

# Statistics, telematic networks and EDI bulletin

2 □ 1994

## WE/EB-MD6 - Statistics

### The standardisation body for EDI in statistics

MD6 is now five years old, comprises six working groups and some 60 delegates participate regularly to our meetings and work sessions. In these five years MD6 has developed eight new EDI messages, contributed to the design of existing messages so that they can be used for statistical data collection or dissemination, and played a significant role in the evolution of the EDIFACT process.

MD6 working method is based on teamwork and co-operation. MD6 team comprises representatives from international statistical agencies such as the UN/ECE statistics division, OECD and Eurostat, national statistical agencies, statistical services of national administrations, central banks, and ports authorities.

As a team, we have developed eight new EDIFACT messages and seven sub-sets of messages; we have co-operated with other development groups internationally, in particular the customs group for our work on trade statistics, the finance group for our work on balance of payments statistics, and the transportation group for our work on transport statistics.

#### MD6 achievements

1993 saw the first fruits of our work with the live use of the sub-set of the customs declaration message used for the collection of EC-INTRASTAT declarations (CUSDEC / INSTAT), and the first use of GESMES, the generic message for the exchange of aggregated multi-dimensional data.

1994 has seen the start of pilots in the field of balance of payments.

#### EDI, MD6 and DSIS

One of the top five priorities of the DSIS (Distributed Statistical Information Services) framework, adopted by the Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) in 09/94, is the design and the integration of EDI messages. In 1995, within the DSIS work-programme, many more pilots are planned for the exchange of economic series using the ECOSER sub-set of GESMES; the collection of raw data using the newly, jointly developed with North American, RDRMES (Raw Data Reporting MESSAGE) message for questionnaire data; the exchange of classifications using the CLASET message and the migration of existing computing infrastructures to cope with native EDI messages. Organisations participating to MD6 are also hoping to benefit from the other priority activities of the DSIS programme: the definition of the reference environment and associated metadata will enable organisations to use GESMES more effectively; the telecommunications initiatives will assist in all the pilots.

#### MD6 - Future prospects

In the immediate future MD6 will concentrate on consolidating its work by writing user friendly implementation guides, developing awareness material and demonstrations, and supporting pilot projects. It will continue to act as the voice of the statistics sector on international standardisation issues which affect the UN/EDIFACT process. Finally, it will continue to develop first class solutions which can be used to ease the problem of statistical data collection and dissemination world-wide.

#### Inside this issue

- Who is Who in MD6
- Up to date news on each of the working groups
- Information on implementation guides
- Workplan for 1995-1997
- Who is using MD6 messages
- Names and contacts
- Calendar of meetings



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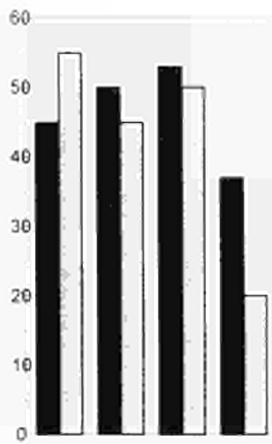
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## Working Group 1

### *Aggregated Statistics*

WG1 is concerned with the exchange of aggregated statistical data or, in other words, the exchange of multidimensional statistical tables and time series. The type of data exchanged in this way is many and varied: population, farming, transportation, economic activity, etc. The principal organisations involved in the exchange of these data are the national statistical authorities, Central Banks, and those organisations playing a role on an international level, such as the UN/ECE, OECD, Eurostat and the IMF. However, as work has progressed, many private organisations have expressed a keen interest in the activity of WG1.

The result of this work is GESMES – Generic Statistical Message – which is anticipated to reach Status 1 in March 1995. GESMES supports the exchange of statistical figures together with its associated metadata (e.g. footnotes, methodological notes, dataset structures).

Two guides are available on the use of GESMES:

- the Guidance to Users which explains the architecture and use of GESMES and which contains many worked examples, and
- the Reference Guide which is the blueprint for all message implementation guidelines for GESMES.

