



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

ESA/STAT/AC.340/11
16 August 2017

**Meeting of the Expert Group on
International Statistical Classifications
New York, 6-8 September 2017**

Approval Process for an International Statistical Classification

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Approval Process for an International Statistical Classification

This document outlines the process for the UN Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications (hereinafter referred to as 'the Expert Group') to follow and check against, when considering endorsing a classification for adoption by the UN Statistical Commission or a similar governing body, and for the classification to become a member of the International Family of Classifications.

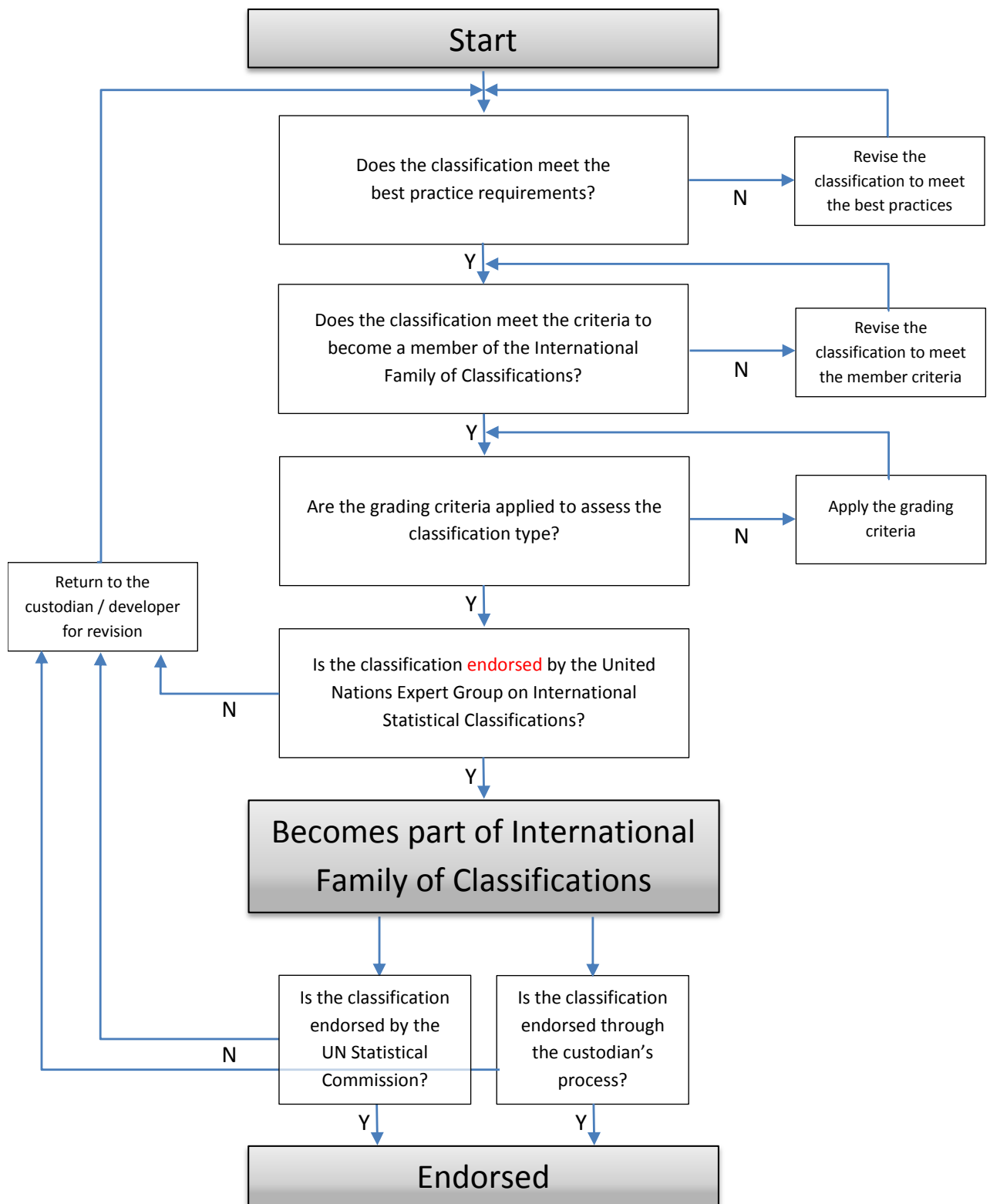
The custodian/developer of the classification needs to comply with the requirements of three documents. These documents are the:

- Best Practice Guidelines for Developing International Statistical Classifications (as detailed in Section A of this document)
- Criteria to become a Member of the international Family of Classifications (as detailed in Section B of this document)
- Grading Criteria for International Statistical Classifications (as detailed in Section C of this document)

The Expert Group will then be provided with a document and checklist to ensure compliance with the requirements for any endorsement/approval to take place. Section D of this document outlines the final endorsement by the Expert Group before the classification either proceeds through the custodian's own sign-off/approval process (if required) or is presented to the UN Statistical Commission for approval.

The following diagram gives an overview of the classification approval process as a series of yes/no steps.

