

International Family of Classifications

Background

The Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications (now CEISC) considered at its previous meetings in 2011, 2013 and 2015 issues related to the scope and composition of the International Family of Classifications (the Family).

In 2011, the Expert Group started a process of reviewing and redefining the concept of the International Family of Classifications as the existing Family only showed a small set of major classifications, and their regional counterparts, and addressed very few statistical domains. It was proposed to enlarge the concept of the Family to include relevant classifications from all statistical domains, thus providing users with a better way of identifying classifications that should be used for specific statistical projects.

At the meeting in 2015, the scope of the family had been agreed to be defined by the following criteria:

- the Family should include all international classifications that represent standards for a given statistical domain;
- these classifications have either been approved as, gained a de-facto status as or are simply used as standard classifications in their domain, which would in some cases necessitate the inclusion of a regional or national classification, if no international standard exists;
- the Family should cover all statistical domains.

The Expert Group also approved a first draft of the list of classifications in the Family at that meeting and approved the questionnaire format that would be used to collect information on these classifications going forward. UNSD was tasked with collecting detailed information about the classifications in the Family and to propose a way to publish this information.

Process of identifying classifications

Following the 2015 meeting, UNSD started to collect detailed information on these classifications and sought input from custodians on updates or addition required to the existing list. This process identified 162 candidate classification to be considered for inclusion in the Family. UNSD also collected detailed information on 99 classifications for which data was submitted by their custodians and has put this information into an online database.

Whilst it was deemed necessary to keep this information current, getting support from custodians is not easily obtainable so mechanisms for maintenance of the website and database still need to be established.

IFC website

The International Family of Classifications is available at:

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/classifications/Family>

In creating the website, and as directed by the Expert Group, UNSD grouped the Family content by the domains of the Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA) Rev 1, as well as by alphabetic sort. Inclusion into the International Family is through the UNCEISC Approval Process for International Statistical Classifications.

Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA)

The current website for the International Family of Statistical Classifications only uses Domains 1-3 of CSA Rev 1, as this is how the individual statistical classifications mapped.

With the introduction of CSA Rev 2 in 2022, the classification structure has changed and this has a flow-on effect for the search and discovery and grouping of the current members of the IFC. A mapping has been created of the existing Family into the new CSA which highlights that the majority of classifications still sit within 3 of the Domains but there is also a couple that would sit in Domain 4 and Domain 5 respectively. This is not seen as a problem as the evolution of the Family may well necessitate greater use of the other domains of CSA not previously used.

Questions for the Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications

The Committee is invited to express its views on:

1. Updating the overarching Domains for presenting the International Family from CSA Rev 1 to CSA Rev 2, and if agreeable
2. Whether the mapping of the Family to CSA Rev 2 is appropriate.
3. Identifying ways and mechanisms to keep the list of classifications and their detailed information up-to-date.