With the imminent emergence of an international standard for the exchange structure of multidimensional tables it is hoped to interest commercial software houses in building a GESMES interface to their software packages (e.g. spreadsheets, statistical packages). Indeed, some software houses have already shown an interest in implementing GESMES.

GESMES is currently being implemented in a variety of statistical environments:

- product data submitted to Eurostat by the Member States statistical administrations
- leading indicators submitted to the UN/ECE statistical division
- balance of payments and other financial statistics compiled by Central Banks

The appeal of GESMES is not confined to statistical organisations: trials are currently underway in both the health and education sectors; where doctors and schools use GESMES to report to regional or national administrations.

WG1 is now developing a message for the request for statistical data.



### Working Group 3

#### *Statistical Classification*

The primary aim of WG3 is to define structured EDI messages to exchange the structure, contents of classifications (e.g. nomenclature, code lists, directories, ...), and their relationship.

In addition to this WG3 aims to:

- ease the use of classifications by economic operators, maintenance agencies and international bodies (e.g. National Standards Institutes, National Statistical Administrations, Customs Authorities, professional federations, Chambers of Commerce, Eurostat, OECD, UN/STAT, etc).
- promote the use of official classifications, in particular statistical classifications, in EDI messages.

A specific aspect of this work is to ensure that the multi-lingual aspects of the classifications and the use of different character sets within the same message are catered for, including the handling of textual components.

For instance, solutions are being analysed allowing for the cross-referencing between EDIFACT-oriented message parts and SGML (Standard Generalized Mark-up Language – ISO-9069) oriented message parts.

Following the requirements of exchanging classifications during the different phases of their life cycle (e.g. compilation, consultation, dissemination), WG3 has conceived an exchange data model and structured EDIFACT messages:

CLAREQ:

to request a selected set of information elements relating to a classification or relationships;

CLASET:

to transfer a selected set of information elements relating to a classification and relationships.

Status 0 was reached in Spring 93. Status 1 is targeted for March 95 and Status 2 for 1996/97.

A future activity of the group is to extend its work into the development of messages allowing the exchange of other metadata (e.g. statistical unit, definition, concept, methodology).

The group will build on the output from other groups working in this area (e.g. DSIS, METIS and the DOSIS Research Programme).



#### **Working Group 4**

##### *Collecting Raw Statistics*

WG4 is concerned with investigating new ways of collecting raw statistical data.

In order to reduce the burden of compiling statistical information on individual organisations, the vital job of statistics gathering needs to be integrated into the information systems currently being used on a day to day basis by the economic operators (e.g. payroll, accounting, production, distribution).

Ideally, this integration should support both regular surveys and ad hoc enquiries for ALL declarative purposes (statistics, customs, trade associations etc.).

The target public for such messages includes the NSAs, the economic operators and the professional bodies representing the economic operators (e.g. the professional unions and chambers of commerce).

The objectives of this group represent the most challenging work for MD6. The technical aspects of the work are concerned with the development of EDI messages which are used for declarative purposes; one such type of message is a generic message which supports the responses to a questionnaire.

Recent initiatives in this field were taken both in America and in Europe:

- In 1993 the US Bureau of the Census submitted a new EDIFACT message for the collection of raw data (RDRMES), and
- in early 1994, WG4 started developing a general data model for questionnaire data.

During the April 94 JRT in Ottawa, it appeared that the two projects could easily converge.

In May 94, technical co-operation started for a Joint Development of RDRMES, the UN/EDIFACT message for the collection of questionnaire data, and the new version, which meets the requirements of Europe and North-America, was finalized during the September 94 JRT in Vienna.

RDRMES is expected to be submitted to the UN/ECE for Status 1 in September 1995.



## Working Group 5

### *External Trade Statistics*

WG5 is concentrating on the procedures for collecting and disseminating statistical information in the field of international trade.

