PC-AXIS Reference Group meeting

Copenhagen 24 -25 August 1998

Participants in the PC-AXIS Reference Group Meeting in Copenhagen.
Representatives from Faeroe Islands and Slovenia had left when the photographer was present.

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Agenda   **Monday the 24th of August:**

8,30 - 9,00   Registration and coffee
9,00 - 9,15   Welcome by Lars Thygesen, Director, Statistics Denmark
9.15 - 9,30   Adoption of the agenda
9.30 - 11,00   Presentations from the participants on the experiences and
                   the planned usage of PC-AXIS in their country.

 Short break
11,10 -12,00   The statistical databases in the future at Statistics
Denmark.
12,00 - 13,00   Lunch
13,00 - 17,00   Demonstration of products of relevance in the field of
                   dissemination of statistics in electronic form.
                   • Nordic cd-rom 1998, HTML-user interface and PC-
                     AXIS for windows
                   • PC-AXIS on the Internet
                   • PC-AXIS 98, 32-bits version of PC-AXIS for Windows
                   • PC-AXIS SQL for Microdata aggregation to Macrodata
                   • Metadok2, Metadata entry software for Microdata
                   • PC-AXIS SQL for Macrodata
                   • Makrometa, Metadata entry for Macrodata
                   • PX-MINI in the future ?
                   • PX-PUBL, Publication production
                   • PX-MAKE, producing px-files
                   • PX2TSD, defining timeseries in px-files
                   • Overview and summary of the total concept
At 19,00   Statistics Denmark invites to dinner
                   Restaurant La Novo, Torvegade 49-51, Christianshavn,
                   Copenhagen K

Tuesday 25th of August:

9,00 - 10,25   Wishes and plans for the development of PC-AXIS, PC-
                   AXIS SQL for macrodata and PC-AXIS SQL for
                   microdata
10,25 - 10,40   Coffee break.
10,40 - 12,00   Discussions on future development of
                   PC-AXIS Windows version. What functions are desired
                   for the future.
12,00 - 13,00   Lunch.
13.00 - 15.30   Continued including coffee.
15.30   End of meeting

Lars Thygesen, Director of User Services, welcomed the participants to the largest PC-AXIS meeting so far. Statistics Denmark has for 14 years had a very fruitful co-operation with Statistics Sweden around databases and PC-AXIS. He found it very promising that much more countries now engage in the work and thus share the resources and ideas for the development.

Basque Countries
Has been using PC-AXIS for several years. Input was created from Tabula (in-house product), SAS and Excel. Has more over used PX-MAKE, but experienced problems in the version to be downloaded from Internet.

Denmark
More information in the annex.
PC-AXIS is chosen as *the* format for dissemination of statistics.
It is used on Statistics Across Boarders, CD-ROM with key figures by municipalities, several statistical standard products on diskette or CD-ROM, on the Internet databank, KIDS, on CD-ROMs and diskettes included in publications
Much effort during the last year has be concentrated on the creation of PX-MAKE 32 bit version and the preparatory work for the SQL-PC-AXIS sumdatabase which is supposed to be working from January 1999.
4 training courses a year and user group meetings secure a relative close contact to the users.
Manuals in PC-AXIS 98 (in Danish) and PX-MAKE (in English) had been printed and were distributed to the participants.

A time series approach, PX2TSD, had been developed for the PC-AXIS databank on Internet.
PX-files are in Denmark produced as output from AXIS Mainframe databases or PX.MAKE. 150-200 external users of PC-AXIS.

Faero Islands
Established a home page with free PC-AXIS download and data on Internet. A price might be set later. Planning to start using PC-AXIS/SQL from their Oracle database.

Philippines
Used PC-AXIS since the DOS version. NSCB got PC-AXIS for Windows in February. In June-July a training course in PX-MAKE took place. Now they are converting a lot of files from Excel and Lotus to PX-format. Run time errors and other problems occurred during this conversion. Creation files to the INDEL (Classification base) caused a lot of problems. Planning for the release of a CD-ROM and statistical database on the Internet this year. PC-AXIS shall moreover be used in the regional offices (8 at the moment).

Norway
PC-AXIS is used on the Statistics Across Borders (Nordic CD-ROM)
Have not yet decided on the extented use of PC-AXIS. Has started a project with the local authorities. Statistics from the municipalities is aggregated in Statistics Norway and returned to all municipalities. The intension is to evaluate PC-AXIS as a user interface in this project.

