TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE OWNERSHIP GROUP SDMX FOR MACRO-ECONOMIC STATISTICS

9 FEBRUARY 2016

Introduction

The introduction of global Data Structure Definitions (DSDs) under the auspices of the SDMX[1] Sponsors Group has created a momentum for standardisation of data models and data exchange using the SDMX information model, both at the conceptual level and in the technical infrastructure needed for implementation. It also marks a significant enhancement of cooperation among relevant International Organisations (IOs) in the alignment of the coding system (the DSDs in the narrow sense), as well as the application of these DSDs to the actual data flows that are under their responsibility.

The IOs represented in the Ownership Group for SDMX in Macro-Economic Statistics (referred to as "Ownership Group" in the rest of this document) are all involved in the management and exchange of data in the relevant areas of statistics. They also have constituencies, consisting of National Statistical Offices, National Central Banks, and other statistical actors, sharing the benefits of the SDMX framework and the global DSDs available so far. Whilst the IOs have abandoned some of their autonomy in establishing an information model and a coding structure, the first tangible benefit can be observed in the alignment of individual countries' data reporting obligations to various IOs, by unifying the transmission format and abandoning the need to service these obligations in different data transmission formats. The second tangible benefit of the global DSDs is that it greatly facilitates data exchange between IOs, as a consequence of which IOs can rely on their mutual data exchange arrangements for collecting national data. Thus a single country reporting data can limit the provision of a given dataset by sending it, in the agreed data format, to one IO which afterwards makes these data available to the other IOs. This scenario is already implemented for some reporting templates, under the G-20 Data Gaps Initiative, as part of the objectives of the Task Force on International Data Cooperation (TFIDC). A third benefit is that the global DSDs are accessible from a unique authoritative source on the SDMX Global Registry and thus provide a ready to use data model for internal data management of the relevant statistics in countries and IOs.

It is also acknowledged that the introduction of the new standards places the burden of accommodating any agreed change to these DSDs not only on the participating IOs, but also on the side of the national statistical authorities of the various constituencies. In this respect, particular care needs to be taken that all changes

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[1] Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange, www.sdmx.org

are introduced and communicated in a consistent and transparent way by the Ownership Group. The maintenance agreements in place cater for long-term stability (e.g. backward compatibility), but also provide for sufficient flexibility to accommodate the needs of individual IOs and their constituencies to implement changes.

Ownership Group Mandate

The Ownership Group for SDMX in Macro-Economic Statistics (SDMX-MES) is mandated by the SDMX Sponsors group to oversee the maintenance of global DSDs and related artefacts for the statistical domains related to macro-economic statistics. The following organisations are member of the Ownership Group:

- Bank for International Settlements (BIS)
- European Central Bank (ECB)
- Eurostat (ESTAT)
- International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
- World Bank (WB)

Currently the following statistical domains are covered by this agreement:

Statistical Domain	Maintenance Agency and Contact	Major Stakeholders
BOP Balance of Payments	IMF StatisticsQuery@imf.org	BOPCOM [2]
FDI Foreign Direct Investments	OECD FDI-SDMX@oecd.org	WGIIS [3]
NA National Accounts incl. Government Finance Statistics	ESTAT ESTAT-Support-SDMX@ec.europa.eu	ISWGNA [4]
PRICE Price Statistics	*To be decided*	ISWGP [5]

Following the governance principles outlined by the SDMX Sponsors, the maintenance agencies only act upon agreement of the Ownership Group, when implementing changes to the SDMX artefacts and supporting materials.

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[2] IMF: Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics (http://www.imf.org/external/bopage/bopindex.htm)
[3] OECD: Working Group on International Investment Statistics
(http://webnet.oecd.org/OECDGROUPS/Bodies/ShowBodyView.aspx?BodyID=7250)
[4] UNSD: Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/iswgna.asp)
[5] ILO: Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics (http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/guides/cpi/)

The following principles govern the organisation of the Ownership Group:

1. The Ownership Group derives its mandate from the SDMX Sponsors. In this respect, the SDMX Sponsors recognise that a single ownership group should cover domains related to macro-economic statistics: the "Ownership Group for SDMX in Marco-Economic Statistics". The organisations that form part of the Ownership Group should ensure a balanced representation of both the content (statistics related) side and the technical (SDMX-related) side.

2. The statistics governed by the Ownership Group are explicitly limited to the field of macro-economic statistics, as typically understood. Upon request from organisations represented in the Ownership Group or the SDMX Sponsors, new statistical domains within the area of macro-economic statistics may be added to the coverage of the above mentioned statistics.

3. Other IOs - and their respective representatives - can become member of the Ownership Group, upon request by the relevant IO and upon approval by the existing members of the Ownership Group at that time, and subsequent approval by the SDMX Sponsors.

4. The chair and the secretariat of the Ownership Group will be established on a rotating basis with a mandate of three years. Starting from January 2014, the OECD is chair of the Ownership Group, while Eurostat provides the secretariat.

