

## **Modalities of data sharing among international organisations**

### **Progress report of the Task Team**

Prepared by European Central Bank

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The Principles Governing International Statistical Activities were adopted by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) at its 6<sup>th</sup> session in 2005. Principle 1 states “High quality international statistics, accessible to all, are a fundamental element of global information systems.” It is supported by good practices for implementing Principle 1 such as “compiling and disseminating international statistics based on impartiality; providing equal access to statistics for all users; ensuring free public accessibility of key statistics”.

2. Moreover, the CCSA has adopted the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) as technical standard for the exchange of statistical information at its 9<sup>th</sup> session in 2007. This may facilitate a regular and significant exchange of data and metadata also among the CCSA member organisations.

3. Both developments above led to the question whether the legal and contractual modalities of data and metadata sharing among international organisations may also benefit from a certain degree of standardisation or even a code adopted by the CCSA.

#### **2. Deliberations in previous CCSA sessions**

4. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) prepared a document entitled “Modalities of Data Sharing between International Organisations: towards more Compatibility with Good Dissemination Practices of National Official Statistics” for the 10<sup>th</sup> CCSA session in Madrid in September 2007. The CCSA agreed at the time that currently the exchange of data among agencies was working relatively well. In particular, it was noted that progress had been made to limit the burden to countries avoiding sending similar requests by different agencies. However, some issues and

limitations still existed, especially in connection to the extent to which data provided by a partner agency could then be re-used in other statistical outputs.

5. At the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the CCSA in Tunis in September 2008, the UNECE, in consultation with the World Bank and the ECB, presented a document entitled “Modalities of Data Sharing among International Organisations: Proposal for a Code on Data Sharing”. The CCSA expressed concerns that the proposal goes beyond the agreed terms of reference, namely, to outline good practices for data sharing among CCSA members and was not able to come to a positive conclusion due to differences in the opinion of members regarding the feasibility of the proposal. The Committee agreed that further work in exploring best practices with respect to data sharing among international organisations would be necessary and that the Committee should take a constructive position, without involving legal terms.

### **3. Task Team on Modalities of data sharing among international organisations**

6. The Task Team, led by the ECB included Eurostat, OECD, World Bank and the World Tourism Organization. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Trade Organisation were invited to the Task Team working lunch in the margins of the 40<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in New York in February 2009.

7. The data and metadata sharing among international organisations is currently taking place in an environment that may be described as follows:

- a) The statistics departments of the international organisations have to comply with the respective administrative rules of their organisations.
- b) Some statistics departments offer their (non-confidential) data and metadata free of charge; other statistics departments sell a significant part of their data and depend on the revenues to finance partly their budgets.
- c) The sharing of data and metadata among international organisations is very heterogeneous: there are small and large volumes, ad hoc and regular exchanges, voluntary exchanges and obligations to report, gentleman’s agreements and legal contracts, etc.
- d) A large majority of the statistics departments perceive the sharing of data and metadata among international organisations as working relatively well.

8. Given the situation as described above, the Task Team suggests establishing general non-binding best practices for the modalities to share (published and non-published) data and metadata among international organisations. The best practices may include the following elements:

- a) The sharing of data and metadata among international organisations should ideally be free of charge; a charge may cover the marginal costs of the data and metadata providing organisation.
- b) The receiving organisation may share the data and metadata with third parties (including commercial data providers) with the consent of the providing organisations.
- c) The original providing organisation must be acknowledged as source when using or further disseminating the data and metadata.
- d) Any transformation of data and metadata by the receiving organisation (e.g. the compilation of growth rates or seasonal adjustments) must be well documented and made transparent when using or further disseminating the data and metadata.
- e) Disclaimers related to data and metadata published by the providing organisation are to be repeated by the receiving organisation when using or further disseminating data and metadata.
- f) The sharing of data and metadata follows the SDMX standard as adopted by the CCSA. The SDMX sponsor organisations may be requested to develop within SDMX standard facilities for providing information on sources and disclaimers (see elements c) and e) above), e.g. as part of the SDMX Cross-Domain-Concepts CDCs.

#### **4. The CCSA is invited at its 14<sup>th</sup> session in Bangkok in September 2009**

- to take note of the findings and suggestions of the Task Team on Modalities of data sharing among international organisations;
- to confirm that the CCSA supports general non-binding best practices for the modalities to share (published and non-published) data and metadata among international organisations;
- to assess whether the general best practices listed in paragraph 8 above are acceptable and whether further elements need to be added;
- to provide guidance whether the Task Team should aim at detailing best practices or whether the heterogeneity of the situation for sharing data and metadata among international organisations does hardly allow a detailed common standard.