Table 1: Classification Approval Process Flow Diagram



A. Does the classification meet the best practice requirements for developing an international statistical classification?

For a classification to be considered for membership of the International Family of Classifications, the classification must meet the best practice requirements. The following questions need to be answered and documented by the custodian or organization seeking approval for the classification.

- Does the classification have an identified custodian?
- Is there a well-defined conceptual basis?
- Does the classification have a flat or hierarchic structure?
- Is the classification proposed as an international reference classification or an international derived or related classification?
- Are the classification categories mutually exclusive?
- Is the classification exhaustive for all possible values of the variable which the classification represents?
- Is the classification statistically balanced?
- Is the classification statistically feasible? In other words is it possible to effectively, accurately and consistently distinguish between the categories in the classification based on the information available?
- Does the classification have clearly defined classification or statistical units?
- Has consideration been given to time-series comparability?

If the classification meets all of the above requirements it can be moved to the next stage of the process. If not, then the classification needs to be revised to meet the best practice requirements.

B. Does the classification meet the criteria to become a member of the International Family of Classifications?

For a classification to be considered for membership of the International family of Classifications, the classifications must meet all the requirements as specified

1. Is there a custodian for the classification? (**NB:** This information should be carried over from the previous document)
2. What is the primary use of the classification?
3. What are the underlying concepts used in the classification?
4. What is the scope of the classification?
5. What are the statistical units being measured?
6. How many classification levels are required?
7. Are the category names precise, unique and reflective of the category scope?
8. Is the classification code structure logical and sequential?
9. Is the classification statistically balanced? (**NB:** This information should be carried over from the previous document)
10. Has there been a consultation process with users of the classification?
11. Has the classification been tested?
12. Are there correspondences between previous versions and the current classification?
13. Is there an implementation plan for the classification?
14. Is there a maintenance schedule available?
15. How will the classification be disseminated?

If the classification meets all of the above requirements it can be moved to the next stage of the process. If not, then the classification needs to be revised to meet the criteria.

C. Apply the grading criteria to ascertain the classification's status within the International Family of Classifications?

For a classification to be considered for the next stage of the approval process it must have passed the criteria stage before entering the grading stage.

Is the classification to be considered as an international reference classification?

For a classification to be considered as an international reference classification it must comply with the following definition.

“A reference classification is one developed by an international agency. It provides a common framework for collecting and organizing information about a particular statistical system, concept or variable. Their use, either directly or through national adaptations, facilitates the exchange and comparability of statistics and other information between countries. These classifications have generally been developed through extensive international consultation, and have achieved broad acceptance and official agree for use.”

Is the classification to be considered as an international derived or related classification?

For a classification to be considered as an international derived or related classification it must comply with the following definitions.

Either:

“A derived classification is based upon the corresponding reference classification. The classification may be prepared by the rearrangement, aggregation or disaggregation of items from one or more reference classifications.”

or

“A related classification that provides a set of organized categories for the same variables(s) as the corresponding reference classifications, but for which the categories may only partially refer to those defined in the reference classifications or that may only be associated with the reference classification at specific levels of the structure.”

Is the classification to be considered as some other form of classification?

A classification that is not declared as either a derived or related and which shares the same variables/units or purpose of the reference classification, but is not harmonized with the reference classification is considered as an ‘other’. For example, a national classification developed in isolation from the international standard.

A classification that falls into this category may not necessarily be considered as a member of the international family unless it fills a gap for which no reference classification exists.

Has the custodian documented:

- How the classification was developed and justified why the classification is proposed as a particular type?

- That the classification is developed based on a recognized reference classification (and which reference classification it is);
- The rationale for rearranging or subdividing reference classification content to create a derived or related principles;
- Alignment with best practice principles?

If the classification meets all of the above requirements it can be moved to the next stage of the process. If not, then the classification needs to be revised to meet the grading criteria.

D. Can the classification be endorsed by the UN Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications?

Members of the UN Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications may be involved in the development process for the classification, or may have been involved in either a mandated Technical Sub-Group reviewing/developing the classification, or part of an Expert Group administered by the classification custodian for that same purpose.

This involvement should enable the Expert Group as a whole to take advice from those participants, in conjunction with reviewing the relevant documentation. The Expert Group should check that:

- The classification meets the best practice requirements:
- The classification fulfills the criteria to become a member of the International Family of Classifications
- The classification meets the grading criteria for international Statistical Classifications.

To assist with this task the Expert Group should be supplied with the completed checklist table as documented in Appendix 1 of the Grading Criteria.

If the Expert Group is satisfied that all of the above documentation and process has been complied with, it can endorse the classification for approval at the next available UN Statistical Commission meeting. It may also provide endorsement to the governing body of the classification custodian.

If the Expert Group believes that the classification does not meet all the requirements as specified above, then the classification should be returned to the custodian for revision of the issues of concern

Approval by the Expert Group on the suitability of a classification to become an International Statistical Classification and be part of the International Family can be achieved by either electronic approval requested by the bureau, or by agreement at any physical meeting of the full Expert Group – whichever is most appropriate or expedient.