Estonia

Is considering on the use of PC-AXIS. A decision will be taken very soon. They want to make a CD-ROM and later on distribute statistics on the Internet.

Iceland

PC-AXIS is only used on Statistics Across Borders (Nordic CD-ROM)
Use PC-AXIS so far. A big burden dissapeared when they started to use PX-MAKE 32 bit version. Investigations going on regarding an SQL-PC-AXIS model as used in Sweden and Denmark.

Finland

PC-AXIS used on the Statistics Across Borders (Nordic CD-ROM) and in Population Statistics. They find it is very easy to produce PX-files, either as output from the databases or by help of VALTI (Finish program) or PX-MAKE . Regarding the big databases they are now 17 years old and a new solution shall be chosen. Finland considers the SQL solution like Sweden and Denmark, but nothing is final yet.
Futher decsription on PC-AXIS use is found in the annex.

Slovenia

No agreement with SCB yet. So not much experience. It will come soon. PC-AXIS has been translated to Slovenian. A help file has been translated, but they need support with the compilation.

Spain

Has just started using PC-AXIS. The first big project will be handling Foreign trade. Spanish language uses longer words than PC-AXIS usually allows.

Sweden

More description in the annex.
The new publication policy states that
- All statistical productions should be entered into the databases.
- The result should be available on Internet in the form of a publication.
- If resources permits it can be printed on paper as well.

PC-AXIS is a strategic software and the internal use is increasing. An even bigger step forward can be expected when the publication facility PX-PUBL is introduced.
PC-AXIS on CD-ROM: Statistics Across Borders (Nordic CD-ROM), and a CD-ROM with the PC-AXIS internet files are sold together with the software.
PC-AXIS SQL is used for the New Database.
Ca 300 files are updated regularly by means of PX-BATCH.

In PC-AXIS SQL a new feature that aggregates from micro to macro data has been tested on population statistics and labour market statistics. To work a metadatabase is required. (METADOK)

A project to handle very large data set with many values like in the foreign trade was established. An alternative way of selecting values will have to be found, (direct selection by code or search instead of list boxes)

Ca 1000 PC-AXIS external useres

For data to the Nordic Database that has not been available in the central databases has been converted from Excel to PX- format by using PX-MAKE.

Demonstrations

The future plans of database in Statistics Denmark was described. A sumDatabase with aggregated but very detailed statistics will be the central core for all dissemination. A metadatabase, TIMES 2000 will be connected to define and describe the data. The database will be organised in Oracle based on the Swedish PC-AXIS SQL data model. Nevertheless a lot of work must be carried out, as the SCB Sybase solution can not be used without modification in Oracle. PC-AXIS will be the user interface both in Internet (defining and retrieving PC-AXIS files) and the local net.

HTML used as a new presentation and selection possibility to PC-AXIS. Demo of the new approach to HTML in Statistics Across Borders, and new features in PC-AXIS 98 (32-bit version: graphics, changed lalyout of "Advanced", Matrix format output. Search facility and browse a file (without importing it in a database).

Demo of the Greenlandic homepage

Demo of Statistics Denmark's Internet databank, KIDS, with economic short term indicators.

Demo of Finland's PC-AXIS databank on Internet.

An example of a solution to *select* data from a PC-AXIS file *before* downloading it was shown. Output is a table in HTML on the screen. The program is developed by Ministry of Education in Denmark.

PC-AXIS SQL

PC-AXIS SQL is used with Sybase in Sweden. Denmark will use it with Oracle. More countries (Norway, Finland, Iceland, Faeroe Islands, The Basque Countries, The Philippines) are at the moment considering new solutions on databases, and the PC-AXIS-SQL is one of the realistic possibilities..
Statistics Sweden gave an overview of the different elements in the PC-AXIS-SQL concept:
- PX-Batch , creating PX-files from the SQL database and save them in a directory as a database. Batch to run saved queries. A PXT file lists all the queries.

Possibility to aggregate microdata to macro data with PC-AXIS. To manage this a metadata model for both micro and macro data is needed. Sheets describing the content of these models were distributed.

