



**FOLLOW UP TO THE Q2006 SATELLITE CONFERENCE ON DATA QUALITY  
FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

Prepared by Eurostat

## **I. Introduction**

The Conference on Data Quality for International Organisations, organised by Eurostat on behalf of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) and hosted by the Office for National Statistics of United Kingdom took place on 27/28 April 2006. The conference was attended by 23 participants from 11 international or supra-national organisations, as well as 17 participants from 8 national institutes.

This Conference was the second meeting of the CCSA entirely dedicated to data quality. It followed the "European Conference on Quality in Survey Statistics – Q2006" in Cardiff (UK) from 24-26 April 2006. The conference was opened by Mrs. Karen Dunnell, National Statistician, Office for National Statistics, UK. Mr. Stefan Schweinfest from the United Nations Statistical Services Branch and Mr. Håkan Lindén from the Eurostat Unit for Statistical Governance, Quality and Evaluation, also presented opening remarks. Mr. Enrico Giovannini, Director, OECD Statistics Directorate, gave an overview of the first Conference on Data Quality for International Organisations (Mainz, Germany, 24-26 May 2004), the progress since then and future directions for international cooperation to ensure data quality.

The Conference was structured along the key areas of work in the Eurostat coordinated CCSA project on the use and convergence of quality assurance frameworks for international organisations (ref. CCSA, SA/2005/13) covering six thematic sessions on "Quality assurance frameworks for assessing and improving statistical activities carried out in international organisations", "Coherence of data published by various international organisations", "Collection, management and dissemination of current best methods, minimum standards, and best practices", "Peer review methodologies", "Tools and practices for collecting quality metadata from data providers and informing users on the quality of statistics" and "Panel discussion: Labelling of statistical information", in which a total of 21 presentations were made.

The main conclusions of the Conference are reflected in the following section. The programme and the list of participants are attached to this note. Detailed information on the event as well as all the papers presented can be found on the conference website: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/acsub/CDQIO-2006.htm>.

## **II. Conclusions**

1. Quality frameworks: Comparisons of the different frameworks in place (for example between European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP) and the EFQM; CoP and IMF/DQAF; UN Principles governing international statistical activities and CoP) show that these frameworks are quite similar. The focus could now be to look at characteristic features (scope) and uses of quality frameworks for international organisations, the impact of quality

frameworks, and cost and benefit aspects. The findings from the in-depth surveys on quality assurance frameworks and quality reporting should also be taken into account. Future work should aim at addressing specific issues and clarifying the concepts distinguishing between quality initiatives for the international organisations and those targeting the member countries; a need for involving the latter being emphasized with a view of future acceptance of any decisions.

2. Metadata: A common platform for metadata sharing could be built up on the SDMX cross-domain concepts (currently undergoing a public review period) and the use of XML tools. The exchange framework needs to be "open", model independent, well-documented and extensible to accommodate peculiarities. The discussion highlighted the potential for exchange created by reconciling the DQAF and European Code of Practice, and by ensuring a good level of "granularity" that would allow countries to create a mapping between their systems and target frameworks by using, if possible, a single set of metadata. This would reduce the reporting burden while increasing the coherence between disseminated metadata sets.

3. Best practices: A "typology" for describing different kinds of "best practices" would ease the sharing of such information. UNSD should progress on the work related to identification and dissemination of "best practices".

4. Quality reporting: The high level reference metadata concepts developed within the SDMX consortium could serve as the "granules" for more streamlined quality reporting from data producers. An international data dissemination standard would improve and harmonise the ways quality information are presented for the users.

5. Reviews: reviews are useful tools for identifying strengths and weaknesses but quite burdensome to undertake and it was stressed that existing information from country reviews should be shared among international organisations. It was also mentioned that a calendar covering upcoming reviews could be hosted by an international organisation. One tangible output was the IMF and Eurostat joining forces with regard to reviewing member countries' compliance with the respective frameworks, Code of Practice and IMF DQAF. The ECE asked to be included in one of the Code of Practice peer reviews with a view to extending this approach to other ECE member countries.

6. Labelling: the panel-discussion showed a great interest among all participants for the issue of labelling of statistics, as this topic has been featuring on the "statistical agenda" for the first time. It involved e.g. to find a set of minimum quality requirements for "official statistics" or define "experimental statistics". The discussion revealed advantages and shortcomings of existing approaches and the need for a cautious timing for action at European level to allow for a clear definition of objectives, governance structure, concepts and processes, including e.g. the question whether a label can be removed. It was felt that institutional issues would hamper an application at international level.

