

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

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

Joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality
(Manchester, United Kingdom, 17-19 December 2007)

INFORMATION NOTICE No. 1

The meeting will be held at the University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom, from 17 to 19 December 2007, starting at 9.30 a.m. on 17 December *

I. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. The main objectives of the meeting are to facilitate the exchange of experience and identify the best practices in dealing with technical issues related to statistical data confidentiality in national statistical offices. The meeting is primarily intended for experts from national and international statistical offices dealing with statistical disclosure limitation. At the kind invitation of the Office for National Statistics and the University of Manchester, United Kingdom, the meeting will be held from 17 to 19 December 2007 in Manchester (United Kingdom).

2. Statistical disclosure limitation (SDL) is an important issue influencing public perception of official statistics. Statistical confidentiality and protection of respondents' privacy is included in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe adopted at its 1992 annual session.

II. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

3. The work programme of the meeting will consist of the following substantive topics:

- (i) Microdata;
- (ii) Tabular data protection;
- (iii) Applications (including practical implementation of SDC methods, actual issues within NSIs and software).

4. Panel discussions will be organized on:

- (iv) Microdata protection and remote access facilities;
- (v) Balancing data quality and confidentiality.

5. Detailed explanatory notes on the nature and expected outcomes of topics (i) – (iii) and the Panel Discussions (topics (iv) and (v)) are provided in Section V of this Information Notice.

III. PARTICIPATION AND ACCREDITATION

6. Representatives of all Member States of the United Nations and of interested intergovernmental organizations are welcome to participate in the meeting. Participants representing non-governmental organizations in a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council may also attend. **All participants must be accredited by the competent authorities of their country or international organization.** All participants attending the meeting are requested to have a valid passport and, if required, a visa. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible to the Embassy of the United Kingdom in the

* Information on the venue and local arrangements in Manchester (hotel accommodation, transportation etc.) will be provided in Information Notice No. 2.

country in which the participant resides, with a reference to the joint UNECE/Eurostat Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality.

7. The statistical offices and international organizations are requested **to inform the UNECE secretariat before 1 September 2007** whether their organization intends to participate at the meeting and/or submit a contribution on the topics mentioned above. Please indicate the topic to which the paper will refer as well as *participant(s) name(s) and their contact data*.

8. Participants are requested to fill in the attached Conference registration form, which is found on the last page of this document and which will also be available in Word format on the website at the address indicated in paragraph 14. It should be sent to both the UNECE secretariat and to the University of Manchester as indicated on the form by **2 November 2007** so that it may be processed well in advance of the meeting.

9. The UNESCO Chair in Data Privacy (<http://unescoprivacychair.urv.cat>) sponsors a limited number of travel grants for contributors and delegates from transition countries. For further information please send an e-mail to gloria.pujol@urv.cat.

IV. DOCUMENTATION, METHODS OF WORK AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

10. The official language of the meeting is English. The documents should, therefore, be submitted in English only. The following deadlines and requirements apply:

- The papers, not exceeding 10 pages in length, should be sent to the UNECE secretariat **by 5 November 2007 at the latest**.
- Papers should be submitted in electronic format in **MS Word** and **LaTeX** by e-mail to Ms. Diane Serikoff (diane.serikoff@unece.org). Exceptionally, a PDF file can be accepted, provided that the formatting and numbering meets the requirements for this meeting (please contact the UNECE secretariat for further information).
- Templates in Word and LaTeX containing the header, and format will be made available on the website or may be requested by e-mail (diane.serikoff@unece.org).

11. For each substantive item on the agenda the organizers will invite a small number of speakers to write an **invited paper** and to present them at the meeting. All other participants are welcome to submit a **supporting paper** on any topic of the agenda.

12. For the first time during a Work Session on Statistical Data Confidentiality we will organize panel discussions. For this purpose, we have selected two topics. The panel organizers will invite two or three very short introductions for each topic. After that, we hope to have an active discussion with the participants. In order to allow for serious discussions we have allocated 90 minutes for each panel discussion. We would like to investigate future directions for research in statistical data confidentiality, to discuss bottlenecks that need more attention and hopefully to draw a few conclusions. After the Work Session, the panel organizers will write a report with the conclusions of the discussions. These reports will be published on the website and will be included in the Eurostat publication.

13. Authors of invited papers will have about 20 minutes per paper for their presentation. Time permitting, authors of supporting papers may be given time to highlight the main issues raised in their papers. Presenters may use PowerPoint presentations, Adobe Acrobat full screen presentations or A4/letter transparencies. The UNECE secretariat cannot provide translations of the presentations.

- Presentations in PowerPoint or Adobe Acrobat should be sent to the UNECE secretariat by **3 December 2007 at the latest**, so that these can be reviewed by Discussants and installed on the conference room computer prior to the meeting.

14. Eurostat will publish a special volume in the series Monographs of Official Statistics devoted to this work session, containing a wide selection of the papers presented.

15. Invited and supporting papers will be made available on the website of the UNECE secretariat at the following location:

<http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2007.12.confidentiality.htm>

Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website and bring their own copies to the meeting. Documents posted on the website before the meeting will not be distributed in the conference room.

V. EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE AGENDA

Topic (i): Microdata

Session Organizer: Josep Domingo-Ferrer, Rovira i Virgili University of Tarragona, Spain
(josep.domingo@urv.cat)

16. Microdata protection methods have seen a substantial development in the last ten years. Yet their specific properties regarding data utility and disclosure risk often remain unclear. Another gap is the conciliation of respondent privacy, data owner privacy and user privacy, which is a largely unaddressed issue. Reports on real-life disclosure scenarios and real disclosure cases resulting from microdata release are also needed for practical advancement of this field.

