

SIX TARGETS FOR THE FUTURE OF SDMX



On behalf of the SDMX Sponsors, Mr. Paul Schreyer, Chair of the SDMX Sponsors Group, summarized the following six points that offer an indication of where SDMX will go from here:

- the business case of SDMX needs to evolve further.
- the value of SDMX as a standard will bring value to the outside world as well. There is a great opportunity for more strategic cooperation between SDMX and the private sector.
- SDMX is sometimes mentioned as a well-kept secret in the world of statistics. There is a call for us to keep thinking about how we can move forward with visibility.
- capture the emerging areas: especially microdata and geospatial information.
- user-friendliness in the sense of making implementation and use easier. SDMX 3.0 will move in this direction and the involvement of the private sector might also help.
- importance of further developing skills and engagement.

SECOND DAY AT A GLANCE



Pictures taken and text written by the staff of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office

WHAT'S ON THE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME?

18-19 September: 2 days of CAPACITY BUILDING

- Beginners' track
- Experts' track

Do not forget to bring your laptop (or similar device) to the capacity building sessions!

SIDE EVENTS: These invitation-only meetings deepen the SDMX experience for involved organisations.

- SDMX Secretariat meeting
- Joint meeting of the SDMX Technical Standards Working Group (TWG) and the SDMX Statistical Working Group (SWG)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Working Group meeting

SHARING EXPERIENCES WITH SDMX IMPLEMENTATION CONCLUDED ON THE SECOND DAY

CENTRAL BANKS



The second day of the conference opened by adding more experience with SDMX from the central banks. SDMX is a crucial standard for the European System of Central Banks and its use shows great variety. This is a common characteristic with the National Statistical Organisations, but there are also other similarities in the challenges.

Integrating large amount of data and providing common data management frameworks are in the focus of central banks. Maturity of SDMX, its extensive documentation and implementation experiences of similar organisations boost the implementation of the standard among central banks. Implementation of SDMX resulted in many innovative solutions, such as new data warehouses and services and also more "traditional" solutions, such as using the standard for disseminating statistical information. Continuous support for the most widely used tools is well appreciated.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Following a tradition started at the last SDMX Global Conference, this session introduced companies with experience in developing and providing SDMX solutions to the community. This session was therefore a good opportunity to get to know real private sector SDMX solutions and to start discussions and networking.

Highlights of the second day

- 01** Experience with SDMX implementation: Central banks & private sector: Continuation of Session 4
- 02** Experience with SDMX implementation: International organisations & Common lessons learnt
- 03** SDMX: the way forward for the standard and the community
- 04** Six targets for the future of SDMX & Second day at a glance: pictures from Day 2



SDMX clearly has a great impact on a wide range of businesses as the private sector also realizes the importance of SDMX; even if sometimes SDMX seems to be hidden within the world of official statistics. The speakers highlighted the benefits of the implementation and use of SDMX by presenting how they incorporate the standard into IT systems and tools.

The solutions presented by the companies in Session 5 were focusing on different aspects of using SDMX for official statistics: tools that could help to simplify the publications, researches and reuse of statistical data or connect them more directly to the GSBPM. Tools could link SDMX and geospatial data and thus create a geospatial cloud which enables to connect people, locations and data owners by using interactive maps. Many of these applications are developed in pilot projects as these initiatives are usually planning to build a community.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS



"SDMX is a mature standard that can usefully contribute to any layer of a modern data production environment."

Motto of this session could be "Global Data Commons" as we could hear in the presentation of the representative of the IMF. The presentations of this session were given by representatives of some of the SDMX sponsoring organisations that established this standard to ease their data transfer among each other. According to the presentations, the scope of their SDMX usage significantly widened in the last decades since the launch of this standard in 2001. One of the main innovations is that they also use it to help researchers with their activities by further standardising data structures and concepts not just for existing

statistical domains but also for new ones such as the Sustainable Development Goals. They use it for solutions managing Big Data and microdata despite the fact that originally SDMX has been elaborated for aggregated data. New IT solutions were also built into the SDMX environment that can ensure the further widening of opportunities for SDMX usage for different data formats and data structures.

For all of the innovative solutions, SDMX provides an excellent base that can be built upon. That might be good news for architects as these are tools, artifacts that can be used as they are. The disadvantage of those innovations are the same as everywhere: a lot of resources. But it definitely worths the effort as they are solutions for the demand of the future.

COMMON LESSONS LEARNT AND EXPERIENCES

Based on the sessions focusing on experiences from National Statistical Organisations, central banks, the private sector and the international organisations, some common messages concerning SDMX can undoubtedly be formulated. The conference identified the following key common topics:

BROADER SCOPE

There is a constant push from the community to further develop SDMX by moving it farther away from being a data exchange format to become a much more complex standard that offers solutions covering bigger parts of the statistical business process.

NEW TYPES OF DATA

Even though SDMX started as a standard to support exchange of aggregated data and metadata between organisations, there is a strong need to be more open to other types of data, especially microdata and geospatial data and to provide more advanced SDMX solutions there.

DATA INTEGRATION

Organisations all around the world face the challenge of integrating information and for that purpose, standards are needed to make the integration meaningful and efficient. SDMX has a strong potential to be a driving force behind data integration.

USER NEEDS & CAPACITIES

The SDMX Sponsors and the SDMX community in general, are very dedicated to the further development and continous support of the standard. To ensure that SDMX is developed in the right way, user input and experience is crucial. Apart from experiences, it is also important that the community joins forces to provide solutions together. The SDMX community has been quite successful in producing tools, training material, documentation by joint initiatives. All countries are encouraged to join the work of the statistical or technical working groups, continuously working on the development of SDMX for the benefit of us all.

SDMX: THE WAY FORWARD



The first two days of "traditional" conferencing allowed the contributors to the sessions and the participants to summarize and exchange their experiences, connect to lessons learnt from others and formulate common conclusions for the use of SDMX.

These common lessons learnt is an important basis for SDMX as future targets for the standard are formulated based on these lessons.

The SDMX Sponsors discussed new features, then a public consultation for SDMX 3.0 was launched that lasted about 2 months. 29 replies were received from different organisations, expressing the needs and wishes for the new version. Based on the initial features and the outcome of the public consultations, features were grouped into 4 categories („very helpful”, „helpful” by both stakeholder groups, „helpful" by the community only, „helpful” by the Sponsors only), resulting in options for development.

Based on this input the following development directions were picked as the most important for SDMX:

- improvements to codelist design and maintenance
- enabling data validation and transformations
- versioning and management of artifacts made easier
- enhance data queries
- improve the exchange of reference metadata
- support reference metadata in the API
- support microdata exchange

As a next step, SDMX Sponsors will analyse the results and decide on the scope and timeline for SDMX 3.0. They will come up with a package that fulfills the needs but that is also managable given the resources.

SDMX was originally built to address the needs of international data exchange. Now SDMX would address use cases that make the standard more attractive for data providers beyond simple reporting.