Approval Process for the Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA)

This document takes the Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA) through the approval process of the UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (CEISC) for the classification to become an international standard and for custodianship to be transferred from the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) to the UN Statistics Division (UNSD).

The process is applied by the UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (hereinafter referred to as 'the CEISC) 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)

Based upon the application of this process the classification may/may not be endorsed by the Expert Group.

Final recommendation:

The Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA) is recommended for approval by the CEISC as an international standard, noting that the classification is primarily for analytical purposes rather than purely statistical. It is also recommended that the classification is recommended for endorsement by the UN Statistical Commission.

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?
  The custodian is the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). This has transferred from the Conference of European Statisticians (CES)/UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

- Is there a well-defined conceptual basis?
  The CSA is based around the concept of a statistical activity and is designed for two main purposes:

  a) Based on the process related to a statistical activity, CSA can be used to classify statistical events, capacity building activities, training courses, working groups, publications or statistical standards, etc.;
  b) Based on the output of a statistical activity, CSA can be used to classify data and metadata.

  Statistical activities ae defined as a statistical production activity or activity that directly supports it.

- Does the classification have a flat or hierarchic structure?
  The classification is a hierarchic classification containing three levels.

- Is the classification proposed as an international reference classification or an international derived or related classification?
  The classification is proposed as an international reference classification.

- Are the classification categories mutually exclusive?
  No. CSA is an analytical classification and not designed to be mutually exclusive. It is not used in the production of statistics and therefore there is no problem with double counting. In some cases, an item can be classified in several areas and the user can decide where to place it according to their specific need.

- Is the classification exhaustive for all possible values of the variable which the classification represents?
  Residual 'not elsewhere classified (nec)' and 'Other' categories have been included where appropriate to enable the classification to be as exhaustive as possible

- Is the classification statistically balanced?
  No. However this is not seen as relevant for a classification designed primarily for analytical purposes.

- 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?
  The definition text has been improved in V2.0 to provide greater guidance to user on the scope of categories contained in the classification, and to include more relevant examples, and improved inclusion and exclusion text.

- Does the classification have clearly defined classification or statistical units?
  The statistical unit is the 'statistical activity'.

- Has consideration been given to time-series comparability?
  Yes. The initial scope for the revision of CSA was that any changes be kept to a minimum to mitigate time-series issues. However, in response to user consultation the domain levels have been expanded and this has meant a recoding of the entire classification structure. A correspondence table will be made available which details the changes between the classification versions.

Recommendation: The classification does not meet all of the above requirements as it is primarily for analytical purposes rather than statistical. However, this does not preclude it being moved to the next stage of the process.

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?
   Yes

2. What is the primary use of the classification?
   It is an analytical classification used for describing and grouping statistical activities.

3. What are the underlying concepts used in the classification?
   Statistical activities are defined as a statistical production activity or activity that directly supports it. Therefore, in addition to collecting, producing and disseminating data, statistical activities also include providing leadership, capability development and corporate support to statistical production.

4. What is the scope of the classification?
   Statistical activities used in the structuring of information about activities of statistical organizations, dissemination websites, publications, etc..

5. What are the statistical units being measured?
   Statistical activities.

6. How many classification levels are required?
   Three

7. Are the category names precise, unique and reflective of the category scope?
   Yes

8. Is the classification code structure logical and sequential?
   Yes

9. Is the classification statistically balanced?
   No. However this is not seen as relevant for a classification designed primarily for analytical purposes

10. Has there been a consultation process with users of the classification?
    Yes

11. Has the classification been tested?
    No.

12. Are there correspondences between previous versions and the current classification?
    Yes

13. Is there an implementation plan for the classification?
    No. This is in progress

14. Is there a maintenance schedule available?
    No .

15. How will the classification be disseminated?
    Electronically

Recommendation: Whilst the classification does not meet all of the above requirements as it is an analytical classification it can be moved to the next stage of the process.

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

For the CSA 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."

Recommendation: The classification generally fulfils the requirements of the definition, noting it is primarily for analytical purposes, and should be considered as an international reference classification.