Datamodel	1. Macro metadata 2. Micro metadata Programs developed to help filling in the datamodel. A sheet appears for each box in the model. On the Internet only micro metadata is available. No data.
PX-MINI	PX-MINI is the "slim" version of PC-AXIS. In Denmark it is used to compliment paper publications with more data on electronic media. It has to be "slim" because it is distributed to people who do not ask for electronic data, and who we suspect do not have an advance use of it. To this user group we would like to present the figures together with a simple program (the manual can be written on 3 lines). Because of a former need to have it on one diskette it was "slimmed" very much. Suggestions from Statistics Denmark to enlarge PX-MINI to handle more languages, to select variables and include graphics.
PX-MAKE	Reports on bugs and wishes shall be mailed to Statistics Denmark, lap@dst.dk. You can also find information on: ' http://www.dst.dk/internet/axis/pcaxis/styr1.htm '
Timeseries	Statistics Denmark had developed a timeseries approach to PC-AXIS, PX2TSD. The program contains two parts. In part one a selection of time series is created from a PX-file. Possibility to attach individually designed codes partly or totally. If the same selection of time series should be repeated only part two is necessary. Here the series are selected and transformed to TSD-format (used in Aremos). The keyword TIMEVAL is mandatory in the PX-file to create this format. The program is in Danish only. (www.dst.dk/internet/axis/pcaxis/styr8.htm) If someone wants to try it, they can have the source code from Lars Pedersen (lap@dst.dk)
PX-PUBL	In Statistics Denmark 10 000 out of 16 000 yearly produced pages are published through Word templates. This includes the daily newsletter, the Statistical Year book and the thematic publications etc. This publication facility has now been developed to handle PX-files as input to Word documents.
Summarizing from Sweden	SCB outlined an summarised the interconnection between the microdata, micro metadata, macrodata and macro metadata on local level at a single producer and in the central databank with macrodata. The external user will have acces to macro data and -metadata as well as *micro meta*data. SCB plans to use the publication facility similar to Statistics Denmark

New or changed features in PC-AXIS:

Statistics Sweden outlined some of the new features in the latest PC-AXIS version that was released June 1998 on the CD-ROM Statistics Across Borders.

Table presented in <u>matrix format</u> (one record for each combination of variable values in the stub: each value written in a field of its own followed by a counting field for each value in the heading.)
This is considered useful for instance if you transfer data to Excel. The possibility to leave out repeated text in the stub lines was discussed. The term "matrix format" was considered to be difficult to understand (and translate) Any suggestions of another term can be mailed to louise.bjorkell@scb.se

Priority list from last time shows that (of course) not everything has been settled. The 32-bit version had highest priority. Some wishes has survived to this version. The participants discussed the following changes and agreed on a list of priority, where
0 = very top priority
1 = top priority
2 = priority
3 = not so important

Priority 0

0 DAT files should be substituted by directories. Substituted with directories and refreshed through an index file. Giving indefinit number of levels (like Word, Excel) instead of the 2 levels today.
longer texts is another wish.

0 A new keyword for PC-AXIS-files written in Windows text instead of DOS text.

0 Save information on that a zero-lines or columns is not to be showed.

0 Remove the zeroes from the PX-file, not only when displayed on screen (3 months)

0 PC-AXIS should know whether code or text is selected. Always save the file as text. The keyword VALUES means text and the keyword CODES means code.(3 days)

0 CELLNOTE on single cells, for instance in colour

0 SHOWDECIMALS, store 15 decimals show 6
0 DECIMALPOINT, read from Windows
0 ITEMSEPARATOR /LINESEPARATOR as a consequence of decimalpoint

0 Save, import and convert several files at the same time. In PC-AXIS in the Import. In PX-KONV for batch.

0 Select values by typing them in code. Text search for values in a list.

0 Missing data (or protected data) symbols: possible to customise for different NSIs to allow . .. ... - * and even text

0 Make it easier to create a population pyramid. Adjust variable order in the graphical interface for population pyramid.

0 Change variable order if the keyword TIMEVAL is used, for graphical output.
Wishes to the graphic function has to be reported to louise.bjorkell@scb.se

Classifications
0 File format in classification. A converting program could be used from old to new .(4 weeks)
Co-operation value set with PX-MAKE

Priority 1

1 Select new variables/values to an active table. Possibility to go back from a table to the Metadata screen or variable/value selection screen with the mean of a tool button.

