  
**Statistical Working Group  
Statistical Guidelines**

**CL\_SEX  
Code list for Sex**

**Version 2.1 – 15/6/2017**

## CL\_SEX

**Name**: Code list for concept “Sex” (ID “SEX”).

**Description**: This code list provides coded information about the state of being male or female.

**Explanatory notes**: This concept is applied if data needs to be categorised by sex. It applies not only to human beings but also to animals and other living organisms.

**Established international standard(s) used as input for the code list**: None (see under “Remarks” below for more information).

**Version**: 2.1.

**Date**: 15 June 2017.

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| **Recommended code values** | **Recommended code descriptions** | **Annotations** |
| F | Female |  |
| M | Male |  |
| \_N | Non response | Failure to obtain a measurement on one or more study variables for one or more elements in a survey. |
| \_O | Other | Used to cover residual information not contained in other categories of the code list (in some contexts, e.g. classifications, referred to as n.e.s., not elsewhere specified, n.e.c., not elsewhere classified, etc.) |
| \_T | Total | Used for expressing totals. |
| \_U | Unknown | Failure to obtain a measurement (e.g. non response, no data available, information not known by the respondent unit, etc.). |
| \_Z | Not applicable | Used in response to a question or a request for information that does not apply to the circumstances of the unit being surveyed.  This concept is to be understood as meaning "***statistically*** not applicable"; i.e. \_Z is to be used only for statistical purposes. |

**Remarks**

Further recommended code values for expressing general statistical concepts can be found in section “Generic codes” of the "Guidelines for the creation and management of SDMX Cross-Domain Code Lists"[[1]](#footnote-1)

One may wonder why this cross-domain code list was not based on the ISO/IEC standard 5218 for the representation of human sexes. Some reasons for this are:

* This standard is not widely implemented;
* The guidelines for the creation of SDMX cross-domain code lists state that codes should preferably start with letters;
* Proposing codes 1 and 2 for male and female respectively would necessitate to add an explanatory note similar to the one published by ISO, i.e.:

"*No significance is to be placed upon the fact that “Male” is coded “1” and “Female” is coded “2”. This standard was developed based upon predominant practices of the countries involved and does not convey any meaning of importance, ranking or any other basis that could imply discrimination*."

**Changes compared to version 2.0**

The generic, non-breakdown codes (starting with \_) have been added. The main reason is that these codes are almost always required when representing SEX, so the Cross-Domain CL\_SEX Code List may be reused and/or referenced while avoiding the creation of a new Code List (as was the case with version 2.0).

1. <https://sdmx.org/?page_id=4345%20-%20CodeListGuideline#CodeListGuideline> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)