ECLAC

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

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PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1997-1998

SUBPROGRAMME 4: DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION

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PROPOSED ACTIONS TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND SUBPROGRAMME 4 IN THE BIENNION 1997-1998

SUBPROGRAMME 4: Dissemination of statistical information

BACKGROUND

Since the Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas held in Santiago, Chile, in September 1987, the subject of disseminating statistical information has been included in all the regional meetings in which officials from the national statistical offices of ECLAC member countries have participated.

In view of the importance that the directors have accorded to this subject since that time, at the first Joint OAS/ECLAC Meeting on Statistical Matters in Santiago, Chile, in October 1994 ECLAC proposed to make it a regular focus of concern in joint activities by creating **subprogramme 4: Dissemination of statistical information** (LC/R.1448 (SEM.80/8)).

During the biennium 1995-1996, in accordance with this proposal, activities in this field centred around three programme elements: 4.1 Policies strategies and institutional organization; 4.2 New technologies and services using remote network connection; and 4.3 Platforms and recording media for the dissemination of statistical information.

For the biennium 1997-1998, it is proposed that subprogramme 4 should focus on other programme elements, those that now appear to be the most timely and useful to the national statistical offices of the region in the light of the current state of the art in this field.

It should be recalled that in many of the countries of the region the national statistical offices have been making significant changes and improvements in this area, in terms of both institutional structure and the use of new methods and technologies. In view of this situation, the programme elements presented below reflect what ECLAC believes to be the topics of highest priority for the sustainable development of national statistical offices in the area of dissemination of statistical information.

**Programme element 4.1:** INTERNET as a tool for dissemination and electronic interchange of statistical data.

**Objectives**

Promote and support national statistical offices in the use of the increasing technical resources offered by this medium for the dissemination and electronic interchange of data.
Activities and means

ECLAC will continue to help national statistical offices that request it in the search for the technical assistance they need to incorporate the methodologies, computer platforms and systems that will enable them to take full advantage of INTERNET resources.

ECLAC and the countries that are participating in the project on the Regional Short-term Indicators Database (BADECOYR), will set up a system for disseminating economic indicators on the participating countries, together with those of some of the developed countries for comparison, through WEB pages.

High priority will be given to electronic data interchange between the national statistical offices of the region and ECLAC, and this will be accomplished primarily by using the resources of INTERNET.

ECLAC will promote the use of the means of dissemination now available on INTERNET deployed in an environment restricted to the user institution. This new strategy is known worldwide as INTRANET. In view of the advantages INTRANET offers for internal dissemination and the ease with which it can be used in conjunction with INTERNET, the topic will be included on the agenda of the seminar/workshop proposed below.

National statistical offices interested in studying the organization, methodologies and technological platform that ECLAC is using in the INTERNET and INTRANET environment can request a stay for their experts at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile.

Expected outputs

WEB pages in the ECLAC server and in the servers of the national statistical offices of the countries participating in the BADECOYR project which possess such servers, for disseminating information/metadata and data on short-term indicators -series, tables and graphs- available in BADECOYR.

Electronic mail and electronic data interchange services (FTP on INTERNET) between ECLAC and all national statistical offices of the countries of the region.

Meetings in the biennium 1997-1998

ECLAC will organize a seminar/workshop for experts from the national statistical offices on technologies for disseminating and electronic processing of statistical data, to be held under the auspices of CESD-Madrid with the collaboration
of EUROSTAT and the Statistical Office of Sweden, together with the Argentine (INDEC), Brazilian (IBGE) and Mexican (INEGI) statistical offices.
Place: To be decided
Date: Third quarter 1997

Together with the countries interested in the Regional Short-term Indicators Database (BADECOYR), ECLAC will organize and coordinate a workshop for the purpose of defining and implementing new criteria, procedures and technology related to INTERNET for updating and disseminating BADECOYR data.
Place: To be decided
Date: Second half of March 1997

Possible collaborating and participating countries

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Programme element 4.2: Databases, metadata and new technologies in this field.

Objectives

Promote and assist the national statistical offices of the countries of the region in the design and implementation of metadata systems to facilitate identification, access and processing of statistical databases and in the adoption of the technological platform changes necessary for these applications.

Activities and means

ECLAC will help national statistical offices that request it in the search for the technical assistance they need to carry out the tasks involved in this complex area of electronic processing of statistical data.

ECLAC will assign high priority to the tasks involved in the adoption of the standards, procedures and systems required for a metadata system that allows for search, retrieval and processing of statistical data of the national statistical offices from a regional perspective. ECLAC, in conjunction with Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, will prepare a technical manual on metadata systems that will serve as a practical guide for the implementation of such systems by national statistical offices in the region.

Countries members and associate members of MERCOSUR, in conjunction with ECLAC, will carry out tasks directed towards integrated access to the databases of their statistical offices by facilitating the identification, description and electronic
dissemination of the microdata and aggregated data required for the process of economic integration under way between these countries.

*Expected outputs*

The policies, procedures and technologies required to supplement electronic systems for access to and processing of statistical data will be adopted and implemented within MERCOSUR and will service as a pilot model for integrated access to databases.

A technical manual and practical guide to the use of metadata systems by national statistical offices in the region.

*Meetings in the biennium 1997-1998*

Together with the MERCOSUR member and associate member countries, ECLAC will organize and coordinate a workshop on organization, systems and technologies for integrated access to statistical data in MERCOSUR.

Place: Country to be decided
Date: First half of March 1997

In the seminar/workshop proposed under programme element 4.1, one of the main items on the agenda will be the design and implementation of metadata systems.

*Possible participating countries*

Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile and Bolivia.

*Programme element 4.3: Policies and price levels in relating to the dissemination of statistical information.*

*Objectives*

Promote and help define the policies and criteria national statistical offices should adopt to set prices for services and statistical information.

*Activities and means*

Mexico, with the collaboration of the United States and in coordination with ECLAC, will prepare a document on policies, organization and prices for dissemination of statistical information. The document will present a number of different models now in use in the region and by the statistical offices of developed countries in order
to help national statistical offices in the region to adopt and adapt the strategy most appropriate for their needs.

**Expected outputs**

A document entitled "Case studies in policies, organization and prices for dissemination of statistical information".

**Possible participating countries**

The United States, Mexico, Argentina and Spain.