Minutes – 7th Coordination meeting Dublin September 24th

Participants

Brendan Curtin, CSO
Joseph Keeting, CSO
Björn Witting, DESTATIS
Joachim Weisbrod, DESTATIS
Anna Abatzoglou, ELSTAT
Georgia Golemi ELSTAT
Fabian Rocci, ISTAT
Roberto Guiseppe, ISTAT
Paola Vicari, ISTAT
Birgitta Mannfelt, SCB
Sofia Löfgren, SCB
Ruth Renter, SE
Rick Trap, SFSO
Barbara Dremelj Ribic, SORS

Adoption of the agenda

Birgitta presented the agenda and it was adopted.

Summary of work so far

Birgitta summarized the work done so far and what is left to be done. According to the project plan, she did in the beginning of the summer, we are a bit behind which is mainly due to the holidays, when we have been away from the offices at different times. Birgitta will update the plan.

Finding best practices including report from study visits

Björn told us about the study visit that will take place in the Netherlands, 8th and 9th of October. The Netherlands is chosen since we think CBS is a good example on best practices and it does not have many horizontal inconsistencies. This will be the only study visit. People from WP2 will join as well. Birgitta has been in contact with Jorrit Zwijnenburg from CBS and set up a draft agenda. Germany, Sweden, Estonia, Slovenia and maybe Switzerland will participate. The study visit will be for two days.

ESSnet Admin Data

Barbara and Joachim have looked into the report from the ESSnet on admin data and summarized the variables that are interesting for our project. The definition of “Turnover” is proposed to be changed in SBS so that “excise duties” are excluded. No real changes for the rest of the variables.

Mapping of National accounts and Balance of Payments

National accounts (NA) and Balance of payments (BoP) are examples of users that we should have in mind when making proposals for new definitions. Birgitta told us about what the Swedish national accounts experts have written in preparation for the expert meeting in Wiesbaden. In the paper there is a short introduction to NA, examples of what can be difficult to collect when using admin data, a review of most of the variables, examples of differences between NA and SBS. The wish of the NA experts is to have the SBS definitions closer to the ones in ESA and have one big survey to give the NA all the variables they need. The advantage with only one source is that the background will be the same – population, reference time etc. The Swedish experts want to see our proposals as soon as possible so that they can react on them at an early stage.

Roberto has had a meeting with the NA experts at ISTAT and they are not fond of changes in definitions and that is probably a wide opinion that we should keep in mind.

Balance of Payments does not seem relevant for our proposals and Birgitta will write something about it in the final implementation report.

Assessment of core economic and employment variables and proposed adjustments

Rick started by telling us the situation with the employment variables. He has not been able to work with it but now he will go through the documents and try to compile some analysis until the end of next week. He thinks that the differences must be documented and transparent so that we can explain the differences. Brendan has not done the analyze for "his" variables due to problems with the access data base and some other concerns about denominations, comments etc.

Anna says that she is confused about who is doing what in the analysis. Since Greece is responsible for the "Report on the Analysis, identified problems, evaluation and assessment" (from now on called the Assessment report) and they have not got analysis from all the countries, they have done analysis themselves. Birgitta clarifies that the purpose with the template was to share the work among the countries so that Greece would not have to do it all by themselves.

A problem with the database has been that some countries have ticked both "No inconsistency/not known" and another cause. We have decided that in those cases the answer should be counted as an inconsistency. Mirjam has done new graphs with the correct figures, she will send them to Greece so they will be included in the report. There has also been some confusion about denomination and all valid answers should be counted as denominator. Since there are more answers for horizontal than vertical inconsistencies the denominator for the horizontal inconsistencies will be larger.

Björn told us about the core economic variables and he used the templates he got from the group to make the conclusions. For the variables "Number of enterprises" and "Number of local units" there is nothing to be done. "Turnover" on the other hand has some inconsistencies in the constituents part. Excise duties today are included in SBS and excluded in STS. Björns' proposal is to exclude them also in SBS, as they are not really a part of turnover. The name "Turnover" is also a bit problematic since it is hardly used in the companies. Actually turnover is a part of the variable "Production value" analyzed by Barbara. We discussed if it is possible to propose a definition that could be the same for all domains and for “Turnover” it might be possible, but probably not for “Production value”. “Value added at factor cost” is similar to “Turnover”. “Gross operation surplus” and “Total purchases of goods and services” are not that problematic. “Payments for agency workers” is only in SBS so that is actually not a problem. “Personal costs” have different names like “personal costs” and “Employee benefits” The content is different in LCS, LCI and STS/SBS/iFATS. “Wages and salaries” is slightly different in admin data. Birgitta thinks that we need to have some reasoning about the compromises we have to make. Our proposals will make it better for some and worse for some.