For the EEA countries such a solution will create a mechanism for collecting these statistics in an open trading environment.

The target public for the messages developed by the group are the NSAs, the national or regional collection centres, and the economic operators who are direct declarants.

WG5 works in close collaboration with WE/EB MD3, the Customs Message Development Group responsible for the management of customs messages, and with the Statistical Committee for External Trade.

Four messages have been developed so far:-

#### **INSTAT:**

for the declaration of intra-Community trade. This is a subset of the Customs declaration message, CUSDEC and CUSDEC/INSTAT has been part of the EC INTRASTAT regulation since the opening of the Single European Market in 1993. Status 1 was reached in 1992 and status 2 is targeted for 1994.

#### **STATEM:**

for aggregated statistics which are exchanged between statistical authorities. STATEM has been implemented as a sub-set of GESMES.

#### **EXSTAT:**

for the declaration of extra-Community trade, which is also a subset of the Customs declaration message, CUSDEC.

#### **INSRES:**

the response message to INSTAT, implemented as a subset of the Customs response message CUSRES.

WG5 is also involved in Security and legal issues.



## Working Group 6

### *Balance of Payments Statistics*

The aim of WG6 is to design the messages to support the compilation of the Balance of Payments (BOP).

The partners in this project will ultimately be the enterprises (direct declarants), the corporate banks, the Central Banks and the (inter)national statistical institutes.

WG6 has close working relationships with the EDIFACT Balance of Payments Task Force, one of the task forces set up under the Committee on Financial, Monetary and Balance of Payments Statistics.

This Task Force is responsible for the development of a strategy for the collection of BOP statistics in terms of EDIFACT while WG6 is in charge of the standardization process necessary to support this strategy. Since end 1993, the EDIBOP project obtained financial support from the EU/TEDIS programme.

WG6 has developed five new messages:

- BOPINF** – the beneficiary informs its bank of the nature of a transaction.
- BOPCUS** – a commercial bank reports to the central bank the debit and credit transactions.
- BOPBNK** – a commercial bank reports to the central bank its own transactions and portfolio transactions.
- BOPDIR** – an aggregated declaration sent by an individual enterprise to a central bank or national statistical office .
- BOPSTA** – aggregated BOP information is sent by the collection agency to an international statistical organisation.

In January 1994, after comparative tests, it was decided to implement BOPSTA as a subset of GESMES. However, for the time being, BOPSTA will also remain available in its 1993 form.

BOPSTA will become Status 1 in March 1995, together with GESMES. The other BOPxxx messages reached Status 1 in September 1994 and Status 2 is targeted for 1996.

Trials have already started in France, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands and at Eurostat.

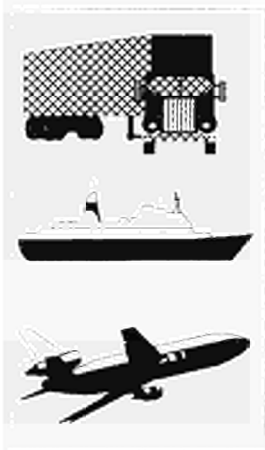
In the IMF Guide for Balance of Payments Reporting, one chapter is now dedicated to the MD6 BOPxxx messages.

A further part of the strategy is to integrate the statistical reporting requirements for BOP data into the electronic payment order information exchanged between enterprises and corporate banks.

In this respect WG6 is working in close collaboration with WE/EB MD4, the message development group responsible for financial messages.

During 1993, WE/EB-MD4 restructured many of its messages and accommodated the MD6 change requests. These restructured messages have been submitted for Status 1 early in 1994.

In the future the group may be directed at the potential for the harmonisation of the flow of other financial statistical information between the central banks and the NSAs (e.g. investments, loans etc.) in support of European Monetary Union.



