

Maintaining the Common Metadata Framework

Strategy Paper approved by the METIS Steering Group - February 2011

Introduction

1. In 2004, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians approved the creation of a Common Metadata Framework (CMF) under the supervision of the Steering Group on Statistical Metadata (METIS). This initiative is now relatively mature, with several parts of the CMF now published. As a consequence, the focus of the work on the CMF will increasingly turning from development to maintenance. This paper sets out the future maintenance strategy for the CMF, approved by the Steering Group.
2. The CMF currently comprises four parts, which are at different stages in their development, as outlined below. It is intended as a living resource for those working with metadata in national and international statistical organizations, so it is essential that it is kept up to date, otherwise it will rapidly lose its value.
3. Apart from Part A, the CMF is published only in electronic format, via the METIS Wiki (<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/metis>). This means that maintenance and updating can be spread amongst the METIS community. However it also means that clear update schedules and responsibilities are needed.

Part A - Statistical Metadata in a Corporate Context

4. The main aim of Part A is metadata advocacy, explaining the importance of a good metadata management system for the efficient production of statistics. It is targeted at senior managers and subject-matter statisticians, as well as those responsible for making business cases to create or enhance statistical metadata systems. It was first published on the Internet in 2006, but was updated and enhanced by the Steering Group on Statistical Metadata to reflect feedback from various users. The resulting version was published in electronic and paper formats, in both English and Russian, at the end of 2009.
5. For these reasons, the contents of Part A are expected to be the most stable over time. **A five-year revision cycle is therefore proposed**, with the next review scheduled for 2014. This review will be announced, with a call for inputs, at the METIS Work Session planned for spring 2013.
6. A short brochure will be prepared to highlight the key messages from the current version of Part A.

Part B - Metadata Concepts, Standards, Models and Registries

7. There are many international standards relating to different aspects of statistical metadata, which can be confusing for those new to the subject. Part B explains the key features of these standards, their applicability and how they relate to each other. A simple template is used to present this information in a logical and consistent way, and to provide the reader with links to original source material for further information.
8. During 2009 and 2010 an informal task force developed Part B to the point where it documents 26 important standards, and their relationships with each other. The work of this task force is now complete, but on-going maintenance of this useful resource will be needed.
9. Given that the area of metadata standards is continually evolving, **a two-year revision cycle is proposed** for Part B, though if standards are known to have changed, intermediate updates are also encouraged.

Part C - Metadata and the Statistical Business Process

10. Part C is currently the least developed part of the CMF. It is intended to explore the role of metadata throughout the statistical production process. The main output so far is the Generic Statistical Production Process Model (GSBPM). Further work on the application of the model and its implications for the management of statistical metadata is on-going via an informal task force. The work of this task force is focused on providing inputs to a METIS workshop (5-7 October 2011), where further requirements for Part C will be decided.
11. It is therefore a little early to talk about maintenance schedules for Part C. The 2010 Work Session on Statistical Metadata agreed that the GSBPM should not be changed for at least two years. **The Steering Group will re-consider the possible maintenance schedule for Part C in 2012.**

Part D - Implementation

12. Part D comprises a set of case studies from national and international statistical organizations, describing their experiences in developing and implementing statistical metadata systems. These case studies follow a standard template and focus on lessons learned. They give honest

accounts of successes and failures, and are regularly updated by their authors, thus providing a valuable resource to help users to benefit from the experiences of others. Some case studies have been added or updated recently, whilst others are already several years old.

13. Case studies have been provided so far by Albania, Australia, Austria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

14. Part D is unique in the sense that the content belongs to a number of different organisations, and only those organisations have the authority and competence to maintain their content. The content should therefore be updated whenever anything changes. However reminders will be sent to authors **every two years**, starting in 2011, and then aligning with the proposed two-year cycle of METIS work sessions from 2013 onwards, to ensure that case studies are updated before each work session.

Roles and Responsibilities

15. Whilst the Steering Group retains the overall responsibility for maintaining the CMF, it will be more efficient to delegate responsibility for certain parts to specific individuals. These individuals are normally members of the Steering Group, who undertake to ensure that the content is reviewed according to the agreed schedule. In some cases this involves checking and updating content directly, in other cases it involves contacting a relevant expert and asking that person to review the content.

16. The Steering Group has therefore approved the following groups to responsibility for the respective parts of the CMF:

- Part A - Jenny Linnerud, Jana Meliškova, Juan Muñoz and Steven Vale;
- Part B - Alistair Hamilton, Isabel Morgado and Juan Muñoz;
- Part C - To be determined when relevant;
- Part D - Klas Blomqvist, Alice Born and August Götzfried.