

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa



ECA Wish List for Data Dissemination Best Practice

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**Workshop on Sharing Best Practice in the Dissemination of National
Development Indicators**

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Outline

- Metadata and Data Discovery
- Open Access
- What next?



Wish list item 1:

Metadata and data discovery



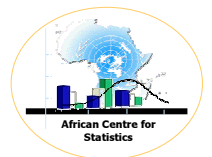
What are Metadata?

- Field level description of data and information resources, in a standard form
- Examples:
 - Identification of data resource
 - Originator and location
 - Purpose for which data set was created
 - Data collection date, processes and methods
 - Availability and access constraints
 - ‘Distributor’ and contact details
 - Etc.



Major Benefits of Metadata

- Excellent insight into your data holding
- Faster access to more suitable data
- No loss of knowledge due to departing staff
- Avoidance of duplicated efforts & costs
- Structured search and comparison of available data resources by all stakeholders
- Increased client services at lower costs



**BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE
METADATA**

**We need to be able to search and
discover what exists**



We need...

- Uniform, distributed search through a single user interface to all servers
- Search for data through fields and full-text in the metadata
- A common, standard vocabulary for metadata
 - Agreed metadata profile (concepts, fields and definitions)
- Then ...
 - Links through to full data access, where available
- Controlled decentralization of data resources
 - Each resource is maintained by its primary producer with structured description for others to know of its existence and how to access and use it



Advantages of (meta)data discovery

- Minimize duplication of effort in data and metadata collection and processing
- Provide means to advertise metadata collection requirements, inventory, and quality
- Support documentation of basic metadata sets for advised re-use of internal and external applications



Why not just use Web indexes?

- On-line indexes support only full-text literal search with limited support for concept search
- Indices do not support fields or other data types (date, coordinate, other numeric)
- Server data increasingly in databases, which are not accessible to web indexes



Provided every data server publishes the same metadata fields and supports agreed data access protocols

- **Reduces:**

“fights” over whose format/platform to use

Multiple dissemination platforms?



Wish list item 2:

Open Access to Data



Transparent Access

- User's client software able to access data without explicit human intervention
- Common Question?
 - Do we mean free and uninterrupted access to all data by all users at all times?
- Answer:
 - Would be nice, but **NOT NECESSARILY**
 - Some data have justifiable restrictions
 - Appropriate data access policies



Constrained Open Access

- First all data is open and available for use by somebody or some people
- But access and use constraints may and do apply
- Different constraints apply to different data sets
- And different constraints apply to different users groups



Data Access Policy

- The R³ of data
- Clear statements of:
 - rights in,
 - responsibilities for, and
 - restrictions ondata and information resources with regards to dissemination, access and use of the resources
- Part of overall broad-based information policy



User Groups

- Classify data and information products by access constraints
- Classify users by access rights, according to community guidelines
- Specify data governance and data stewardship roles clearly

	Unrestricted	Pre-authorized users	Internal users	...
Intra-REC trade	Yes			
Demographics Level 1		Yes		
Prices	Yes			
Hydrography				
...				

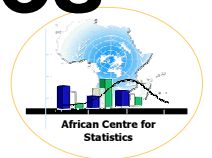


Where do we go from here?

Spread first the message of metadata and data discovery, and all other things will be added

- human level description

- leave the technical issues for techies



We want more people to believe

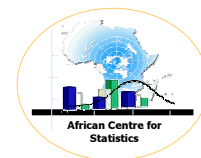


... in metadata and data discovery



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The End