

**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION and  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE  
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
(EUROSTAT)**

**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC  
COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
(OECD)  
STATISTICS DIRECTORATE**

**Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD work session on statistical metadata (METIS)**  
(Geneva, 3-5 April 2006)

## **UNECE TASK FORCE ON ELECTRONIC DATA REPORTING FOR PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION**

Note prepared by the UNECE Secretariat

### **SUMMARY**

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the participants at the April 2006 Work Session on Statistical Metadata (METIS) about the establishment of the Task Force on Electronic Data Reporting, its programme of work, and to solicit a broader interest and collaboration among the national statistical offices.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. Electronic data reporting has already long tradition in the UNECE's statistical work programme. Since early 90's the UNECE was involved in the development, lead by Eurostat, of general standards for the electronic data interchange in statistics. This work is continued by a number of international organizations.

3. In response to the needs of national statistical offices, a work session on statistical data reporting was organized in February 2002 (<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2002.02.edr.htm>). The first work session recommended following up to this activity and continuing the international exchange of experience. This activity was undertaken jointly with Eurostat

4. In 2004 the Conference of European Statisticians has selected the topic of electronic data reporting as a theme of its seminar at its 2005 plenary session. In concluding the seminar the Conference decided to continue the international cooperation in electronic data reporting with the aim to share experience and solutions, make recommendation on specific issues (including security), and explore possibilities for joint development of open source EDR. The Bureau of the Conference has approved the Terms of reference of the Task Force in October 2005 and the Work Plan in February 2006, and recommended that the participants at the METIS work session are informed about this initiative. The Bureau of the Conference also agreed that the UNECE would seek a possible cooperation with Eurostat and OECD.

## THE MANDATE (TERMS OF REFERENCE)

5. The mandate of the Task Force on Electronic Data Reporting for primary data collection is the following<sup>1</sup>:

- a) share solutions for the efficient integration of EDR in the context of multi-mode surveys with EDR as an option;
- b) share experiences in:
  - meta-data driven generalised system for EDR;
  - promoting take-up by respondents of the EDR response option;
  - creating and promoting common data taxonomies, including their relevance, community of interest take-up and the wider applicability in linking business reporting and statistical data collection;
  - participating in a wider Whole of Government approach to Electronic Data Reporting;
- c) make recommendations regarding special issues involving electronic questionnaire design;
- d) outline what is known and not known about possible mode effects;
- e) document the current state of knowledge regarding XBRL, SDMX and other “pull” based collection systems;
- f) make recommendations regarding security arrangements and their public communication;
- g) explore the potential for joint development of open-source EDR and case management solutions;
- h) document special issues affecting Internet collection of population census information including the elements of a business case for electronic collection as an option, the case for outsourcing part of the development, integration with other collection modes.
- i) other related issues that the Task Force wishes to recommend.

6. In its work, the Task Force should take into account the different challenges regarding the EDR process for the individuals/households and businesses/other institutional respondents and the differences in national infrastructure (e.g. legislation, security rules).

7. The Task Force should organize an exchange of experience through e-mail and Internet and possible organization of a Work Session in 2006 (plan: October-November 2006). The Bureau of the Conference requests a report of the Task Force at its February 2007 meeting, for further discussion at the June 2007 plenary session of the Conference.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE ON EDR

8. The members of the Task Force will be experts in national and international statistical agencies dealing with methodological and technical issues associated with electronic data reporting. The Task Force would be able to use the networks created through past and present events organized by the Conference and some national statistical offices in related areas, namely:

- Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Electronic Data Reporting;
- Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Work Sessions on Statistical Metadata (METIS);
- Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meetings on Management of Statistical Information Systems;
- joint activities on EDR undertaken by statistical offices of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US Bureau of the Census.

## METHODS OF WORK, TENTATIVE TIMETABLE AND FORM OF FINAL OUTPUTS<sup>2</sup>

**April 2006** The Task Force will be launched (METIS meeting). The output from this phase will be the membership list.

**April – June 2006** The Task Force members will agree on a detailed schedule and will divide between themselves responsibilities for particular issues listed in the TOR. This phase will be carried out using e-mail

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<sup>1</sup> See ECE/CES/BUR/2005/11/Rev.1

<sup>2</sup> See ECE/CES/BUR/2006/16

and teleconferencing consultations. The output from this phase will be an outline of the final output with responsibilities for its individual components.

**June 2006-October 2006** The Task Force members will make a first collection and selection of material on good practices, with a view to presenting the material at the Work Session on EDR.

**October or November 2006** The UNECE will organize a work session, possibly with Eurostat and/or OECD, on electronic data interchange. The aim of the work session is to submit the material already collected and prepared for a broader discussion, and to solicit more experiences and good practices from countries not directly involved in the Task Force.

**February 2007** The Task Force will submit a progress report to the CES Bureau.

**December 2006 – April 2007** The Task Force will work, using e-mail and teleconferencing, in progressing final outputs on individual issues listed in the work plan and prepare:

- a report for the June 2007 Plenary Session of the Conference;
- a website on good practices and national experiences in the field of EDR (that will become accessible on the public site after the approval of the report).

**June 2007 – October 2007** The Task Force will incorporate the comments received into the report and the website and agree on a mechanism for future updating of the website. The public version of the report and the website will be made available in the course of this phase.

**Late 2007 - Spring 2008** The UNECE secretariat may possibly organize a follow-up Work Session (in cooperation with Eurostat and OECD).

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