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**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION
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STATISTICS DIRECTORATE**

Work Session on Statistical Metadata (METIS)
(Geneva, Switzerland, 10-12 March 2010)

FUTURE WORK

Paper prepared by the METIS Steering Group

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This short paper has been prepared by the Steering Group on Statistical Metadata to outline the likely future direction of the work of this group, and to stimulate discussion on how that work can best meet the needs of national and international statistical organizations. It focuses specifically on the period 2010 to 2012. As this paper was prepared before the Work Session, it can not cover any ideas and suggestions arising from the discussions at the Work Session, therefore, when it is presented, it will be supplemented by additional material as necessary.
2. Delegates to the 2010 Work Session on Statistical Metadata are invited to comment on the proposals below, and how the work on this topic can be developed to better meet their needs.

II. GOVERNANCE

3. The Steering Group on Statistical Metadata reports to the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). This means that certain formalities are required, for example periodic reviews to determine whether the terms of reference are still valid, and whether the mandate should be renewed. A new, more standard format of terms of reference for CES groups is proposed.
4. A new Steering Group should be convened following the 2010 Work Session, to prepare for future meetings and manage the development of the Common Metadata Framework. This new Steering Group should also review its terms of reference, and submit a revised version for the approval of the CES Bureau. The current Steering Group members are eligible to continue as members of the new Steering Group, but proposals for new members are also welcome.

III. THE COMMON METADATA FRAMEWORK (CMF)

5. One task for the new Steering Group will be to review and decide on appropriate maintenance arrangements for the Common Metadata Framework. This will include allocating responsibility for the different parts of the CMF, and agreeing an update schedule.

Part A

6. Part A has recently been published, both on the METIS Wiki and as a paper publication. It is expected to have relatively static content in comparison to other parts of the CMF, so no work on Part A is proposed before 2012.

Part B

7. Part B has developed rapidly during 2009-2010. After incorporating feedback from the 2010 Work Session, the next two years are expected to be a period of consolidation, improving and updating, and possibly extending this part of the CMF as necessary. Closely linked to the work on Part B, the topic of metadata standardization, harmonization and exchange is expected to grow in importance. Part B should develop to reflect new developments in this area.

Part C

8. Part C should expand on the Generic Statistical Business Process Model, by including guidance on how it should be applied in practice from the point of view of statistical metadata systems. This could also include the development of an electronic user community for the model as proposed by Statistics Australia. Further work is needed on defining the inter-relationships between sub-processes, and the way they interact with metadata and quality requirements. The role and uses of paradata (data about processes) should also be explored.

9. The impact of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model already extends beyond the traditional boundaries of work on statistical metadata, and into more organizational aspects such as the harmonization and rationalization of statistical business processes and the tools used for them. Metadata can, of course, play a key role in this respect, though strategic management and information technology considerations are also important. It will be necessary to define the extent to which the Steering Group on Statistical metadata will be involved in this work.

Part D

10. New case studies are being added at the rate of 2-3 per year. As Part D grows, so does its potential usefulness. Further case studies should be encouraged, as well as updates to existing ones. The Steering Group should consider whether any changes to the structure or presentation of the case studies are required to better meet user needs.

IV. OTHER AREAS OF WORK

11. The 2010 Work Session has shown that there is a clear interest in the link between statistical metadata systems and quality reporting. This area of work could be expanded in several ways, for example, a new part of the CMF to deal with the relationship between metadata and quality, or inclusion of more information on the link between metadata systems and quality reporting in case studies.

12. As mentioned in the paragraphs on parts B and C of the CMF above, harmonization of metadata contents, formats, systems and standards, is likely to continue to be a priority for the international statistical community, partly driven by the adoption of SDMX by the Statistical

Commission as the preferred standard for data and metadata exchange. The role of the Steering Group and the METIS work sessions in this process needs to be considered, with possible actions including more work on the inter-operability of standards, for example SDMX and DDI (Data Documentation Initiative), and providing a forum for global discussions on harmonization issues.

V. RESOURCES

13. It should be noted that there are no specific financial or human resources allocated to this work. Progress relies on the voluntary contributions of the members of the Steering Group and other interested parties, and the support of the Conference of European Statisticians. For this reason, volunteers to help with the implementation of the various parts of the future work programme are very welcome.

VI. FUTURE MEETINGS

14. Work Sessions on Statistical Metadata are currently held every two years, sometimes with workshops on specific topics in the intermediate years. The popularity of both the Work Sessions and the Workshops is growing, despite severe restrictions on travel for many statistical organizations. Delegates at the 2010 Work Session are invited to comment on the frequency, and to propose topics for discussion at future Work Sessions.

15. Volunteers to host future work sessions are encouraged. Proposals for Workshops on specific topics are also welcome.

VII. SUMMARY OF CONCRETE TASKS

16. The Steering Group proposes the following concrete tasks for the period 2010 to 2012:

- Seek the agreement of the CES on revised terms of reference;
- Review and update CMF Part B following the discussions at the 2010 Work Session;
- Review the Generic Statistical Business Process Model, collecting comments and feedback from the user community, and decide when a new version should be released;
- Develop Part C of the CMF by providing supporting material on the practical implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model;
- Encourage the provision of new case studies and the regular updating of existing ones;
- Consider how the case study system can be developed to better meet the needs of users;
- Consider how to further develop the work on metadata and quality reporting;
- Consider how best to support and influence international work on the harmonization of metadata contents, formats, systems and standards;
- Organize the next Work Session on Statistical Metadata.