

2019 SDMX Global Conference

Summary report

The [Global Conference](#) is a key event for the SDMX community to share information on recent and upcoming SDMX developments. It is organised every two years by the seven SDMX [sponsor agencies](#) (BIS, ECB, Eurostat, IMF, OECD, UNSD and WB). This year's event was prepared in collaboration with and hosted by the **Hungarian Central Statistical Office**. The participants provided their appreciation on the organisation and content of the conference in their feedback

219 participants from 97 countries attended the 2019 SDMX Global Conference. There were representatives from regional and UN system organisations as well as National Statistics Institutes and National Central Banks. All seven SDMX sponsor organisations also participated. All presentations, conference documents and newsletters are available and can now be accessed [here](#). A summary of the main discussion points and outcomes that were derived from each session has been compiled and can be read below.

The Global Conference was opened by Ms Gabriella Vukovich, the President of the "Hungarian Central Statistical Office" "who" underlined the importance that standards have in increasing quality and saving resources. Speaking on behalf of the SDMX Sponsors, Mr Paul Schreyer stressed the rising popularity of SDMX due to its usefulness among national and regional organisations. The Keynote address was given by Mr Reinhold Stahl and focused on the need for the SDMX initiative to embrace the challenges and opportunities offered by Big Data and the semantic web.

The second session on ***Latest achievements and progress update*** was chaired by OECD. As in past SDMX conferences, it included an OECD presentation of a survey regarding the [SDMX implementation status](#). The survey showed that implementations and perceived usefulness continue to grow; users are well aware of and use the content-oriented guidelines; there is a big demand for more global DSDs and the demand by domain is ranked in the survey results; dissemination and reporting continue to be main use cases. The lack of skills, resources, training, subject matter support, and global DSDs/MSDs were identified amongst the challenges to implementation. Eurostat presented the [SDMX 2020 progress report](#). The 2020 targets are to reach relatively new SDMX communities such as the private sector and end users; make data usage easier; strengthening the implementation with more Global DSDs and guidelines; more training; boosting reference metadata exchange; and more tools and capabilities such as the SDMX/VTL implementation. Moving forward, SDMX will evolve to enable modelling and exchange of microdata and geospatial data. The session concluded with a panel discussion which introduced the vision of the sponsor agencies for the coming years.

The session on ***National Statistical Offices' experiences*** had 7 presentations from 8 countries and 1 Regional organisation spread across four continents. This session was chaired by UNSD. The presentations ranged from countries that have taken their first steps in SDMX, to those that have fully integrated SDMX into their business processes. The key take away is that countries across the world have realized the importance of structured data and metadata exchange, and with many tools now available, they are adopting SDMX at a fast pace to modernize and bring in efficiencies in their business processes, as well as for reporting data including SDG indicators and others. It was also encouraging to see regional organisations like the African Development Bank actively promoting and helping their constituents implement SDMX.

The fourth session named ***Implementing SDMX: Central Bank experiences*** was chaired by ECB and included presentations from four national central banks (Deutsche Bundesbank, Norges Bank, Banca d'Italia and Magyar Nemzeti Bank) and the European Central Bank. Overall, they illustrated strong engagement of the central banking community (notably in Europe) in SDMX, and displayed a number of use cases where SDMX supports the collection, dissemination, visualisation of statistics. An emphasis was also made on the cooperation between

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central banks, especially in the European System of Central Banks (ESCB), and the sharing of knowledge and tools as well as on data centric approach using SDMX.

Session 5 entitled **Experience and involvement of the private sector in SDMX** was chaired by Eurostat and comprised six presentations from companies based in Europe (Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and UK) and in the US (California and Florida). The session highlighted that the private sector's interest in SDMX has increased. There are new players who are developing SDMX solutions, supporting SDMX implementations projects and offering SDMX consultancy services. As the adoption of the standard continues to grow the number of companies operating with the standard and the role that they play is expected to change, which may in turn have an impact on the further development and adoption of the standard.

The sixth session reported on **SDMX implementation experiences and practices of international organisations** with the ILO, BIS, ECB, IMF and UNSD presenting. These organisations highlighted the central role that the SDMX standard has played and still plays in their data systems. ILO stressed that the amount of data disseminated through the SDMX web service increased after ILOSTAT's SDMX API was released. Regarding their future SDMX implementation projects BIS and ECB focused on the prominent role envisaged for SDMX in the new big data platform, with the latter proving the use of SDMX for microdata. IMF confirmed SDMX as a key technology and enabler to implement its vision which will be establishing open-data platforms that permit moving from the current pull system for data reporting to the push system. UNSD centered its intervention on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators which will be adaptable to different reporting and dissemination scenarios depending on the infrastructure available at the statistical offices.

The last session of the conference comprised a panel discussion on the **Evolution of the standard** and a presentation on the results of the public consultation on the proposed features for the next version of the standard. The most important areas for development were identified as the integration of data validation and transformation, improved support for micro data and the management of SDMX artifacts. The panel comprised by representatives from implementing organisations as well as the SDMX governance structure discussed the main features and the potential impact of the new version on organisations that have already implemented or are in the process of implementing SDMX enabled solutions. A quick poll from the audience revealed that there is a strong interest from many organisations in implementing the new version soon following its release. On behalf of the SDMX Sponsors Committee, Mr. Paul Schreyer summarized the key takeaways for the evolution of the standard and the way forward for its development.

The two-day plenary was followed by a two-day Capacity Building session. For the first time, the capacity building session at the Global Conference was split into parallel Beginners Track and Advanced Track. The Beginners Track was attended by over 80 participants. Training was provided in the fundamentals of data modeling and the SDMX Information Model, an overview of available SDMX tools was presented, and the global Sustainable Development Goals Data Structure Definition (DSD) introduced. Hands-on exercises were then provided, using SDG indicators as an example, on the conversion of statistical data in Excel spreadsheets to SDMX. The Advanced Track recorded a high attendance (over 50 participants) and focused on the latest SDMX developments as well as the relation between SDMX and other standards. Participants of the Advanced Track had the opportunity to discuss current implementation issues with members of the Statistical and Technical Working Groups.