Report on the Analysis, identified problems, evaluation and assessment

Greece is responsible for the report and has sent out a draft version. Anna started the discussion on the tables on vertical and horizontal inconsistencies by cause and reason, they are now in the annex but are still quite large and not that easy to read. Do we think they are ok and should they be in an annex? The reason to have them in the report should be that it is the only place where we will present results from the survey. Another suggestion is to include only one table as an example of what they look like. We are afraid that the horizontal tables are confusing since they are not symmetric where they actually should be. A question is also who will read the report? After a discussion back and forth it was decided that Birgitta will contact Hans-Eduard and see what he thinks. If we decide to keep the tables, Greece will make them more user-friendly by putting appropriate names on the columns.

Birgitta thinks that the report is too heavy right now and we should shorten the introduction, there is too much repetition as it is now.

Concerning chapter eight, everyone agrees that we say that indirect causes are not the focus of WP3.

Concerning chapter nine, the first paragraph 9.1 must be elaborated and it will be done by Anna. The graphs in 9.2 will be replaced by the ones Mirjam has done. Since there are asymmetries in the tables with horizontal inconsistencies we should explain it in the text but also have a footnote in all tables. Anna has summarized the comments from all countries and tried to classify them according to name, method and constituents.

We discussed whether indirect causes should be in the report or not. Anna thinks that we should include indirect causes since we have collected them. Fabiana pointed out that it can be overlapping or hidden inconsistencies in the definition. It was decided at the meeting on a compromise, that we keep some minor comments in the text but not present any figures or shares on it

The structure of the report.
Birgitta shows her example of “Wages and salaries” where she has the following structure.
Introduction with definition
Vertical inconsistencies

- Go through the different domains

Conclusion on vertical inconsistenies
Horizontal inconsistencies

- Name
- Method

- Constituents

Conclusion on horizontal inconsistencies

The indirect causes could be mentioned in the text but with not too much emphasis on them.

Anna thinks that also the vertical inconsistencies should be divided into name, method and constituents. The group agreed that she can do that, but if there is too little text under each heading, she will put them all in one paragraph. She will also skip the indirect causes in the analysis. She will make an example for one variable and send it out to the group in the middle of next week. When the group has approved the format, Anna will need another week to finalize the report. Anna makes conclusions after every variable. Chapter 11 concluding evaluation and assessment can be skipped if we have conclusions on every variable.

Birgitta will finalize the chapter on National Accounts and Balance of Payments.

Björns' conclusion of the analysis should also be a part of the Assessment report.

Outline of Report on proposed adjustments

Barbara presented her general idea of the outline. The second chapter will be about users and she asked if we have any other than NA, e.g. DG Enterprise? It was decided that it is too late to contact them for their input now. We will, however, invite them to the final workshop to present. The third chapter is very much from the workshop in Rome. In the fourth chapter she describes overlapping with the other WPs. In the end there are some questions that should be answered.

- Cross-border relations, profiling.
- Consolidation - should it be a part of a definition? Björn does not think so.
- Commodity oriented statistics - should there be proposals? Birgitta does not think so as we decided to leave commodity oriented statistics out from the beginning

In chapter 4.1 the system of variables, we would like to propose, will be described. In 4.2 the use of administrative data is described. There are usually three different sources "Company accounts", "VAT" and "Social security contributions". In chapter five there will be the proposed system of variables, proposed revised definitions per variable. The system of variables will include a unique number and name. When Barbara gets the employment variables from Switzerland as well, which should be in the middle of October, she will finalize the paper and send it to the group for feedback.

Outline of the Final Implementation Report

As a coordinator Sweden is responsible for it and it is due in December. It will include a summary of our proposals but it is very much a management report.

Preparations for the final work shop

Sofia told the group that the workshop will be at Elite Palace Hotel in Stockholm 18th and 19th of November. The workshop will be for one and a half days and then we will have a coordination meeting in the afternoon (day two). A draft agenda and invitation was presented. The group objected on having proposals after 4 pm as the audience might be tired at that time. A suggestion is to have proposals for both economic and labour market variables first and then have the discussions on both sets of variables. The first discussion could be after four the first day and the other discussion the next day. We would like to have discussions after our proposals but then we need to think about who we can invite to take part in the discussions. One suggestion is DG Enterprise another is to ask Hans-Eduard about other external users. Brendan emphasized that it is our proposals we want feedback on not an open discussion. Barbara suggested that we in the beginning of the workshop talk about the suggested system of variables. Roberto thinks we should say something about the links to WP1 and WP2. More comments on the invitation and agenda should be sent to Sweden by the end of this week.

Other

Birgitta will update the project plan.

The final coordination meeting will be in Athens, the week before Christmas.