

Implementation

Short introduction to Session IV:

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The Statistical Metadata Framework was developed by the task force following the recommendations of the METIS meeting of 2004. The Framework includes a chapter about practical experiences of national statistical offices (NSO's) that have recently implemented or re-engineered their statistical meta information systems.

Within this chapter the discussion on this topic will focus on:

- implementation planning and management;
- identification of recommended practice in the implementation of metadata systems, etc;
- usability considerations;
- infrastructure development options (e.g. build, buy, sharing and collaboration between NSO's, open source software);
- updating and improving statistical processes;
- change management:
 - influencing corporate culture (includes communication plans);
 - transition planning and management.

But any other business related with practical work on metadata could be added. See below for some examples.

In December 2005 every NSO has been requested to send their best practices to the task force. Two countries already uploaded some papers (Australia, Sweden). These papers will become available on the Internet.

To identify the papers it is very helpful to use a template containing at least and very brief the following items:

- Author and organisation
- What did you do (Project plan)?
- Why did you do it (Business case)?
- How did you do it (Project process)?
- What are the results (Project results)?
- What are the good and bad experiences?

The task force will develop such a template.

Some examples of 'any other business'

Some interesting topics will be addressed but it is certainly not a complete list:

- Co-ordination: Sometimes after but also within the implementation phase metadata can be used to achieve textual co-ordination. Are there some experiences?
- Language versions: metadata could support different language versions of concepts. But do we need also a formal and a popular version? Do we need also for different domains different naming of concepts? What are the experiences and practices?

- With the help of metadata all kind of relations between concepts, populations could be recorded and checked: profit = income – costs; paid salaries by enterprises = received salaries by persons; national total = sum of regions etc. The same could hold for statistical units: Persons belonging to households and working in enterprises. Is it already used in some NSO? Will it help to develop a coherent and consistent statistical system?
- Could the dimensions of an indicator be fuzzy or should it be crystal clear defined? Maybe it is more easy to develop an exact model but is it less easy to present our fuzzy indicators within that model.

Metadata could fulfil different functions. Related to statistical output do NSO's distinguish with the help of metadata:

- Versions of indicators (corrections, adjustments, revisions): differences in quality within more or less the same process;
- A system of products: single source, multiple source, integrated: different process, more or less the same indicator;
- A system of products: business cycle, monthly, quarterly, annual: different focus but nearby the same phenomenon;
- A quality dimension: for example do we expect or assume 'later' means 'better' for different versions or products?

Related to the statistical production process, do NSO's use metadata

- To describe their processes in a standardized way?
- To steer their processes to make the process more robust and reliable?