5. The Ownership Group will provide progress reports to the SDMX Sponsors Group on a regular basis, as a minimum once a year, or when need arises. Issues which affect the statistical areas covered by the Ownership Group, including changes in the composition of the Ownership Group as regards the IOs represented, will be put forward to the SDMX Sponsors Group for approval.

6. The Ownership Group operates through maintenance agencies, one for each statistical domain covered by the Ownership Group. The responsibility of the Maintenance Agency (MA) is to apply agreed changes to the respective DSDs and related artefacts in the SDMX Global Registry[6], including taking care of appropriate communication of the respective global DSDs and related packages (guidelines, coding templates, etc.) on the SDMX website. The SDMX Global Registry is the authoritative source for all global DSDs.

7. The Ownership Group has a central role in the governance of the global DSDs for the respective areas of statistics. It functions as the active agent in the compilation and maintenance of global DSDs under its responsibility. In compiling new DSDs and/or changing existing DSDs, the Ownership Group will consult other major stakeholders as appropriate.

8. The Ownership Group will ensure an appropriate level of coordination between the various Maintenance Agencies. The maintenance of these DSDs occurs without prejudice to any Ownership Group member's institutional activities.

9. As members of the Ownership Group usually have a competence vis-à-vis their constituency to establish data exchanges, the Ownership Group only has a competence in deciding how any new data flow can be best accommodated in the global DSDs.

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[6] https://registry.sdmx.org

Change Requests

The principles for changes follow the guidelines on the governance of commonly used SDMX artefacts, the guidelines on versioning of SDMX artefacts and other guidelines available on the SDMX website to the extent possible. In addition, the following points are agreed:

10. Change requests: the respective maintenance agency will only apply changes which are agreed upon by the Ownership Group. Agreements are to be based on consensus. If, in exceptional cases, consensus shows to be impossible, decisions will be taken on the basis of a qualified majority, i.e. two thirds of the IOs being member of the Ownership Group. In case of major issues, the Ownership Group may decide to consult the SDMX Sponsors for a final decision.

11. Three types of changes are foreseen: multi-annual structural changes, annual maintenance changes and fast-track maintenance changes:

    a. Multi-annual structural changes are generally triggered by changes in methodological guidelines or by a comprehensive review of the content of official data flows. This would involve a full review of the entire set of DSDs, including possible restructuring, deletion or replacing of concepts, code lists and codes. These will only be implemented after extensive consultations of all affected institutions and constituencies.

    b. Annual maintenance changes could be proposed by anybody, and would serve the purpose of allowing for new data exchange needs by any party. Only changes not impacting on the backwards compatibility of the relevant DSDs and having limited impact to existing data flows can be issued as annual revisions.

    c. Fast-track maintenance changes can be proposed by any of the organisations represented in the Ownership Group. Only changes not impacting on the backwards compatibility of the relevant DSDs and having limited impact to existing data flows can be issued as fast-track. Fast-track changes follow a similar change management process as normal annual changes, but are applied with immediate effect if approved. They do not need to wait until the next annual maintenance cycle and consultations with constituencies are done in a limited way depending on the impact of the change. Fast-track change requests are subject to review in the following annual maintenance cycle.

12. All change requests are analysed and assessed with due care. In particular, the Ownership Group will ensure consultation with the respective domain groups responsible for the statistical methodology underlying the domain. In particular, the domain groups mentioned as "major stakeholders" will play a role in the final approval process of structural and annual maintenance changes, recognizing the role they play in developing the manuals setting forth the methodology for the respective domains. The versioning of the global DSDs will be done in accordance with the SDMX versioning guidelines.[7]

13. If change requests to cross-domain artefacts are filed to one of the maintenance agencies, all other maintenance agencies will be informed and the request will be forwarded to the SDMX Statistical Working Group (SWG) as a general change request. In case the change is approved by the Ownership Group but rejected by the SDMX SWG for general use, the artefact might be moved from "cross-domain" to "cross-domain based shared", in order to accommodate changes which are of interest for the domains under responsibility of the Ownership Group. The same approach is followed for

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[7] Only versions 1.5 and newer, since SDMX versioning guidelines were not available before that.

fast-track changes requiring a quicker agreement and finalisation than the SMDX SWG approval cycle.

Technical Arrangements

14. The Ownership Group will be supported by a Technical Group, consisting of experts from relevant IOs with significant technical and content-related expertise. In elaborating rather specific issues, the Technical Group may apply break-out meetings for a smaller number of experts in the relevant subject or domain oriented statistical area.

15. The Technical Group will provide, at the request of the Ownership Group, advice on various issues related to the further development and the implementation of the global DSDs in practice. It may also raise issues for consideration at the Ownership Group at its own initiative, when deemed necessary. If the members of the Technical Group cannot arrive at a consensus, they can escalate issues to the Ownership Group, on the basis of a clear and concise document with the various alternatives and their pros and cons. The Technical Group can also forward any request to the SDMX Technical Working Group (TWG) for purposes of clarification, when deemed helpful to facilitate a decision.