7. Role of CCSA: it was recommended to be further formalised (creation of a CCSA Bureau) and that the "accountability" (terms of reference, reporting requirements etc.) of the CCSA should be addressed in the corresponding task force that will present the work at the September meeting of the CCSA. It was also emphasized the desirability of greater involvement of the heads of the CCSA members with a view to committing the agencies to agreeing further steps.

## ANNEX 1: CONFERENCE AGENDA

### Conference on Data Quality for International Organizations Newport, Wales, United Kingdom, 27-28 April 2006

#### Programme

#### Thursday, 27 April 2006

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##### 9.00 – 9.30 **Welcome and introduction**

- ONS, UNSD, Eurostat

##### 9.30 – 10.00 **Overview of last conference: content, directions taken and progress made**

- E. Giovannini, OECD

##### 10.00 – 11.30 **Session 1: Quality assurance frameworks for assessing and improving statistical activities carried out in international organizations**

Organizer: Eurostat

- H. Linden (Eurostat) "First results from the in-depth surveys on quality assurance frameworks and quality reporting in international organisations"
- L. Laliberté (IMF) "IMF experience in data quality"
- Michael Colledge "Quality frameworks: implementation and impact"

##### 11.30 – 13.00 **Session 2: Coherence of data published by various international organizations**

Organizer: OECD

- K. von Kleist (BIS) "The new JEDH—harmonising and sharing data with SDMX"
- Catherine Ahsbals, Violetta Damia, Gérard Salou and Caroline Willeke "Joint dissemination of Eurosystem statistics: a way to enhance accessibility & ensure consistency of statistics"
- Mary Jane Holupka (UNSD) "Joint United Nations/OECD system for the collection and processing of international merchandise trade statistics"
- B.A. Lindblad, L. Maqua, M. Pellegrino and G. Sindoni (Eurostat) "Using SDMX standards for dissemination of short-term indicators on the European economy"
- Lars Thygesen (OECD) "SDMX data sharing between IMF and OECD"

##### 13.00 – 14.30 **Lunch break**

##### 14.30 – 16.00 **Session 3: Collection, management and dissemination of current best methods, minimum standards, and best practices**

Organizer: UNSD

- Stefan Schweinfest (UNSD) "The role of best practices in building a global statistical system"
- Brian Buffet (UNESCO) "Application of a Data Quality Assessment Framework for education statistics"
- Sylvester Young (ILO) "Principles governing international statistical activities—some next steps"

##### 16.00 – 16.30 **Coffee break**

16.30 – 18.00 **Session 4: Peer review methodologies**

Organizer: UNECE

- Claudia Dziobek (IMF) "Peer review for International Macroeconomic Statistics: the IMF's Standards and Codes Initiative and its Data Module"
- Yoel Finkel (Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel) "Assessing quality of statistical data: the ROSC procedure in Israel"
- Martina Hahn (Eurostat) "Code of Practice peer reviews: first steps in defining a European Statistical System wide approach"
- Hilikka Vihavainen (Statistics Finland) "Peer reviews—a driving force towards excellence in official statistics?"

**Friday, 28 April 2006**

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9.00 – 10.30 **Session 5: Tools and practices for collecting quality metadata from data providers and informing users on the quality of statistics**

Organizers: FAO, IMF

- R. Mayo (FAO) "Data Quality Indicators and Related Stress Factors: The FAO framework to account for differences in statistical environments at country and international levels"
- M. Pellegrino (Eurostat) "The use of SDMX standards for retrieving metadata from different providers and achieving rapid dissemination"
- R. Edwards (IMF) "Tools and Practices for Collecting and Disseminating Metadata—The Data Quality Assessment Framework and IMF's Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board"
- Bob Pember (ILO) "ILO experience with gathering and disseminating meta-data"
- M. T. Dupré (ILO) "Assessment of statistical data quality: the example of the occupational wages part of the ILO October Inquiry"

10.30 – 11.00 **Coffee break**

11.00 – 12.30 **Session 6: Panel discussion: Labelling of statistical information**

Organizers: ECB, Eurostat

Panellists: UNECE, Statistics New Zealand, Statistics Sweden and ONS-UK

- Martina Hahn (Eurostat) and Caroline Willeke (ECB) "Labelling of statistical information: some introductory considerations"

12.30 - 14.00 **Summary of the conference and conclusions**

Organizers: Eurostat, ILO

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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