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## MEASURING THE DYNAMICS OF ORGANISATIONS AND WORK

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In this first MEADOW newsletter we provide the reader with an overview of the project's objectives and structure. Funded by the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission's DG Research and coordinated by the CEE (Centre d'Etudes de l'Emploi), MEADOW is designed to set out Guidelines for collecting and interpreting harmonised data at the European level on organisational change and its economic and social impacts.

There is a growing consensus among policy makers all over the world that knowledge has become of great importance for wealth creation and that innovation is an important driver of economic growth. Within the European Union, knowledge policies are cast in a broad social framework giving recognition to the importance of knowledge development both for improving economic performance and for reinforcing social cohesion. This broader social perspective was the starting point for the 2000 Lisbon agenda which set the objective for Europe 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (Lisbon European Council Conclusions, March 2000).

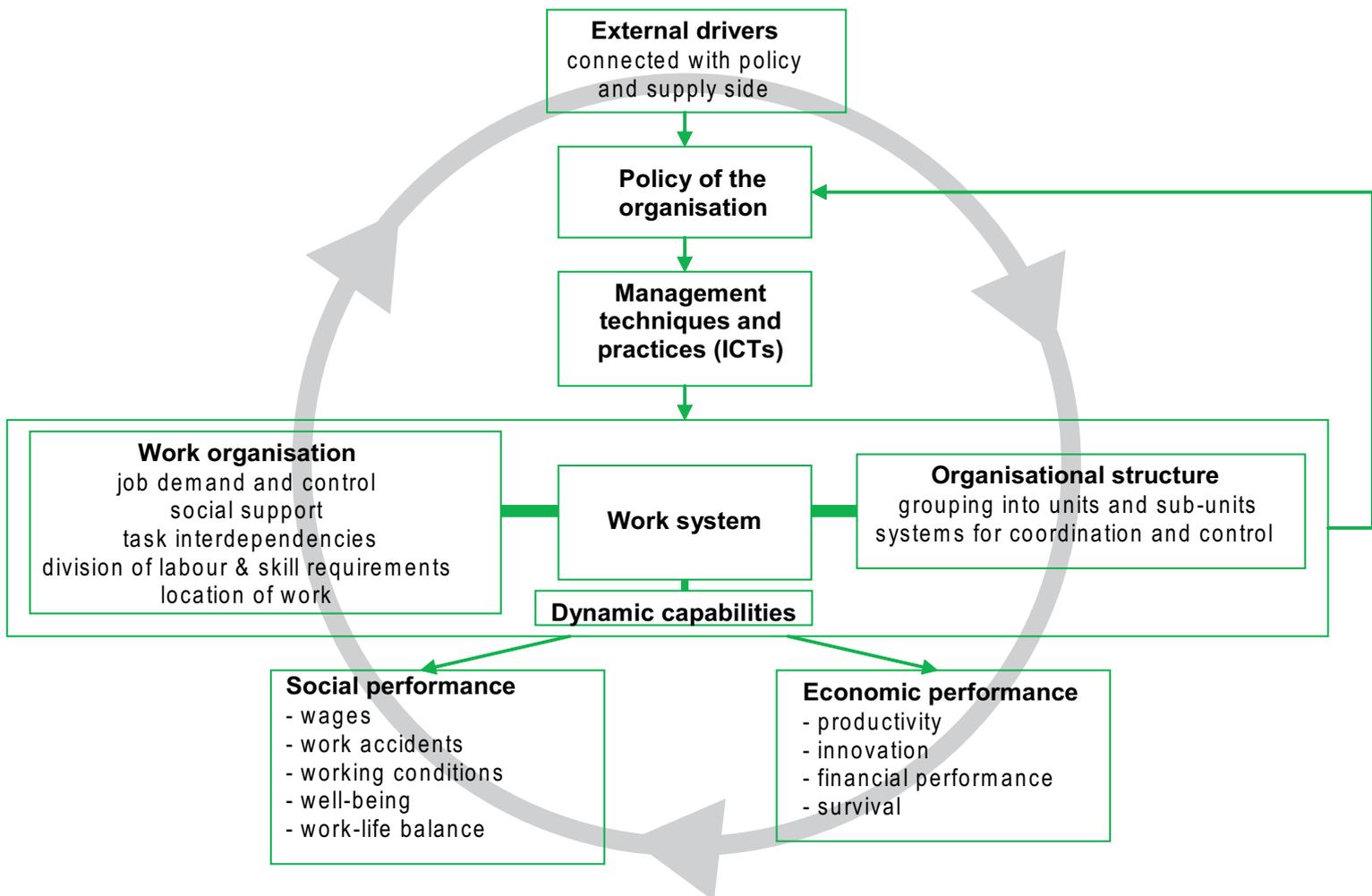
The goal of combining economic and social objectives was confirmed by Heads of State and Government at the Spring 2008 European Council. The Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2008–2010) were adopted, placing emphasis on exploiting synergies between different policy areas and instruments. Policy guidelines and targets in the areas of R&D, innovation and ICT are formulated in an explicitly transversal manner with respect to objectives in the areas of labour markets, work organisation, the quality of jobs, and education and training. Lifelong learning is seen as integral to a wide range of economic and social objectives and it is a cornerstone of the revised Lisbon's strategy on achieving 'flexicurity' where the goals of flexible and adaptable enterprises and employees are combined with those of employment security and reduced labour market segmentation.