## Working Group 7

### *Transport Statistics*

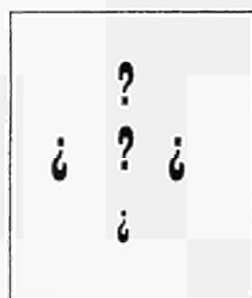
The statistical domain supported by WG7 is the collection and dissemination of transport statistics. It was launched in November 1993 and the group indicated immediately its intention to work in close co-operation with WE/EB-MD2, the Message Development Group responsible for transport messages.

Maritime transport has been set as its first priority, considering the needs stemming from the proposed maritime transport statistics directive.

WG7 has identified the minimum statistical requirements in the field of maritime transport, which may need to be augmented by additional requirements from NSAs.

The group immediately addressed itself to the survey of the messages already existing – in particular those of WE/EB-MD2 and MD3 – in order to select those of interest for WG7 and to undertake their thorough analysis concerning the coverage of the necessary statistical information.

The group decided to work on a set of messages (already existing or under development) available for EDIFACT users within the European port community. In this context, a pilot project covering a few ports in several Member States is about to be launched.



## Future Working Groups

New working groups will be set up as the need arises to support well identified projects with clear objectives. These needs may materialise from legislation (e.g. EU regulations), new data collection requirements or the desire to implement a less costly mechanism for the collection or dissemination of current statistical information.



## WEEB/MD6 WORKPLAN – 1995 - 1997

### WG1: Aggregated Statistics

GESMES is targeted for:

Status 1	March 1995
Status 2	March 1997

### WG3: Exchange of Classifications

CLASET/CLAREQ are targeted for:

Status 1	September 1995
Status 2	September 1997

### WG4: Questionnaire Data and Raw data Collection

RDRMES, a Joint Development between the Western European and Pan American regions, is targeted for:

Status 1	March 1996
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### WG5: External Trade Statistics

This group is developing subsets of existing Customs messages and writing the corresponding MIGs. The final CUSDEC/EXSTAT MIG based on the D.95.B directory is scheduled for January 1996.

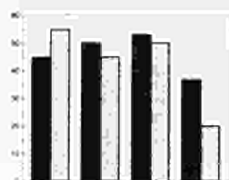
### WG6: Balance of Payments Statistics

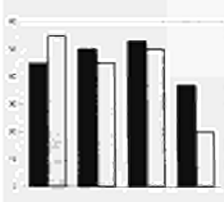
BOPBNK, BOPCUS, BOPDIR and BOPINF are targeted for:

Status 2	March 1996
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### WG7: Transport Statistics

Created in November 93, this new WEEB/MD6 sectorial sub-group, dealing with Transport Statistics intends to work in close co-operation with MD2 (Transport) and MD3 (Customs). It is presently in the process of studying the existing MD2 and MD3 messages (also those under development) to see which ones could be used to convey transport statistics.





## WEEB/MD6 Message Implementation Guides Available

### **CUSDEC/INSTAT:**

INSTAT Subset of CUSDEC User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, March, 1994  
ISBN 42-825-7373-7  
in English, French and German

### **CUSDEC/EXSTAT:**

EXSTAT Subset of CUSDEC User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, Sept, 1994 (Draft)  
in English, French and German

### **CUSRES/INSRES (Response to INSTAT)**

INSRES Subset of CUSRES User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, June, 1994 (Draft)  
in English, French and German

### **GESMES**

GESMES Implementation Guidelines, Eurostat, Luxbg, 1993 (Draft)  
Volume I      Reference Guide      ISBN 92-826-6613-1  
Volume II     General Guidance to Users    ISBN 92-826-6612-3

in English

### **GESMES/STATEM**

STATEM Subset of GESMES User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, 1993 (Draft)  
in English

### **GESMES/PRODCOM**

PRODCOM Subset of GESMES User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, 1994 (Rev. 1)  
in English

### **GESMES/BOPSTA**

BOPSTA Subset of GESMES Guide to the User, Eurostat, Luxbg, 1994 (Draft)  
in English

