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CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

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

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

Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting
on the Management of Statistical
Information Systems

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Topic (i): Changes in statistical processes

**STATISTICS PRODUCTION USING ADMINISTRATIVE
SOURCES: FRENCH EXPERIENCES**

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Summary

1. INSEE has been using administrative sources for statistical purposes for several decades. Enterprise statistics was the first field in which experiments were carried out. These resulted in the development of a strategy under which statistical surveys were to be made solely when the desired statistical findings could not be obtained from administrative sources. One aspect of this strategy was the creation and management by INSEE, over 30 years ago, of a register of all French enterprises, incorporating the notion of a single identifier which in theory makes it easier to find matches among the sources that use it.

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2. It has not been possible to develop a similar strategy for household statistics because of legislation severely restricting matches among files containing personal data based on the national identification number, even though the number itself is administered by INSEE. Nevertheless, INSEE can report a number of interesting achievements, for example statistics bringing together information on employed persons and their employers and the processing of data on income taxes collected by the fiscal administration.
3. In France, as in many other countries, the Government has spearheaded a policy of promoting electronic government that has already had some effect on INSEE's activities and will undoubtedly have much more in the years ahead.
4. On the basis of these experiences, the paper will address several subjects.
5. French legislation on statistical confidentiality and personal data protection has given rise to a policy regulating access by INSEE staff to the data they handle. This policy designates three levels of data confidentiality: non-confidential, restricted access and high-security. The rules for management of such data will be outlined.
6. INSEE's long experience with handling accounting data collected from French enterprises by the fiscal administration in order to develop structural statistics on enterprises offers an insight into such questions as the role of standards in both accounting and computer technology, the harmonization of concepts and the quality of the data to be processed and how it affects the checking, validation and rectification of such data.
7. INSEE's computerized handling of administrative sources has so far involved a series of projects administered in isolation from one another. With a view to greater sharing of the effort involved, a study on creating a "generic" model for the handling of an administrative source for statistical purposes has been carried out and the findings will be presented.
8. The use of the enterprise identification number allocated by INSEE has become widespread within the French administration. The expansion of electronic government has impelled INSEE to offer new kinds of access to the register of enterprises, under conditions ensuring maximum security of its information system. Recent achievements in this area will be discussed.
9. The administrations that have the data INSEE wishes to process have traditionally provided the information on physical media such as tapes, cassettes, diskettes and, more recently, CD-ROMs and DVDs. The files are frequently very large and this, together with the relatively slow speed and fairly high cost of telecommunications networks, used to mean that non-physical transfer was not often easy to justify in economic terms. The situation has changed radically in recent years, leading INSEE to begin building a gateway to handle files exchange with external partners and introduce an enterprise application integration (EAI) solution to control data exchanges between the gateway and INSEE administered applications.