The MEADOW project takes as its starting point that reliable harmonised statistics on organisations and organisational change can contribute directly to the quality of EU policy making. Our knowledge about the internal organisation of firms and organisations in Europe is fragmentary and incomplete, and at present we lack the information needed to deepen our understanding of the impact of the use of different organisational practices and processes of change on enterprise performance and employee outcomes. Reliable harmonised statistics on organisations and organisational change could contribute directly to policy initiatives aimed at increasing the flexibility and adaptability of enterprises and employees while simultaneously improving the quality of jobs.

# MEADOW PROJECT GOALS

- The MEADOW Guidelines will be composed of several interrelated chapters giving the framework for the collection and interpretation of harmonised data on organisational structure and change and their economic and social impacts at the EU level.
- The MEADOW Guidelines will cover both public and private sectors. Based on the multidisciplinary nature of the MEADOW partners, the Guidelines will integrate measurement approaches stemming from different disciplines: economics, sociology, management sciences, industrial relations, labour studies, ergonomics, and work psychology.
- The MEADOW GUIDELINES will provide a survey design which allows for the implementation of a matched employer-employee survey at the EU level. This survey instrument will be internationally comparable and translated in eight languages: English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Hungarian and Danish.
- The MEADOW Guidelines integrate the following basic and measurement frame of organisational change:

## Basic analytical framework and measurement frame



The organisational change under scrutiny is both technologically and socially driven and manifests itself in new management techniques and practices, new work organisation processes and new organisation structures.

# MEADOW PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Meadow project is organised around 6 interrelated main activities, each of them giving rise to a part of the Guidelines and to background documents. The project is currently in its second-year phase of constructing indicators on the basis of the work on theories and priorities completed during year one.

## 1 State of the art in surveys and concepts of organisational change

### Contacts

Lead partner: Peter Nielsen  
Aalborg University - Denmark

Second: Monique Ramioul  
Catholic University of Leuven - Belgium

The main purpose of this activity is to develop **a policy-relevant framework identifying the key elements and interactions to be taken into account measuring organisational change**. This is accomplished both through **an overview and critical assessment of the theoretical and applied literature**, and through **a systematic overview of surveys of organisational change** with a focus on the underlying theory of change in each survey in order to clarify concepts and clearly identify different strategic options in surveys.

A first output of this activity that took place in year 1 is two reports: the "Multilevel Theoretical Framework" and the "Grid report". Chapter 1 of the Meadow Guidelines is a second output from this activity.

## 2 Setting the priorities in measurement and developing basic definitions

### Contacts

Lead partner: Nathalie Greenan  
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Second: Karolus Kraan  
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The purpose of this activity is to create a consensus on a general survey structure by **setting priorities in the measurement of organisational change**. There are a wide range of possible indicators of change in use, but many studies focus on changes internal to the organisation associated with the introduction of new or modified work practices or with the changes in the distribution of tasks and responsibilities across individuals, teams and services. The Guidelines will distinguish between the types or levels of change that are internal to the organisation, and broader changes, including changes of ownership and legislation, setting up of new product lines or geographical divisions and establish clear priorities in this respect.

This activity examines different methods for linking the employer and employee-levels, compares the advantages and disadvantages of panels versus retrospective questions for capturing change, and provides guidelines regarding the unit to survey, the population covered and sample size. The consensus building process which is central to this

activity takes into account the **policy relevance** of priorities in terms of the goals of the renewed Lisbon Strategy and seeks to integrate the views and interests of a wide range of stakeholders including the scientific, policy, trade unions and business communities.

Chapter 2 of the Meadow Guidelines is an output from this activity that took place in year 1.