16. In order to assess whether or not the proposed changes impact any data flow that is under the direct responsibility of the Ownership Group, the Ownership Group, by means of its Technical Group, should maintain a data flow matrix and respective data flow and constraint artefacts in the Global SDMX Registry, cross tabulating individual data flows and concepts. In this respect, it should be noted that data flows that are not fully documented cannot be assessed regarding the impact of any proposed changes.

17. Where possible, concepts are to be coded using the available cross-domain code lists. In some cases cross-domain code lists may need to be extended. The code lists are to be maintained by the relevant maintenance agency representing the Ownership Group. The maintenance agency will ensure that such artefacts are kept in line with the source artefact and inform the Ownership Group of any potential conflicts with, or changes occurring from, updates to the cross-domain artefact.

18. Additions to existing code list will be accommodated by the Technical Group, under the condition that the respective code(s) to be added do not conflict with an existing code and the labels as well as the integrity rules as far as applicable are clearly expressed.

Maintenance Timelines

19. The following timelines are to be respected for the execution of the maintenance cycles distinguished in the above. In the case of the Fast Track Maintenance Cycle, the relevant table below presents the maximum throughput time ensured by the maintenance agency. In case of small changes limited to selected data flows of specific constituencies, the cycle can be shortened accordingly. For the calculation of the delays, the months August and December are not to be taken into account.

Regular Annual Maintenance Cycle[8]

When	Who[9]	What	Deliverable
April	Anybody	Deadline for change requests	Change request with artefact to be changed and data flows affected
May - June	MA, in cooperation with TG(s)	Consolidation of change requests within domain between domains (for shared artefacts)	Issue log with change classification and impact on data flows
June	OG	**OG Video Conference** Evaluation on last year's cycle; discussion on issue logs provided by MAs; approval of joint issue log	OG report on last year's cycle, approved issue log for consultation
June	MA, in cooperation with TG(s)	Incorporate change proposals into reporting frameworks	Updated draft DSD matrix
June - November	OG	Consultation with respective constituencies on changes and implementation planning[10]	Constituency report, implementation plan
December	MA, in cooperation with TG(s)	Incorporate constituency comments into reporting frameworks	Updated draft DSD matrix
December	OG	**OG Physical Meeting** Discussion on constituency reports and implementation plans; approval of revised DSD matrixes	OG report, updated DSD matrix
December	MA	Implement changes	Updated DSD matrix and SDMX artefacts
December - February Y+1	Anybody concerned	Testing	Test reports
March Y+1	MA	Consolidate test results and implement bug fixes	Consolidated test report, updated DSD matrix

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[8] In actual practice, lead times often showed to be shorter and reporting was less pro-active, change requests often coming in a few weeks before the release instead of the year before. In these cases, the Ownership Group has the mandate upon deciding whether or not the relevant change request can be accommodated.

[9] MA = maintenance agency; OG = ownership group; Anybody = any user of the DSDs under the responsibility of the OG.

[10] Respective constituencies can decide on their own planning. In many cases data flows within one constituency will not affect data flows of other constituencies. This allows for implementation planning by data flow.

When	Who[9]	What	Deliverable
March Y+1	OG	**OG Video Conference** Final approval of revised DSDs	
April Y+1	MA	Publish new versions	Updated SDMX artefacts
May Y+1	International organisations concerned	Implementation of data reception and international data sharing systems	
From May Y+1	National organisations concerned	Implementation of affected system as lined out in constituency implementation plan	

Fast Track Maintenance Cycle

Until	Who	What
End of any month	Members of the OG	Deadline for change requests
At the latest M+1	MA, in cooperation with TG(s)	Consolidation of change requests within domain (and across domains if shared artefacts are affected) and draft DSD matrix
At the latest M+2	OG	Written consultation of constituencies concerned and OG approval
	MA, OG	Updated DSD matrix and draft DSDs
	Constituencies concerned	Testing
At the latest end M+3	MA	Publish new DSDs

Document History

Version	Date	Changed by	Approved by	Comments
1.0	12 Mar 2014	Ownership Group	Ownership Group	Initial version
1.1	02 Mar 2015	Daniel Suranyi		Changed versioning, Added SNA93 DSDs
2.0	20 Jan 2016	Daniel Suranyi		New approach towards a merged maintenance agreement and TOR, based on discussion within the OG
3.0	9 Feb 2016	Peter van de Ven	Ownership Group	Final version, after taking into account comments received from OG-members

References

1. Governance of Commonly used SDMX metadata artefacts: http://sdmx.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Governance_of_commonly_used_SDMX_metadata_artefacts_v1.2.doc
2. Guidelines on the Versioning of SDMX Artefacts: https://sdmx.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines_on_versioning_v1_0.pdf
3. SDMX Content Oriented Guidelines and relevant annexes: http://sdmx.org/?page_id=4345