

# **Guide to Sharing Economic Data in Official Statistics**



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# **Guide to Sharing Economic Data**

in Official Statistics



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# Preface

Economic globalization is characterized by innovative global business arrangements and growing interdependence of economies. This raises severe challenges to statisticians in measuring and describing national, regional and global economic development. Multinational enterprise groups' (MNEs) data are critical for the quality of economic statistics. If those data are missing or not correct, national statistics will not be of sufficient quality to support government or business decision making.

Globalization presents new opportunities for businesses that seek more efficient and profitable ways to develop, manufacture and distribute their products and services. Their agile global production arrangements and strategic location of intangibles and R&D challenge statisticians, often in unexpected ways. If official statistics first seemed inept in the face of globalization, statisticians quickly joined forces to jointly figure out how to compile relevant statistics in these conditions. Global problems require global solutions. Indeed, data sharing emerged in these discussions as a game changer for statistical production.

In this Guide, we provide tools and ideas to improve the quality of economic statistics by increasing cross-national and international data sharing for statistical purposes, while observing strict statistical confidentiality. A key aspect of the solution relates to the role of national statistical offices. They cannot rely on national data only but need to exploit the possibilities of using data collected by statistical authorities of other countries to produce better quality economic statistics. The other aspect of the solution is the sharing of innovative practices to understand and correctly record the activities of MNEs. The guidance we provide in this Guide is, however, not restricted to MNEs' data, but is applicable to any type of cross-border economic activity.

The time has come for us statisticians to update our mindsets regarding sharing data among statistical authorities in different countries. Such data sharing is already seen in other areas such as tax and customs administrations. As we already have a century-long successful tradition of international collaboration on statistical standards and methods, we should take a step forward and extend the scope of collaboration to data sharing. I sincerely hope that ideas shared in this Guide will be rooted into the practices of statistical organizations, resulting in better statistics for better policymaking. The global statistical system needs to act decisively and in coordination to develop data sharing to achieve a more complete and accurate picture of MNE activities in official statistics.

The Guide was endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2020. It follows in the steps of the two previous guides - The Impact of Globalization on National Accounts (2011) and Guide to Measuring Global Production (2015). The focus is on highlighting the importance of data sharing to capture economic stocks and flows correctly in official statistics and making data sharing activities possible by introducing practicable ideas and common tools.

I am thankful for the involvement of great experts across countries in the preparation of the Guide. As in the previous Guides, the contribution of Eurostat and OECD was invaluable and the contributions from across the world from both international organizations and individual countries made the Guide rich in examples that help us to learn from various different types of data sharing cases. The work leading to the Guide has been presented at many international fora such as the meetings of the UNECE Group of Experts on National Accounts, organized jointly with Eurostat and OECD, the OECD Working Party on National Accounts, the Committee on Monetary, Financial and Balance of Payments (CMFB) Statistics, the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts, the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts, the World Statistics Congress of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and the Integrated Global Accounts and Global Production project of Eurostat. I am grateful to everyone who contributed to the discussions, challenged our ideas and gave us inspiration.



Timo Koskimäki

Chair of the Task Force on Exchange and Sharing of Economic Data

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This Guide is the result of the joint work of the members of the Task Force on Exchange and Sharing of Economic Data, composed of Timo Koskimäki (*Chair*, Statistics Finland), James Tebrake (Statistics Canada/International Monetary Fund (IMF)), Catherine van Rompaey (Statistics Canada/World Bank), Peter Bøegh Nielsen (Statistics Denmark), Kristian Taskinen (Statistics Finland), Michael Connolly and Ruth O'Shaughnessy (Central Statistical Office, Ireland), Simone Ambroselli (National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), Italy), Francisco Guillen Martin (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Mexico (INEGI)), Rodolfo Ostolaza (INEGI/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)), Gerard Eding (Statistics Netherlands), Katarzyna Walkowska (Statistics Poland), Sanjiv Mahajan (Office for National Statistics (ONS), United Kingdom), Patricia Abaroa (Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), United States), Tjeerd Jellema (European Central Bank (ECB)), Daniel Suranyi (Eurostat/ECB), Mushtaq Hussain and Pekka Alajääskö (Eurostat), Jolanta Stefanska and Sanjeev Gupta (International Monetary Fund (IMF)), Mariarosa Lunati (OECD), Rami Peltola and Tihomira Dimova (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)) and Benson Sim (United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)).

The Guide was developed, reviewed and approved by the entire Task Force. Based on the discussion in the Task Force, each chapter was drafted by a lead author(s) and subsequently reviewed by the Task Force members. The executive summary and Chapters 1 and 7 were mainly drafted by Timo Koskimäki, Kristian Taskinen and Rami Peltola. Chapter 2 draws on the in-depth review of the exchange and sharing of economic data, carried out in 2016. The examples collected then were complemented by new case studies provided by a number of countries and international organizations (listed below). Chapter 3 was a common effort led by James Tebrake. Patricia Abaroa led the development of the first part of Chapter 4. Sanjiv Mahajan, Mushtaq Hussain, Kristian Taskinen, Ruth O'Shaughnessy and Simone Ambroselli contributed substantially to this part of the chapter. The latter part was based on the work of Mushtaq Hussain, Sanjiv Mahajan and Rami Peltola. Chapter 5 was written by Rami Peltola, Ruth O'Shaughnessy and Rodolfo Ostolaza. Other contributions for this chapter came from Kristian Taskinen and Simone Ambroselli. Kristian Taskinen led the drafting of Chapter 6. Other main contributions for this chapter came from Mushtaq Hussain, Daniel Suranyi, Mariarosa Lunati and Tjeerd Jellema. Annex 1 presents related extracts from the UNECE Guide to modernizing statistical legislation. Daniel Suranyi led the development of Annex 2; and Annex 3 was written by Tjeerd Jellema. The commitment and enthusiasm of all authors was crucial for the success of this work. Special thanks are extended to Katarzyna Walkowska for the careful checking of everything related to confidentiality and legal aspects.

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) provided financial support for the editing of the Guidance. Art Ridgeway (Canada) was responsible for the substantive editing of the Guide. His questions, suggestions and remarks stimulated discussions in the Task Force and improved the content of the Guide. Rami Peltola, Tihomira Dimova, Evita Sisene and Oleksandr Svirchevskyy from the UNECE Statistical Division provided secretariat support and organized the meetings of the Task Force and international consultations. Lidia Bratanova, Director of the UNECE Statistical Division and Carsten Boldsen, Head of Economic Statistics, provided support through the life of the project. The cover of the Guide is designed by Luciana Matei (UNECE).

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The Guide includes a number of illustrative examples and case studies, provided by Armenia, Canada, Colombia, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Slovenia, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, ECB, Eurostat, IMF, OECD, UNSD and World Trade Organization (WTO).

The following countries and territories, and international organizations provided comments in the global consultation that were important for the finalization of the Guide: Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, ECB, Eurostat, IMF, OECD and UNSD.

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