### **BOPxxx Messages**

Various Message Implementation Guides (MIGs) for the Balance of Payments messages are also available for certain countries:

**BOPDIR**      for Finland and France  
in English, and in Finnish and French, respectively

+      a draft version for the Netherlands  
in English

**BOPCUS**      for The Netherlands  
in English

## WE/EB MD6



Aggregated Statistics (WG1)



Statistical Classification (WG3)



Collecting Raw Statistics (WG4)



External Trade Statistics (WG5)



Balance of Payments Statistics (WG6)



Transport Statistics (WG7)

### GLOSSARY

- JRT:** Joint Rapporteurs' Team Meeting  
These International meetings gather all EDIFACT *regions* and all *MDs*  
They traditionally take place twice a year:  
in September, in the WE region,  
in April, in another EDIFACT region
- JM8** International Joint Meeting Group dealing with Statistics during *JRTs*.
- MD** Sectorial *EDIFACT* Message Development Group – These groups are presently 12.  
MD6 is the 6th group, in charge of *EDIFACT* for the statistical sector.  
MDs are regional – When they meet interregionally (during *JRTs*), they become *JMs*.
- Region:** In *EDIFACT* terminology, vast geographical areas, roughly corresponding to continents  
There are 6 *EDIFACT* regions: Africa, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, Central & Eastern Europe, Pan-America and Western Europe
- TEDIS:** Trade EDI Systems – CEC/DGIII programme
- UN/EDIFACT:** EDI For Administration, Commerce and Transport – UN Standard
- UN/ECE:** United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- WP.4** Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures, within the UN/ECE

#### **The 3 levels (or stages) of the EDIFACT Messages:**

- Status 0:** Message for information only  
**Status 1:** Draft Message – for trials  
**Status 2:** Standard Message – recommended for general implementation

- SERT:** Business Statistics and Telematic Networks - Eurostat initiative  
**DSIS:** Distributed Statistical Information Services – Eurostat project  
**DOSIS:** Development Of Statistical Information Systems – Eurostat initiative  
**METIS:** Metadata Information System – UN/ECE Statistical Division  
**NSA:** National Statistical Administration  
**MIG:** Message Implementation Guide

**List of WEEB/MD6 Messages**  
**Countries using them, testing them or contributing to their development**

MESSAGES	STATUS	AT	BE	CH	DE	DK	FI	FR	GR	IE	IT	LU	NL	NO	PT	ES	SE	UK	Euro stat	OECD	UN/ ECE
GESMES/STATEM	1 **																				
GESMES/PRODCOM	1 **																				
GESMES/ECOSER	1 **																				
GESMES (other uses)	1 **																				
GESMES/BOPSTA	1 **																				
BOPBNK	1																				
BOPCUS	1																				
BOPDIR	1																				
BOPINF	1																				
CLASET	0																				
CLAREQ	0																				
CUSDEC/INSTAT	2																				
CUSDEC/EXSTAT	2																				
CUSRES/INSRES	2																				
RDRMES	0																				

\*\* Status 1 was granted at the Vienna JRT, in September 94 – It will be officially confirmed by WP.4 in March 95.

**Legend:**

- = *used in production*
- = *Tests and/or pilot projects in progress*
- = *Pilot project starting soon*
- = *Participant in the writing up of the specifications*

## Calendar of Meetings for 1995

- **Eurostat**  
**“Statistics, Telematic Networks and EDI” working group meetings**

March 23/24	Luxembourg
November 13/14	Luxembourg
- **MD6**  
**Working sessions and Plenary meetings**

January 19/20	Geneva - Switzerland
March 16/17	La Rochelle - France
June 15/16	Stockholm - Sweden
November 23/24	Portugal *
- **UN/EDIFACT**  
**Joint Rapporteur Teams Meetings**

April 24-28	Sydney - Australia
September 11-15	Oxford - UK

\* *The exact venue is still to be fixed*

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