

**Unclassified**

**STD/SIMS(2004)12**



Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**30-Mar-2004**

**English - Or. English**

**STATISTICS DIRECTORATE  
STATISTICAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT DIVISION**

**STD/SIMS(2004)12  
Unclassified**

**Statistical Information Services in Mexico**

**EXPERT GROUP ON STATISTICAL DATA AND METADATA EXCHANGE**

**1-2 April 2004  
Château de la Muette, Paris**

**JT00161126**

**Document complet disponible sur OLIS dans son format d'origine  
Complete document available on OLIS in its original format**

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## STATISTICAL INFORMATION SERVICES IN MEXICO

Nowadays the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) is facing a process of technological renewal. The goal of this process is to establish the technological basis of a modern National System of Statistic and Geographical Information.

The core of the system will be a distributed Data warehouse that will integrate statistical information from INEGI and other sources like governmental and civic institutions from the Mexican society.

To accomplish this goal we know that we have a lot of job to do. As our first steps to make it, we have incorporated database technology to our site on Internet. Now INEGI's homepage (<http://www.inegi.gob.mx>) is a dynamic portal that is continually updated with fresh information. With this action we have solved one of our biggest problems with the site, to keep it useful, relevant and reliable.

Also, we are working on our internal Data warehouse, which will be the core (but not the whole) of the National Services of Statistical and Geographical Information on Internet. The system has already integrated twenty databases related to several relevant statistical events like the National Population Census from 1990 and 2000, the Population Count from 1995, the 1994 and 1999 Economical Census, the National Survey of Employment from 2000 to 2003, the Monthly Survey of Industry from 1998 to 2002, the Survey of Home Income and Outlay, etc.

By now the access to this information is for being used on internal purposes only and is made by database queries at record level, multidimensional models, query builders and database views.

We are going to integrate this data warehouse to our site on Internet as we'll add links to other institutions public statistical information databases. Each institution will manage its own information but with help of information technologies we'll have an integrated system of statistical information that will help to support the making of decisions of every sector of Mexican society.

We know that this is not an easy job, to bring this system to reality there are many difficulties to overcome; a common data interface is needed to integrate all this information as a single system, to do this we need to standardize and share catalogs among all institutions that are an integral part of the system. Also we need to solve other problems like data comparability, homogenization of data structures and system protocols, etc.

But Mexico wants to have this kind of information system. For this reason we are going to direct our efforts to standardize and to make official each catalog used on different statistical databases belonging to institutions of Mexican Government. Also, these efforts are being made

with cooperation of other nations, as a sample of that is the SCIAN catalog in which Mexico has been working together with USA and Canada.

SCIAN (North America Industrial Classification System) is a classifying system that enables to compare economical statistical data among United States, Mexico and Canada. SCIAN is the basis for generating, publishing and spreading all economical statistical data produced by INEGI.

To have common catalogs is a required way to share information among different systems; and also it helps to avoid unnecessary re-working.

On the field of derivate statistics, we are planning to establish an informatics system of economical and demographic indicators that will be complemented with business metadata that will describe the methodologies that were used to obtain them. This system will update our BIE (Bank of Economical Information) which nowadays provides information that is published on our web site (some of this information is shared with OECD by e-mail on a datasheet format).

We are convinced that with this hard work, and incorporating new information technologies like the ones that are based on XML and web services will be possible to accomplish our goal on creating modern services of statistical information to satisfy Mexican society demands.

At first, we are going to start developing web services that will enable other institutions to make direct use of our classifiers by its applications on Internet. Then these applications will have official and actualized catalogs to produce information that will be comparable between different organizations.

But we must say it again: Technologies alone are not sufficient to bring interoperability to statistical information systems. We need agreements to have a common language that will make useful the incorporation of XML and related technologies to our systems. We need to have agreements on which will be the common tags that we are going to use to share information among our countries.

This is also a domestic labor that we must do on our respective countries. In Mexico, we want to establish a technical committee on information technologies that will work on making common rules on informatics matter to build our national statistical system. This year our goal will be to have basic regulations on database table formats and naming conventions, protocols and catalogs.

As we said before, our system will not be a centralized database; it will be a distributed one. Statistical information is produced not only by one entity; it is produced and maintained by different organizations at real time, we don't want to have copies of information that maybe will be outdated, so we are planning to have links that will directly interface a big system conformed of web pages distributed on different sites that will have specialized information on specific areas, produced by the experts in charge of making it.

Maybe, an international statistical information system could be as an extension of this idea, a combination of systems from different countries that share some rules and protocols that regulates how they format and name its databases. This is perfect scenery to incorporate new technologies based on XML that will fit well and will have a relevant impact making possible to create this kind of systems.