1 Delete last value for a variable under edit menu

1   SEASADJ,CONTACT,LASTUPDATED,REFPERIOD,STOCKFA, BASEPERIOD,CFPRICES should be set different for different content.

1 TIMEVAL should be updated when a new period is added

1 Change HTML list of content. Personalised HTML code in the ini-file

1 Investigate Active X on maps (Norway). A keyword to identify the geographic variable, look closer at the Norwegian model.

1 ” Copy graph” should copy the graph, not the figures. (copy and paste special copies the graph) (Investigate possibility in First Impression)

1-2 Search for files updated after a certain date.

1 Cell info when clicking right mouse button

Toolbar renewed according to the most used functions

Priority 2

2 Select *text, code* and *text & code* for the values.

2 New format for table (the matrix format) on screen and file output. New button, new text option. Refresh active table on screen .

2 Number of row and columns (256 and 16384) is OK, but possibility to cycle through, so at any time not more than 256 are available.

2 Change database without double click New techniques if switch to directories from DAT-files.

2 Duplicate tables in different languages and create a new keyword for language which give an option to switch language on the system when a file is opened in PC-AXIS.

2 Possibility to decide stub and heading when variables are selected.

2 Possibility to edit the table title not use default

2 Put the default value of a eliminated variable in the title.

2 If only one value has been selected for a variable and this variable then is deleted the value is entered into the head.

2 Sort the table on variable or columns

2 An option to add a "domain" in classification

2 Change value order by marking several values in the selection list.

2 Hierarchical variables should be supported.

Priority 3

3 If only one variable in the stub, an extra column should be possible to create with the code.

3 In matrix format two columns for each selected variable

3 Drag and drop between tables (edit with 2 tables etc)

3 Tool button, individualises

3 Import by update existing px-file with new data (like link to table)

3 Two names (value and code) in pc-axis

Miscellaneous

- Print preview, new version of Formula 1 (has to be checked)

- GESMES/Ecoser works only in PX-KONV and not in the present version of PC-AXIS (will be developed when the format changes).

- Print footnotes at the same page as the table (SCB checks)

- The filenames in the list of contents in HTML format are in capital letters (come from the DAT files), which gives trouble in UNIX if the filename is in lower case letters. (Finland) A version is now available which is not changing to capital letters when the PX-file is saved.

- Information of the number of values in the value set in creating Aggregation. SCB checks.

- When copied to Excel, it opens at the footnotes and not the table. Will be checked by SCB.

- Information on the number of rows and columns can be confusing .

PX-KONV
Changed into a batch-converter. It shall be possible to call px-konv with parameters (even wildcards) to have it convert multiple PX-files without showing the user-interface.

PX-MAKE
New key words in PC-AXIS will be reflected in PX-MAKE
Classification facility, import from text files or database/SQL-database
Integrated with PX-MAKE
At least the same facilities as in the DOS-version
Wishes should be mailed to LAP@dst.dk

PX-MINI
Extended with graph, may be maps , select variables etc.
Ideas and wishes should be mailed to louise.bjorkell@scb.se

SQL
Test SQL anywhere (requires a metadatabase)
PX-Batch convert to other file format (Is perhaps not nessesary if proposed changes to PX-KONV is carried out)

Open F..A.Q list for PC-AXIS on Internet

Coming meetings: 1999: Oslo or Stockholm
2000: Madrid

Annex

Documents distributed during the meeting:

Statistics Denmark: Status Reort from Statistics Denmark (Awu)
Databanks in the future
PXTimeseries
Priority list for futher development of PC-AXIS in
1998 (from PC-AXIS reference group meeting 1997.

EUSTAT, Basque: Experiences and future plans for the use of PC-AXIS

Statistics Finland: PC-AXIS (Ekblom-Merjankari)

Statistics Sweden: Experiences from Statistics Sweden on PC-AXIS
(Nordbäck)
PC-AXIS Planning (Björkell)
PC-AXIS 98 (Björkell)
Nordic Statistics on CD-ROM- Statistics Across
Borders 98
PX-Batch
PC-Axis-SQL for microdata with aggregation to
macrodata (Carlström)
Macro metadata model, tables of contents (3 sheets)
Micro metadata model, tables of contents (1 sheet)
PC-AXIS SQL Interface (Björkell)
Whishes for PC-AXIS 98 (Björkell)