



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

ESA/STAT/AC.234/7
11 March 2011

**Meeting of the Expert Group on
International Economic and
Social Classifications
New York, 18-20 May 2011**

A new template for the International family of Classifications

UNSD

A new template for the International Family of Classifications

Background

The Family of International Classifications has been introduced in 1998 as a concept by the Expert Group to identify international standard classifications. The Family has been comprised of classifications that have been reviewed and approved as guidelines by the United Nations Statistical Commission or other competent intergovernmental board on such matters as economics, demographics, labour, health, education, social welfare, geography, environment and tourism.

In the preamble of the International Family, roles of custodians of classifications, as well as obligations for the classifications have been described.

The Family includes classifications that have been categorized as reference classifications, derived classifications or related classifications and includes classifications at international, regional or supra-national level. In a few exceptions, national classifications have been included as representatives of a regional classification.

Information on the classifications in the Family has been available on the UNSD Classifications website in the past.¹

The present document proposes a new template for the questionnaire associated with the Family, i.e. a new set of information to be collected for the classifications in the Family, responding better to current needs of classification users and to also align it with requirements for information in the proposed Inventory of Global Statistical Standards.²

Information to be collected

The information collected through the questionnaire and presented to users is intended to provide a concise description of each classification, enabling them to understand the purpose and application of each classification, obtain basic administrative and technical information and find references for more detailed information.

As a minimum, the information should cover all aspects required in the Inventory of Global Statistical Standards. However, since the Family of International Classifications (and hence this questionnaire) cover a much narrower and conceptually more homogeneous set of statistical standards, additional questions specific to classifications should be included.

Most questions included in the new template are similar to those in the previously used version. However, in some cases a less strict approach (e.g. regarding available

¹ It has recently been disabled to allow for a review of the information collected and presented.

² See *Report of the Committee on the Coordination of Statistical Activities on the inventory of global statistical standards* (E/CN.3/2011/30), available on <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2011.htm>

languages) has been used, while in others a more detailed approach (e.g. regarding the size of the classification) has been chosen. In addition, additional questions are being asked in some areas that were not well developed before (e.g. regarding availability in electronic formats).

For ease of use, the template has also been subdivided into broader sections. As such, the template covers the following groups of information:

1. Basic bibliographical information
2. Purpose of the classification
3. Methodology
4. Classification structure
5. Revision information
6. Supporting documents
7. Contact information

Since the Family does also cover regional or other classifications that are not considered reference classifications, a question describing deviations from the relevant reference classifications has been added in section 3.

The complete questionnaire is shown in Annex 1 of this document.

For comparison purposes, the previous version of the questionnaire is shown in Annex 2.

Classifications to be covered

Since the main purpose of the questionnaire is to collect information about classifications in the International Family, the classifications that are targeted for inclusion in the Family are obvious choices to be covered. These classifications will be subjected to a review of basic criteria as described in the updated document on *Best Practice Guidelines for Developing International Statistical Classifications* (ESA/STAT/AC.234/6). Classifications meeting these criteria will be included in the International Family of Classifications.

However, some classifications may not fulfil all requirements set out in the Best Practice Guidelines, but are already being used in different applications and may be even widely accepted. In general it is expected that the review of these classifications lead to recommendations by the Expert Group for changes to the classifications to ensure compliance with the Best Practice Guidelines. The Expert Group may wish to consider the addition of such classifications in the listing of classifications of the Family, possibly under a special heading of “Other classifications of interest”. Such addition would make the listing of classifications more useful for users of the classifications and for custodians and developers of national classifications by providing a more comprehensive view of international and regional classifications.

Distribution and use of the questionnaire

Since this template is intended for classifications in the International Family (or candidates therefore), the number of potential recipients is relatively small. An explicit distribution mechanism is therefore not necessary and the questionnaire will be sent to custodians of relevant classifications on an as-needed basis.

Questions

1. Does the Expert Group agree to the overall layout and content of the questionnaire template?
2. Should any additional information be included?
 - a. Are more detailed questions necessary to describe differences in scope, methodology or structure for classifications other than reference classifications?
3. Does the Expert Group agree with the proposed approach, including classifications that are not (or not yet) part of the Family?
 - a. Which criteria should be used to determine the list of classifications to be included?

Annex 1 - Proposed template for the International Family of Classifications

Section 1: Basic bibliographic information

- (1a) Full official name and acronym of the classification:
Official name and acronym in other languages (if available, please list all):
- (1b) Is the full classification available in all of the languages above?
Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, please specify:
- (1c) Please provide a complete citation or reference number (e.g. ISBN number) for each applicable language:
- (1d) Does a dedicated website for this classification exist? (if yes, provide URL)
- (1e) Is the classification available in electronic form? (if yes, list all formats, e.g. PDF, TXT, Excel, XML)
- (1f) When was the classification adopted (or published)?
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Section 2: Purpose of the classification

- (2a) What is the purpose of the classification?
- (2b) What are the main applications of the classification?
- (2c) Who is the intended audience/target of the classification?
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Section 3: Methodology

- (3a) What is the scope of the classification?
- (3b) What is the classification variable? (e.g. activity, product, goods, educational programmes)
- (3c) What is the appropriate unit to which this classification is applied (e.g. establishment, household, transaction)?
- (3d) What main principles were applied to produce the classification?
- (3e) If the classification is not an international reference classification, what is its relationship to the reference classification?