## 3 Measuring aspects of organisational change: Employer-level surveys

### Contacts

Lead partner: Amelia Román,  
OSA Institute for Labour Studies - Netherlands

Second: Annika Härenstam  
University of Gothenburg - Sweden

Drawing on the work on priorities and definitions, the goal of this activity is to establish guidelines for the **development of a core set of indicators allowing to capture the flexibility of organisational structures and organisational changes at the employer-level**. These guidelines will come to terms with issues such as comparability of measurement level, obsolescence of indicators, as well as cross-national comparability. The organisational change under scrutiny is both technologically and socially driven and manifests itself in new internal work processes, work structures, and new links with the organisation's environment. Issues addressed in designing these indicators include:

- Business practices and ICT
- Organisational structure
- Types or forms of work organisations
- Organisational boundaries and inter-organisational cooperation
- Dynamic capabilities
- Drivers of organisational change
- Employment growth and economic performance

Chapter 3 of the Meadow Guidelines and the employer-level questionnaire are two outputs from this activity that took place in year 2.

### Outline of the MEADOW GUIDELINES

**Chapter 1** : From thematic priorities to theories and concepts

**Chapter 2** : From existing surveys to a general survey framework

**Chapter 3** : Measuring the dynamics of organisations and work – employer-level survey

**Chapter 4** : Measuring aspects of organisational change – employee-level survey

**Chapter 5** : Statistical methods

**Appendix** : Synthesis report on testing the Guidelines

\* The titles of the chapters that will compose the Guidelines are not definite at this stage, and still can be modified.

## 4 Measuring aspects of organisational change: Employee-level surveys

### Contacts

Lead partner: Francis Green - University of Kent, Department of Economics - United Kingdom

Second: Csaba Makó - Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Sociology - Hungary

In parallel with the measures of change at the employer level, the objective of the employee level survey instrument are threefold: first, to capture employees' perspective on organisational change; second, to collect data on both the job and the employee; and third to measure employee experience and outcomes in the organisation.

**The proposed set of indicators will highlight from an employee perspective processes of organisational change and their consequences on job quality.** Based on the work on priorities and on definitions areas to be included are:

- Work organisation and ICT use
- Participation and control
- Skill utilisation
- Working time and work-life balance
- Employment security
- Employee well-being
- Wages

Chapter 4 of the Meadow Guidelines and the employee-level questionnaire are two outputs from this activity that took place in year 2.

## 5 Statistical methods

### Contacts

Lead partner: John Forth - National Institute for Economic and Social Research - United Kingdom

Second: Lutz Bellmann - Institut für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung - Germany

This activity is dedicated to a discussion of **the advantages and drawbacks of the various possible survey methods which may be used to collect data on the nature and impact of organisational change.** Survey methods used in particular countries are often a reflection of existing institutional constraints; however, if alternative possibilities are available in a country, the chapter on survey methods in the Guidelines will help to evaluate them in terms of the quality of the resultant data, and also in terms of its potential use in descriptions and analyses.

Detailed issues regarding statistical methods include:

- Sampling methods
- Contact response and data collection methods
- Data preparation, data analysis and dissemination
- Choice of classification

Chapter 5 of the Meadow Guidelines is one output from this activity that took place in year 2.

## Meadow Past Events

Scientific progress of the project is monitored by permanent dialogue within the MEADOW consortium. Meetings between partners are organised to follow up the project's results and include discussions with stakeholders at key milestones of the project.

### Paris, April 2007

The First General Assembly of Meadow project gathered the partners and the Advisory Board members around an overall project work plan and introduced the outline for two comprehensive reports: the "Grid report" concerning the State of the art on organisational change, and the "Multilevel Theoretical Framework report" concerning concepts of organisational change.

### Amsterdam, November 2007

This working Meeting settled decisive discussions between partners in order to define a consensus on a general structure by setting priorities in the measurement of organisational change and policy issues. This meeting was the starting point of Chapters 1 and 2 of the Meadow Guidelines.

### Budapest, March 2008

The second General Assembly of the Meadow project organised a discussion of the two first chapters of the Meadow Guidelines. Julia Lane from the University of Chicago and Bernard Felix from Eurostat served as discussants on presentations of the Chapters dealing with conceptual issues and the overall survey framework respectively. Agnès Parent-Thirion from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions made a presentation on harmonisation issues in European survey instruments and Arnold Reidmann (TNS Infratest) made a presentation on the methodology used in the EFILWC's employer-level survey.

At this meeting, activity was also planned for the drafting of the three following chapters of the Meadow Guidelines.

### Nuremberg, September 2008

This working Meeting focused on the discussion of chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the Meadow Guidelines. The employer and employee draft questionnaires were also presented and debated between the partners. And the testing activity of the project that will take place in year 3 was organised.

## The Meadow Survey design

The above activities will lead to the drafting of **employer-level and employee-level questionnaires** designed for the implementation of a matched survey at the European level. A key factor in this survey design will be **flexibility**. Firstly, flexibility is needed so that the questionnaire design can accommodate the survey method (e.g. telephone or face-to-face interviewing). Secondly, flexibility is necessary so as to reduce of obsolescence in the indicators used. And thirdly, the survey design must accommodate an international sampling method. For this, the core set of indicators identified is developed into questions that will be directly translated in the languages of the countries taking part in the MEADOW project and tested for consistency.

## 6 Testing and revising a harmonised questionnaire developing core indicators

### Contacts

Lead partner: Anthony Arundel  
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Second: Daniele Archibugi - Giorgio Sirilli  
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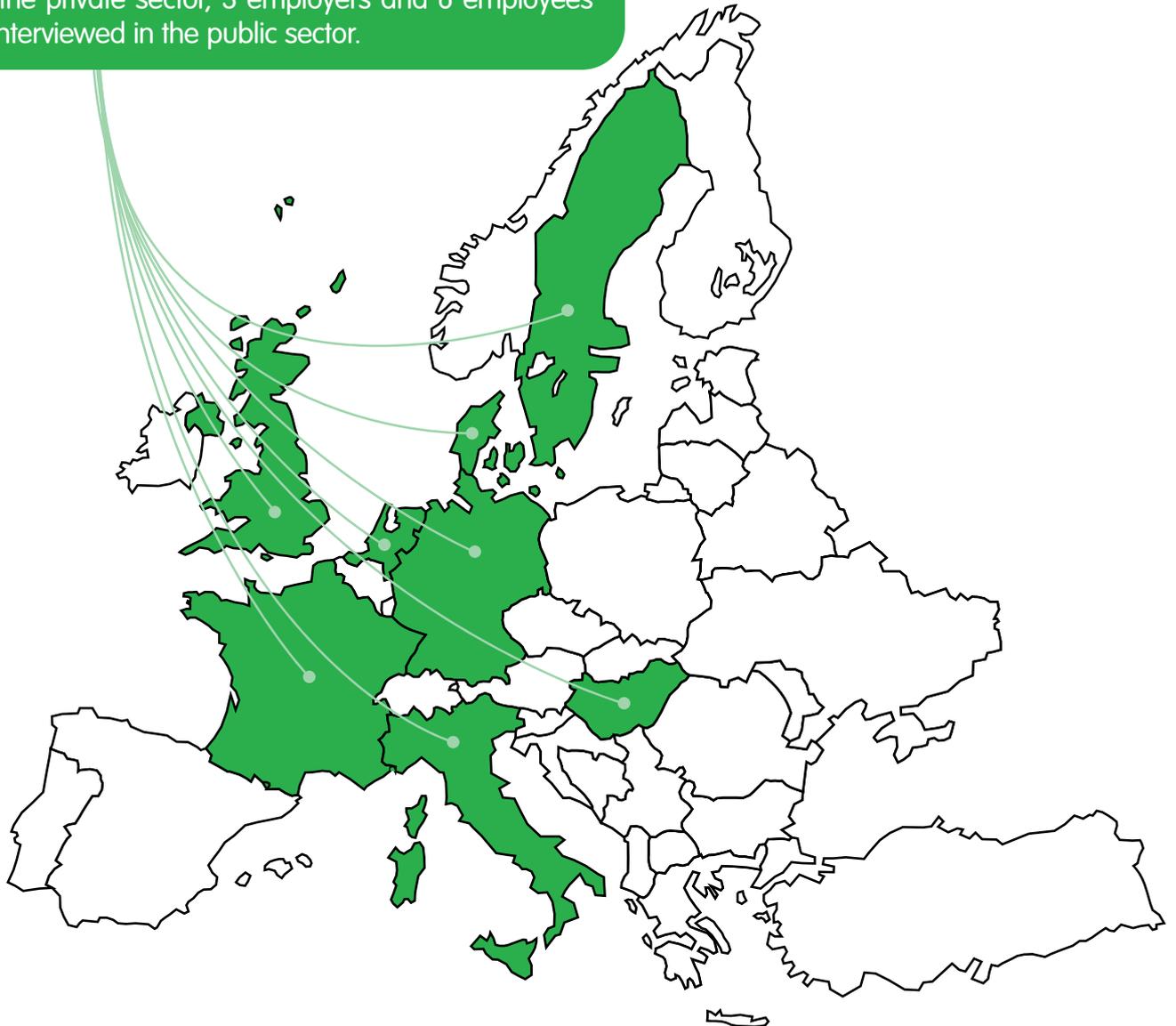
**Field testing of a core set of employer and employee level questions** will take place during 2009. The questions will be field tested for both **the private and the public sectors**. The field test results will feed back

into each related activity and lead to revisions in the definitions and measures.

The tests will focus on the ability of the definitions and survey questions to meet the following five goals:

- Face validity
- Content validity
- Reliability
- The ability to measure changes over time
- Social desirability and other forms of possible biases in responses

The employee-level questionnaire and employer-level questionnaire will be field tested in 8 countries: France, Italy, Netherlands, Hungary, Sweden, Germany, England and Denmark. 38 tests will be made in each country (312 in total) : 10 employers and 20 employees will be interviewed in the private sector, 3 employers and 6 employees will be interviewed in the public sector.



# DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF THE MEADOW GUIDELINES

## Contacts

Lead partner: Edward Lorenz – University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis – France

Second: Nathalie Greenan – Centre d'Etudes de l'Emploi – France

Dissemination activities are transversal and core to the MEADOW project.

The four fundamental pillars of the project's dissemination strategy are:

- the Meadow Advisory Board
- the project's Institutional Partners
- the Stakeholder meetings planned for February 2009 and December 2009 of the project
- the Meadow website

## Advisory Board

The project's Advisory Board, composed of prominent members of the scientific and policy communities, contribute to on-going project assessment as well as providing strategic advice in relation to project dissemination.

### Members of the Advisory Board:

- Alessandra Colecchia, Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry, OECD
- Johan van Rens, former Director of CEDEFOP
- Peter Elias, Strategic Advisor (Data Resources), ESRC, UK
- Veijo Ritola, Social Statistics and Innovation Society, EUROSTAT
- Julia Lane, Director of Economics, Labor and Population at NORC/University of Chicago
- Agnès Parent-Thirion, European Working Conditions Observatory from EFILWC
- Joao Medeiros, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission

## Institutional Partners

MEADOW has the backing of a number of a network of institutional partners among which key European and international institutions with central responsibilities for data collection and dissemination, including the OECD, Eurostat, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, and DG Employment. In this respect, **two very positive developments are that the project's institutional representatives from Statistics Sweden and ISTAT have expressed an interest in seeking funding in order to carry out pilot surveys or full scale test surveys based on the Meadow guidelines.** MEADOW has a global reach and is supported by research institutions and administrative agencies beyond Europe with data collection activities in India, Korea, and China.

### Institutional Partners of the MEADOW project:

- OECD (Organisation for Cooperation and Development), Paris
- EUROSTAT (Statistical Office of the European Communities), Luxembourg
- DG Employment (Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities), Brussels
- EFILWC (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions), Dublin
- OSHA (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work), Bilbao, Spain
- DARES (Direction de l'Animation de la Recherche, des Etudes et de la Statistique), France
- SCB (Statistics Sweden), Sweden
- ISTAT (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica), Italy
- HCSO (Hungarian Central Statistical Office), Hungary
- IPISS (Institute of Labour and Social Studies), Poland
- Faculty of Management, Comenius University, Slovak Republic
- The Planning Commission Unit in Development Economics, Centre for Development Studies, Kerala, India
- S&T Statistics Department, National research Centre for Science & Technology Development, Beijing, China
- Korea Labour Institute, Republic of Korea
- SHR (The Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Association), Sweden

## Up-coming Events: MEADOW Stakeholder meetings

- **A major Stakeholder Meeting will take place in Aalborg, Denmark, on the 4-6th of February 2009.** The main purpose of this meeting is to present the project's mid-term results to representatives from the network comprising the European Statistical System (ESS) which includes Eurostat and the statistical offices, ministries, and agencies that collect official statistics for EU Member States. Representatives from these institutions will be actively engaged in a dialogue around the draft employer and employee-level questionnaires with a view to ensuring that the consortium stays focused on

the needs of such national authorities who would ultimately carry-out a European-wide organisational survey.

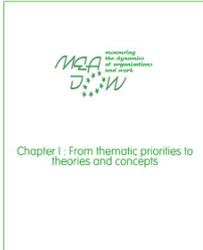
- **The final Meadow Conference will be held in Brussels on December 2009.** This meeting will involve a wide range of potential users of the Guidelines, including representatives from the policy, scientific, business and trade union communities. The main objective of this meeting will be to present the Guidelines, including the results of the testing phase of the project carried out in 2009, in order to demonstrate the feasibility of producing harmonised statistics on organisational dynamics at the EU level. The meeting will be an occasion for further discussions aimed at building-up a partnership with members of the ESS network with a view to carrying-out a European survey on organisational change and its impacts.

# MEADOW WEBSITE ACTIVITIES

The Meadow website assures continuous dissemination throughout the life of the project by providing information on the network, the project goals and project activities. You can also be informed of project publications. The public space on the MEADOW webpage will be used to diffuse all unrestricted documents and reports. Provisional versions of Chapters 1 and 2 of the Guidelines are already available. Background documents written by different teams within the consortium are also published on the website.

## On-line Publications

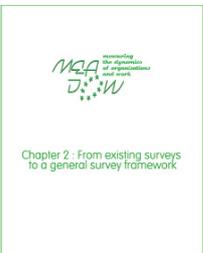
### Guidelines for collecting and interpreting harmonised data on organisational change and work restructuring and their economic and social impacts at the EU level.



#### Chapter 1 "From thematic priorities to theories and concepts"

This chapter identifies thematic priorities for measurement in relation to the information needs of policy makers and analysts. Secondly it provides an overview of theories of organisations and organisational change including their impacts on enterprise performance and employee outcomes. Each of the main sections of this chapter identifies core concepts as a basis for constructing indicators in order to ensure that the design of organisational surveys provides information that is useful to both policy makers and analysts.

This Chapter is dated on 24th of April 2008. It will be revised and updated on the website at the beginning of 2009.



#### Chapter 2 "From existing surveys to a general survey framework"

In line with the concerns of international organisations, the European policy agenda and theoretical developments on work organisation and its dynamics, there has been for at least twenty years growing interest in many European countries, as well as in North America, to develop survey instruments suitable to analyse changes in work organisation. In order to draw some methodological principles from these experiences, one of the tasks of the MEADOW Team has been to collect precise information on existing surveys and to provide an overview of their design principles. Backed up on the previous experiences, this chapter proposes a general survey framework for a linked employer-employee survey, leaving however opened options for an employer only and an employee only survey.

This Chapter is dated on 24th of April 2008. It will be revised and updated on the website at the beginning of 2009.

## Background document



#### The Multilevel Theoretical Framework

Background Document n°1

The aim of this report has been to establish an overview of theoretical literature in surveys on organisational change, innovation and work conditions. An international team of scholars have cooperated on this task. Scholars from Aalborg University (Denmark) have coordinated the work and accepted responsibility for establishing a comprehensive multilevel framework regarding theories on organisational change, innovation and work conditions.

Authors:

- Nielsen, P., Lund, R., Lundvall, B.-Å., Gjerding, A. N., Nielsen, R. N., Rasmussen, J. G. and Hesselholdt, A. D., from Aalborg University.
- Makó, C., Illéssy, M. and Csizmadia, P., from Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Sociology
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- Huys, R., from Catholic University of Leuven
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- Coutts, A., from University of Cambridge

## Up-coming on-line publications

- **Chapter 3** "Measuring the dynamics of organisations and work – employer survey"
- **Chapter 4** "Measuring aspects of organisational change – employee-level survey"
- **Chapter 5** "Statistical methods"
- **"The Grid report"**, Background document n°2
- **"The Access rights to survey results report"**, Background document n°3

## Meadow Agenda: next steps

- Revision of three chapters of the Meadow Guidelines in January 2009.
- Presentation of the Guidelines to Stakeholders in February 2009.
- Revision of the master questionnaire in February 2009
- Translation of the questionnaires in 8 languages in March 2009
- On-site Testing of the questionnaires in 8 countries from April to October 2009
- Finalisation of the Meadow Guidelines in November 2009
- Final Meadow Conference in December 2009

# MEADOW CONSORTIUM

Meadow is a three year project involving 14 teams covering 9 European countries, selected for their specific areas of expertise in relation to the project's goals. The project integrates the perspectives of both producers and users by including research teams that have designed and implemented national survey instruments for measuring organisational change and innovation at the employer level and work restructuring at the employee level, as well as experienced users of such surveys.

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SIXTH FRAMEWORK  
PROGRAMME

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