerned with confidentiality and privacy issues. This does not preclude the Task Force from collaborating with others who may have an interest in the topic. The work of the Nordic countries in their review of best practices in register-based statistics, which had a particular focus on population and social statistics, will also be referenced during this project.

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