

Workshop on the Modernisation of Official Statistics
(Geneva, Switzerland, 22-23 November 2016)

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

1. The Workshop on the Modernisation of Official Statistics was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 22-23 November 2016. It was attended by representatives from the statistical offices of Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom as well as by representatives from the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

2. Ms Lidia Bratanova, Director of the UNECE Statistical Division, opened the workshop and welcomed participants.

3. The keynote presentation was given by Mr Pádraig Dalton (Ireland). His presentation stressed how the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) is moving from a broad range of activities to a much more focused subset as the modernisation programme matures. He highlighted other challenges, such as growing demands for capacity building and how to be open to all, whilst keeping a “cutting edge” focus. In conclusion he listed the many outputs produced during 2016 and thanked those involved for their work.

4. All background documents and presentations for the workshop are available at <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/hlgbas/Workshops>

Session (i) Reporting on progress during 2016

Modernisation Committee on Production and Methods

5. Mr Matjaz Jug reported on the activities of this committee, including on the topics of methodology architecture, machine learning and next generation data management. He referred to the outcomes of a workshop on the implementation of the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA), and preparations for a workshop on statistical data editing.

Modernisation Committee on Organisational Framework and Evaluation

6. Ms Jackey Mayda, Mr Fabrizio Rotundi and Mr Michael Quinlan outlined the activities of this committee. An important area of work was risk management, for which guidelines have been prepared. Follow-up work is assessing how to manage risks in an “agile” environment. The results of a study of organisational barriers to international collaboration were presented, as well as the outcomes of workshops on risk management, and human resources management and training.

Modernisation Committee on Products and Sources

7. Mr Barteld Braaksma outlined the contributions of this committee over recent years, including work on communicating the value of official statistics, workshops on data collection, and statistical dissemination and communication. During 2016, committee members have been heavily involved in the two HLG-MOS projects.

Modernisation Committee on Standards

8. Mr Klas Blomqvist presented the work of this committee. Key areas during 2016 have included quality indicators for the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), the metadata glossary, and the review of the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations (GAMSO). A workshop on implementing modernisation standards was organised, and committee members were actively involved in the development of modernisation maturity models and the modernisation roadmap.

Task Team on Communicating Modernisation

9. Ms Lieneke Hoeksma reported on the work of this task team. She highlighted the development and implementation of the Modernstats logo, as well as the development of information materials in various languages for dissemination via YouTube, Twitter, wikis and other platforms.

CSPA Implementation Group

10. Ms Rosemary McGrath, Mr Pierre Peyronnel, Mr Eric Deeben, Mr Klas Blomqvist and Mr Jakob Engdahl presented the work of this group. Main activities have included developing CSPA-compliance review and governance mechanisms, further development of the CSPA Catalogue, practical technical assistance to service implementers, the CSPA Logical Information Model and CSPA architectural patterns. Effective communication and promotion of CSPA should be a future priority.

Implementing Modernstats Standards: Linked Open Metadata

11. The outcomes of this project were presented by the project leaders, Mr Franck Cotton and Ms Monica Scannapieco. They defined linked open metadata, and presented tools developed to manage and disseminate statistical classifications, models and standards as machine-readable, linked open metadata. The classification tool has received the award of “Best Challenge” from Oracle at a conference on semantic statistics.

Implementing Modernstats Standards: Modernisation Maturity Models and Roadmap

12. The final versions of the Modernisation Maturity Models were presented by Ms Jackey Mayda. They have been tested in several statistical organisations and during a workshop in Geneva. Ongoing work to develop a roadmap for organisations to progress to higher levels of maturity was also outlined.

Data Integration

13. The different activities undertaken within the Data Integration project were presented by the project manager, Ms Jenine Borowik. The project has developed the outline for a practical guide for data integration in statistical organisations. Experiments have considered data from surveys, administrative sources, geo-spatial data, and new sources such as Big Data. The growing importance of integrating data from multiple sources was highlighted in the presentation and discussion.

Session (ii): Priorities for 2017

14. Participants were invited to give short “soapbox” presentations. The following people presented:

- Mr Zoltan Csanyi – Data integration for job vacancy statistics
- Mr Matjaz Jug – Data architecture
- Mr Barteld Braaksma – Urban statistics
- Mr Jon Wylie – A coordinated approach to data suppliers
- Mr Marco Pellegrino – Linking standards

15. Mr Trevor Sutton and Mr Bert Kroese, co-chairs of the Executive Board, presented the new HLG-MOS Strategic Framework, within which all new projects and activities should be framed. They also presented the new structure of subsidiary groups from 2017, which aims to streamline activities and focus efforts on key areas.

16. Mr Taeke Gjaltema presented the results of the 2016 survey on investment intentions of statistical organisations. Workshop participants supported greater visibility and publicity for the survey results.

17. Three project proposals were presented:

- Data integration – Ms Jenine Borowik
- Linking CSPA to implementation standards – Mr David Barraclough
- Data architecture – Mr Klas Blomqvist

18. Following the first round of small group discussions, data integration and data architecture were identified as the top priorities. The CSPA-related work should be taken forwards by the new groups on Supporting Standards and Sharing Tools.

19. A second round of small group discussions identified the key issues to be addressed within each of the projects:

Data Integration

- Development of the proposed on-line guide
 - Quality measures for integrated data
 - Methodology – leading to CSPA-compliant prototype tools
 - Data security and trust issues
 - On-line training resources

- Further joint experiments
 - Geo-spatial and statistical data
 - Urban statistics (based on the soapbox presentation)
 - Prices data

Data Architecture

- A scoping exercise focused on the needs and priorities of statistical organisations
- Review of use cases, best practices, lessons learned and existing technical solutions
- Design of a reference architecture
- Proof of concept
- Semantic interoperability and metadata management
- External data sources and off-site data

20. The close links between the two projects were stressed. There is a need for clear governance and coordination, particularly in areas such as methodology and data governance (privacy, security, quality) which could fall under both projects.

21. In his summary, the Chair thanked participants for their active engagement both during the year, and over the two days of the Workshop. He noted a growing awareness of strategic considerations in the discussions at the workshop, compared to previous years. He considered this a sign of the increasing maturity of the international collaboration activities on statistical modernisation. He thanked the participants, presenters and organisers for an excellent workshop.