

IDEP/CN8

(Extract from CoRD 028, 'Electronic Collection of Raw Data (eCORD): A European Perspective', U Kunzler, 2000)

1. Background

IDEP/CN8 was developed in 1992 in preparation for the completion of the European Internal Market on 1 January 1993. Until then data on trade in goods between the EU Member States was taken from customs documents. Since 1993, data has been collected directly from traders on a monthly basis. This new statistical system was named Intrastat; its legal basis is the European Council's Intrastat Regulation of 7 November 1991. Over 400,000 trading companies were affected by the change. Projects like IDEP/CN8 were designed to alleviate the new administrative burden.

2. The INTRASTAT survey

The Intrastat questionnaire requests a limited number of variables on exports and imports for each type of goods. The Intrastat goods classification – the Combined Nomenclature – comprises about 10,000 items. The questionnaire is available in different versions (e.g. 'simplified' or 'detailed') as the declaration is possible with different levels of detail, based on a system of thresholds. Data are collected on a monthly basis by the competent national administrations, who forward aggregated data to Eurostat. Each Member State offers the questionnaires in the local languages (there are 11 official EU languages) with some national variations (e.g. additional national variables). Some Member States combine the Intrastat survey with the VAT declaration.

3. IDEP/CN8

IDEP/CN8 is an electronic version of the Intrastat questionnaire together with the complete Combined Nomenclature. It is used in 12 Member States (out of 15) in the respective local languages (more than one language for some Member States), covering the different detail levels and national variations. IDEP/CN8 has to be installed on a PC. Data are entered manually or imported from business management systems. IDEP/CN8 stores data in a local database. The user is supported as much as possible in preparing a declaration (conversion between enterprise and statistical codes; automatic validations; search utilities for classification codes; etc). There are supplementary functions like the generation of reports (various selection criteria), multi-user and local network support, and so on. Declarations are generated in EDIFACT format (CUSDEC/INSTAT), to be submitted on diskette or on-line via mailbox systems (bulletin board systems) or Internet e-mail.

IDEP/CN8 was developed and is maintained by Eurostat. It is updated every year. In order to cope with the many possible variations in the Member States, a generic master version in English is produced by Eurostat and sent to the competent national administrations. They translate the screen and help texts, set national parameters and prepare user manuals. The national administrations care for the mass production (copies on diskettes or CD-ROM), distribution (by mail) and also the local user support. Eurostat has set up a second level support for the national administrations.

The original DOS version of IDEP/CN8 is still in use but will be replaced gradually by the current 32-bit Windows version (Windows 95, 98, NT, 2000). The last DOS release will be the one for 2002. Around 40,000 firms are using IDEP/CN8. The IDEP/CN8 project was funded through EDICOM, an EU programme supporting Intrastat. EDICOM ended in December 1999. A 5-year follow-up, EDICOM II, is currently under preparation.