17. Topics of interest in this session include but are not limited to:

- new SDC methods for microdata, especially with well-defined utility and risk properties;
- synthetic microdata vs. masked microdata;
- best SDC practices for microdata;
- estimating disclosure risk in microdata SDC;
- record linkage methods;
- privacy-preserving data mining;
- private information retrieval;
- conciliation of the privacy of respondents, dataset owners and dataset users;
- utility and risk of tabular data generated from SDC-protected microdata;
- real-life disclosure scenarios and/or case studies.

Topic (ii): Tabular data protection

Session Organizer: Sarah Giessing, Federal Statistical Office, Germany (sarah.giessing@destatis.de)

18. Contributions for this topic should cover the field of statistical data protection for both tabular frequency, and tabular magnitude data. Topics of interest include:

- disclosure limitation methods for tabular data such as collapsing, suppression, rounding, perturbation of tabulations or original microdata, controlled adjustment, etc.;
- disclosure risk assessment for frequency tables;
- measurement of disclosure in tabular data;
- disclosure control methodology suitable for tabular data accessible via data warehouse systems, or tabular data that can be generated on-site or through Web-access.
- data quality issues, suggesting for instance methods used to compare data quality of tables protected by different protection methods.

Topic (iii): Applications (including practical implementation of SDC methods, actual issues within NSIs and software)

Session Organizer: Eric Schulte Nordholt, Statistics Netherlands (esle@cbs.nl)

19. The objective of this topic is to establish the link between the technical work carried out in the work session and the daily practice of implementing statistical disclosure control (SDC) methods in national statistical institutes (NSIs). Bridging this gap helps to identify the need for further methodological and technical developments, thus enriching initiatives from both sides. Communications will report on on-going

initiatives related to the protection of both microdata and tabular data. As an example, some of the presentations in this topic will focus on the protection of recent Census output.

20. Contributions for this topic may cover the entire field of SDC. They should, however, focus on practical implementation and solutions, rather than on discussion and analysis of theoretical concepts. Papers documenting progress in the state of development of standard tools, and implementations of recently proposed methods including prototypes, are encouraged. Contributions may survey or compare software, or focus on aspects of a software implementation, as well as on practical application.

21. Apart from solutions for the disclosure risk problems associated to data typically released by NSIs, i.e. tabulations, and anonymised microdata sets, we particularly welcome contributions on software tools addressing problems arising in the context of on-site access, remote execution, and remote access, such as disclosure risk assessment for the output of statistical analysis, tools to control and limit the use of procedures for statistical analysis, or solutions perturbing the input, or output data of such procedures.

Topic (iv): Panel discussion on microdata protection versus remote access facilities

Organizer/Chair: Jane Longhurst, Office for National Statistics, UK (jane.longhurst@ons.gov.uk)

22. There is a strong, widespread and increasing demand for NSIs to release microdata files. As well as demand increasing, it is internationally accepted that the threats to confidentiality of microdata are also increasing. Thus, NSIs are confronted with the problem of ensuring that the risk of a breach of confidentiality is acceptably low, while at the same time providing as much detail as possible in the microdata to users. There are different options available for managing these disclosure risks. Some NSIs apply microdata protection methods to modify the data; others restrict access to files through the use of licenses or access agreements or use a combination of the two. Some NSIs also provide access to microdata in data laboratories/research centres or via remote access/execution. This panel discussion will focus on the advantages and disadvantages of these different approaches, current practices and developments. Panelists will provide an overview of their experience and thoughts on microdata access and participate in discussion from the floor. The aim will be to determine future directions on this issue and establish where research should be concentrated.

Topic (v): Panel discussion on balancing data quality and confidentiality

Organizer/Chair: Lawrence H. Cox, U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, (lgc9@cdc.gov)

23. The period 1970-2000 was an active period for research, development and application of methods for statistical disclosure limitation (SDL), resulting in a collection of effective SDL methods and software. Until recently, however, little attention was paid to identifying and studying the effects of SDL methods on the completeness, quality and usability of disclosure-limited statistical data, on quantitative assessment of these effects, or on development of methods that address both SDL and data quality objectives. This panel discussion will focus on current and potential developments on balancing quality and confidentiality of statistical data, and on unmet needs. Panelists will briefly describe their own work in this area, comment on each other's work, and participate in discussion from the floor.

VI. FURTHER INFORMATION

24. For further information, please contact the following organizers:

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REGISTRATION FORM

Joint UNECE/Eurostat work session on statistical data confidentiality (Manchester, United Kingdom, 17-19 December 2007)

This form should be completed in duplicate by each participant and returned by **2 November 2007**

1 copy to: Ms. Diane Serikoff
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Fax: +4122 917-0040
E-mail: diane.serikoff@unece.org

1 copy to: Ms. Kimberley Hulme
Tel: +44-161 275-4737
Fax: +44-161 275-4722
E-mail: kimberley.hulme@manchester.ac.uk

1. Surname (Family name):		Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. First name:
3. Representing (country or organization):			
4. Official function (in home country):			
5. Mailing address:			
6. Tel. No.:		7. Fax No.:	
8. E-mail address:			
9. Please indicate topic ((i)-(iii)) and title, if you intend to present a paper:			
10. Date and time of arrival in Manchester:		11. Date and time of departure from Manchester:	
12. Special requirements:			

Date _____

Signature _____