Please describe major differences in scope, concept or structure.

Section 4: Classification structure

(4a) Please provide the level name, code format, and number of items at each level of the classification? In case of deviations, please explain.

	Label	Code Format	# of items
Structure level 1:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Structure level 2:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Structure level 3:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Structure level 4:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Structure level 5:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Structure level 6:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Example: *Group* *12.1* *255*

Remarks:

(4b) What criteria have been used in the definitions of the levels in the classification?

Section 5: Revision information

(5a) Please list all previous revisions/versions of the classification up to the most recent (use additional space if necessary):

Year published:	<input type="text"/>	Title / version number:	<input type="text"/>	Website:	<input type="text"/>
Year published:	<input type="text"/>	Title / version number:	<input type="text"/>	Website:	<input type="text"/>
Year published:	<input type="text"/>	Title / version number:	<input type="text"/>	Website:	<input type="text"/>
Year published:	<input type="text"/>	Title / version number:	<input type="text"/>	Website:	<input type="text"/>
Year published:	<input type="text"/>	Title / version number:	<input type="text"/>	Website:	<input type="text"/>
Year published:	<input type="text"/>	Title / version number:	<input type="text"/>	Website:	<input type="text"/>
Year published:	<input type="text"/>	Title / version number:	<input type="text"/>	Website:	<input type="text"/>
Year published:	<input type="text"/>	Title / version number:	<input type="text"/>	Website:	<input type="text"/>

(5b) Why was the latest revision undertaken?

(5c) What were the major changes to the classification as a result of the latest revision?

(5d) When is the next revision scheduled?

(5e) Is information available on corrections between revisions? (if applicable, please explain)

(5f) Is there a website documenting the current (ongoing) revision process, e.g. for seeking user input, providing intermediate drafts etc.? If yes, please provide URL.

Section 6: Supporting documents

(6a) Is an Alphabetical index available for this classification? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If electronically available, please provide a website:

In which formats is the index available (e.g. PDF, TXT, Excel, XML)?

(6b) Is a correspondence between the current and previous versions of this classification available? (*List all that exist*):

(6c) Is a correspondence between this classification the international reference classification available? (*Please describe*):

(6d) Are correspondences between this classification and other international/multi-national/regional classifications available? (*Please list all that exist*):

(6e) Are training materials or other documents available (Please provide a website if applicable)?

Section 7: Contact Information

Whom to contact for more information:

Agency/Office:

Agency/Office website:

Contact person - for public use (i.e. this information will be made available on the UNSD website):

Name:

Title:

Unit:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

Address:

Contact person – for internal use (i.e. this information will not be publicly shared):

Name:

Title:

Unit:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

Address:

Annex 2 – Previously used template for the International Family of Classifications

Section 1: Title and available languages

(1a) Title of classification: (English language version):

(1b) Original language title (specify language):

(1c) Other official titles (specify languages):

(add more lines if necessary)

(1d) Abbreviation in:

English: Arabic: Chinese:

French: Russian: Spanish:

(1e) Classification structure and explanatory notes available in:

English: Arabic: Chinese:

French: Russian: Spanish:

(1f) Are the explanatory notes available in any other languages? (*Please explain*):

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Section 2: Purpose of the classification

(2a) What is the purpose of the classification?

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(2b) What principles were applied to produce the classification? (e.g. must align to the international standard)

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(2c) What is the appropriate classification unit for this classification?

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Section 3: Revision status

(3a) Year first published:

(3b) Year of last revision:

(3c) Years between revisions:

(3d) Latest revision number:

(3e) Why was the latest revision undertaken?

(3f) What were the major changes to the classification as a result of the latest revision?

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Section 4: Products to support the classification

(4a) Is an Alphabetical index available for this classification?

(4b) Is a Numeric index available for this classification?

(4c) Are other indexes available? *(Please explain):*

.....

(4d) Is there a correspondence between the versions / revisions of this classification? *(Please describe):*

.....

(4e) Is there a correspondence between this classification and relevant international classifications? *(Please describe):*

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(4f) Is there a correspondence between this classification and relevant multinational/regional classifications? *(Please describe):*

.....

(4g) Please describe any other pertinent relationships with statistical classifications. *(Please include comments on conceptual and structural issues):*

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Section 5: Classification structure and sources

(5a) Please provide the label and number of digits at each level of the classification? *(Please describe):*

Structure level 1:

Structure level 4:

Structure level 2:

Structure level 5:

Structure level 3:

Remarks:

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(5b) Sources *(Please list all publications that apply to this version of classification)*

Title:
Author:
Sales number:
Publication Series:
Year published:

Availability in machine-readable format (*Please explain*):
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Section 6: Contact Information

WHOM TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Agency/Office:

Contact person (Name): Title:

Unit:

Telephone: Fax:

Email: Classification Website

Address:
Address: