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Topic - Working with the media

**LITHUANIAN MEDIA SURVEY 2008 RESULTS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Strategy of Statistics Lithuania 2008–2012 envisaged calculation of Customer satisfaction index for Specialised target user groups, applying the uniform methodology of the currently ongoing annual General Public opinion polls. The System foresees repeated surveys of Specialised target user groups every 2–3 years with one not yet surveyed user group added every year. In 2008 the newly tackled group was Media.

2. Comparisons against other user satisfaction surveys and their results have been made. Results of all surveys are not only analysed by a particular target user group approach, but are also compared with results of other surveys run over a similar period to follow the trend and trace the impact of social and economic environment and topicalities of the period on opinions of other user groups. This leads to better perception of user needs and development of more individualised services and products.

**II. THE SYSTEM OF USER SATISFACTION SURVEYS IN STATISTICS LITHUANIA**

3. Prior to 2005, Statistics Lithuania ran only ad-hoc irregular user surveys, organised by employees of Statistics Lithuania with a few questions posed, not covering the country, population, etc. This led to just rough understanding of user needs and trends. To enable objectivity of replies, more detailed analysis of target user groups and the survey coverage based on sampling principles the System of user-satisfaction surveys was developed at the beginning of 2006, outsourced surveys planned and started on a regular basis.

4. During the period of 2005–2008, four annual General public opinion polls on Image perception were run, 1 Public administration survey (inc. municipalities) held in 2005 and repeated in 2008, 1 R&D community survey organised in 2006, 1 Secondary school survey, 1 Business community held in 2007 and 1 Media survey conducted in 2008.

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5. All surveys maintain a uniform structure, approach and procedure (1. Survey objective; 2. User-group surveyed; 3. Periodicity; 4. Survey programme, data collection means and form; 5. Anticipated results and their application; 6. Feedback with users).

6. Regular target user groups have been identified (1. Students and school children; 2. R&D community; 3. Media; 4. Politicians; 5. Business community (respondents); 6. International organisations; 7. Embassies; 8. Public administration institutions (inc. municipalities); 9. NGOs; 10. General public).

7. All surveys maintain one block of uniform questions (covering 4 principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP) + quality-related and ad-hoc questions of national interest relevant to a specific surveyed target group or topical events).

### III. THE LITHUANIAN MEDIA SURVEY 2008

#### A. Survey methodology

8. The survey objective was to get a deeper insight into the opinion of media representatives who use statistical information in their work to more precisely assess their needs and co-operation possibilities.

9. The survey respondents were broken down by social-demographic characteristics: Sex; Age group (under 25 years, 25–34 years, 35–44 years, 45–54 years, 55 years and over); Education (higher / unfinished higher, high / specialised secondary, unfinished secondary); Position in the media (editor-in-chief / deputy editor; journalist; other (fill-in)); Seniority in the media (1–5 years, 6–10 years; 11–15 years, 16 years and over).

10. The selected sample covered 206 respondents in Lithuania: central, local media and news agencies. Both the national and regional media were split into Radio, TV, electronic, paper press, specialised magazines, etc. The survey was a CATI interview.

Media	Region/ type	Number of questionnaires
1. Televizija	1. 5 National channels 2. 10 Regional channels (county, municipality)	1. 1 news service & 1 specialized outlet in each 2. 2 in each
2. Radio	1. 5 National stations 2. 5 Regional stations (county, municipality)	1. 1 news service & 1 specialized outlet in each 2. 1 news service & 1 specialized outlet in each
3. News agency	1. Lithuanian agency 2. Representation of foreign / international agency	1. BNS, ELTA, 2 in each 2. Reuters, Bloomberg, Interfax, AFP, 1 in each
4. Internet media	8 major national	2 in each
5. Newspapers	1. 6 National 2. 10 Regional / county 3. Regional / municipality	1. 3 in each 2. 2 in each 3. 1 in each municipality
6. Magazines	1. 5 National weeklies 2. Specialized weekly, monthly, quarterly	1. 2 in each 2. 2 in each of topics – finance, real estate, business, tourism, education, agriculture; official journals – 1 in each.

11. The survey questionnaire was developed following the uniform methodology to calculate the user satisfaction index, one quality-related as well as some ad-hoc questions of the media interest (Annex 1).

## **B. Key Media Survey Findings**

12. Based on the above social-demographic characteristics, the Survey respondents corresponded to the following groups: 40% males and 60% females; 10% aged under 25 years, 29% 26–34, 31% 35–44, 21% 45–54, 8% 55 and over; 61% editors-in-chief, editors, 37% journalists; 26% with seniority in the media 1–5 years, 23% 6–10 years, 19% 11–15 years and 32% 16 years and over; 14% represented TV, 15% radio, 4% news agencies; 8% internet media, 47% newspapers, 12% magazines; 42% represented national media and 58% the regional media.

13. Most frequently statistical information was used by males, aged 26–34 with the seniority in the media over 5 years, working in the national media (daily 34%, at least once a week 38%, at least once a month 20%, less than once a month 8%). The least frequent users were journalists of the paper media (newspapers and magazines).

14. Statistical information was important to journalists, who inform the public at large, and to the public at large to understand social and economic situation of the country, while on the third place were businessmen using statistics for planning. Female journalists under 25 with the lowest seniority in the media consider media of key importance as an information source.

15. The mostly resorted statistical domains were key indicators, prices, unemployment and economic development, which totally corresponds with the findings of the annual 2008 General Public opinion poll results. However, this can also be explained by the fact that basically this was mentioned by editors, who better feel the needs of readers or journalists with longer seniority in the media, who also have more experience.

16. The key source of statistical information was internet search engines and the website of Statistics Lithuania, which was no surprise; followed by direct telephone calls, which means the media either cannot find the relevant information in Databases or are not sure if this is the right figure. This calls for intensification of statistical literacy and improvement of the website.

17. Information is sufficient for males aged over 55 years working in the regional media, which implies experienced journalists know both their regional reader and are rather qualified in using statistics, unlike young beginners, who jump to several themes before they specialise. On the other hand, regional readers are not so demanding and need only basic figures, with not much analysis and interpretation (sufficient 59%, average 14%, insufficient 25%).

18. Information is clear and best understood by the regional media representatives (clear 73%, average 13%, unclear 9%).

19. Opinion on high quality of statistical data is expressed by the national media representatives of younger age and shorter seniority in the media (positive rating 58%, neutral 31%, negative 2%).

20. Confidence corresponds to the quality ratings and was expressed by the national media representatives, basically news agencies and portals (trust in statistics 66%, neutral position 22%, distrust 11%).

21. Visibility of activities run by Statistics Lithuania was also better rated by the national media representatives (knew a lot 75%, something 24%, only the title 1%).

22. As the media is the key user of Press releases, website and telephone/email enquiries, these services got the best rating as excellent and good. However, Databases again were not rated high, which can lead to a consideration on relevant training needs and user-friendliness of the instrument. Although European and international data are of importance and frequently asked by the media, neither the European statistics data service at Statistics Lithuania nor Eurostat website were actually known to the media as a data source.

23. Male regional media representatives stated they have enough knowledge to interpret statistical data (enough 74%, average 9%, not enough 15%). Shortage of statistical knowledge is best admitted by senior journalists of newspapers with longer seniority in the media, they are more critical about their capacities in interpreting statistics.

24. The urgent need for a web media corner was expressed by the youngest and with least seniority in the media respondents (yes 89%, no 9%).

### C. Media Survey Results Compared Against Other User Satisfaction Surveys Run by Statistics Lithuania

25. The Methodology for evaluation of the Customer satisfaction index was approved in Jan. 2008. It

involves the CoP four quality characteristics: relevance, sufficiency, clarity, reliability / trust, as well as visibility and quality. The general Customer satisfaction level and index has been calculated from the results of the 2005–2008 annual General public opinion polls. This enabled to assess and measure the progress in user satisfaction of the public at large.

26. Previously surveyed Specialised target user groups can also be used for comparisons and user satisfaction index calculations, but not all characteristics have been included in questionnaires so far. The Strategy 2008–2012 has stimulated development of such surveys and cross analysis. Additional characteristics have been added to the list (e. g. frequency, relevance for decision-making at work and for personal needs) to be more carefully analysed in the future.

27. When comparing against all the surveyed user groups, it is obvious, that the media trusted statistics, used information and knew about activities run by Statistics Lithuania best of all. This lead to the highest satisfaction level among the surveyed user groups. However, sufficiency of statistical information and analysis was the lowest (impacted by the national and electronic media). Some results directly correspond with the annual General public opinion poll results.

<b>Annual General public opinion poll</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>R&amp;D community survey 2007</b>	<b>Business community survey 2007</b>	<b>Media survey 2008</b>
<b>Characteristics</b>							
Clarity	55.0	59.0	56.0	62.0		79.0	63.0
Sufficiency	45.0	56.0	79.0	92.0	56.0	60.0	44.7
Reliability	28.5	37.7	34.6	33.5		51.0	55.3
Relevance	77.7	83.3	74.6	70.7			93.1
Visibility	61.4	62.0	71.4	73.8		94.0	98.6
<b>General satisfaction level (5 characteristics)</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>66.3</b>			<b>70.9</b>
Quality perception		136.1	137.5	184.4	92.0		149.0

28. The Picture will fully develop with every survey repeated at least once and all regular questions posed to all Specialised target user groups. Such comparisons unveil shortcomings and opportunities for developing user relations with each individual user group.

#### **D. Future developments**

29. Headquarters of Statistics Lithuania (through Public Relations division) maintain close contacts with

the national media, while the regional media since 2007 has been handed over and basically tackled by regional statistical offices; thus, their opinion and needs are less known. However, since reorganisation of regional statistical offices due as of 1 July 2009, the Public Relations division will regain more active ties with the regional media, especially concerning the forthcoming Agro census (2010) and Population and Housing census (2011). Communication activities will be developed accordingly. The future work should be concentrated on invoking the interest of the regional reader, which is a difficult task.

30. On the other hand, out of 6300 media coverage (excl. TV and radio) cases in 2008, only 1100 came

from the regional media, basically paper media. Therefore, the opinion and needs of the national media have retained importance, so co-operation should continue taking into consideration the Media survey results.

31. Regular Media trainings to use the website and Databases, understand key definitions, correctly

interpret cross-sectional data and make comparisons to inform the public at large are organised. Trainings are held with every new generation of journalists entering the media and when changes in personalities usually writing about statistics occur, new surveys and censuses appear. Negotiations are run to hold a brief course (half-semester) in statistics for students of the Institute of Journalism at the Vilnius University.

32. Media-oriented services will be developed or improved accordingly: user-friendliness of the website and Databases to be improved, analytical capacities of both the employees and journalists to be strengthened, a specialised Media web corner is under consideration.

33. Information and communication campaigns should turn more active and pinpointed in face of the current tough saving policy in Statistics Lithuania and media starting charging for articles. This implies search for innovative ways and solutions in work with the media, as the principle not to pay to the media for spreading statistical information is to be retained.

## 2008 Lithuanian Media survey questionnaire

### O. How often do you use statistical information? *Single response (permanent for all user groups)*

1. Daily or almost daily
2. At least once per week, but not everyday
3. At least once per month, but not every week
4. Less than once per month
5. **Don't use and not interested – Survey finished.**

### 1. What is statistical information useful for? *Several responses possible (permanent for all user groups)*

1. For public at large – to understand the social-economic situation of the country
2. For public at large– to plan household activities and life
3. For public at large – interesting
4. For politicians – to make political decisions
5. For students and academic community – for tasks and analysis
6. For farmers – to plan agricultural activities
7. For businessmen – to plan activities
8. For public administration institutions, incl. municipalities – to develop plans and make decisions
9. For media – to inform society.
10. Not necessary
11. Other (fill in) \_\_\_\_\_
12. Don't know.

### 2. What statistical information is useful in your work? *Several responses possible (permanent for all user groups)*

*About....*

1. Key indicators
2. Employment and unemployment
3. Earnings
4. Population (number, age)
5. Economic development
6. Prices
7. Imports and exports
8. Legal issues
9. Health and social care
10. Business
11. Education
12. Agriculture
13. Regional figures (city, municipality) on social and economic development
14. Population and economy of other countries (comparable indicators)
15. Other (fill in) \_\_\_\_\_
16. Not any interest in statistics.

**3. When needed where do you search for statistical information?** *Several responses possible*

1. Directly to Statistics Lithuania / Regional statistical office (telephone, email, fax)
2. Website of Statistics Lithuania (www.stat.gov.lt)
3. Publications of Statistics Lithuania
4. Library-bookshop of Statistics Lithuania
5. Eurostat Databases
6. Internet search facilities (e.g. Google)
7. Other (*Fill in*) \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Is statistical information sufficient?** *Single response (permanent for all user groups)*

1. Completely sufficient
2. Sufficient
3. Average
4. Insufficient
5. Completely insufficient.

**5. Is statistical information presented clearly by Statistics Lithuania?** *Single response (permanent for all user groups)*

1. Completely understandable
2. Understandable enough
3. Average
4. Poorly understandable
5. Totally not understandable.

**6. How do you rate quality of statistical information released by Statistics Lithuania?** *Single response (permanent for all user groups)*

1. Very good.
2. Good
3. Satisfactory
4. Bad
5. Very bad.

**7. Do you trust in statistics?** *Single response (permanent for all user groups)*

1. Complete trust
2. Trust
3. Average trust
4. Poor trust
5. Complete distrust.

**8. Did you know about statistics and Statistics Lithuania prior to this survey?** *Single response (permanent for all user groups)*

1. Yes, rather much
2. Yes, something

3. Knew only the title
4. Didn't know anything
5. Not important for me.

**9. How do you rate services of Statistics Lithuania?** (tick one position in each line)

		Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Bad	No opinion
1.	Publications	5	4	3	2	99
2.	Website	5	4	3	2	99
3.	On-line Databases	5	4	3	2	99
4.	Replies to user requests	5	4	3	2	99
5.	Press releases	5	4	3	2	99
6.	Telephone replies	5	4	3	2	99
7.	Library-bookshop	5	4	3	2	99
8.	Subscription services	5	4	3	2	99
9.	European statistics data service	5	4	3	2	99
10.	General service culture	5	4	3	2	99
11.	Other services (fill-in) _____	5	4	3	2	99

**10. Do you have enough statistical knowledge to understand and interpret statistical data?**

*Single response*

1. Enough knowledge.
2. Feel the need to upgrade.
3. Feel some shortage.
4. No necessary knowledge.
5. Don't know.

**11. Would you like to have a specialised media corner on Statistics Lithuania website?**

*Single response*

1. Yes, would be useful.
2. Yes, if presented clearly and handy.
3. No, difficult to say what is interesting for the media.
4. Difficult to say, no need.