Activities to reduce response burden: development of questionnaires and electronic data submission environment eSTAT based on feedback from respondents and data processing phase

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Organisational structure

- The organisational structure of SE is based on the **Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) 4.0**
- Work organisation is fully centralised
- In autumn 1993, marketing and dissemination, and in 2004, data collection were centralised
- A major re-engineering of the statistical production process took place in October 2013, when data processing and data warehouse activities were centralised
- Minor changes were made in March 2015 and in October 2017.
Implementation of GSBPM in SE

- The main reason for such a centralised work organisation is to increase resource efficiency.
- Consolidation of similar functions has contributed to standardisation.
- Standardised tools are implemented in different parts of the statistical information system.
- The use of GSBPM has raised the awareness about statistical production and processes in SE.
- GSBPM is used for analysing the efficiency and similarities / differences between statistical activities and for making other analysis about the statistical programme.
- Better horizontal integration across statistical domains has been achieved.
Lean tools and Agile methods in SE

In 2016, SE introduced Lean tools and Agile methods to define the value stream and make value flow better. Our objectives are:

- To achieve better coherence between strategic, tactical and operational planning
- To reduce work-in-progress through a systematically arranged management system and sharing of competences
- To improve work flow in the value stream and information flow between employees
Lean internal audit results, May 2017

1. Visualize
2. Limit Work-in-Progress
3. Manage Flow
4. Feedback Loops
5. Continuous Improvement

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Respondents’ feedback collected with the Promoter Index (PI) questionnaire

- The PI questionnaire is used to get feedback from respondents (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_Promoter)
- PI has been measured in SE since 2014, using the web application recommy.com (https://app.recommy.com)
- Collected information is used to:
  - receive input for the strategic goal “Reduce respondents’ perceived burden”
  - get feedback from respondents about eSTAT, questionnaires, statistical work and the reputation of SE
  - meet the respondent needs and develop eSTAT, questionnaires and communications
Questions of the PI questionnaire and coding of respondents’ comments

- **Questions**
  - Q1: How likely is it that you would recommend to submit the questionnaire XXX using the electronic data submission environment eSTAT to your friend or colleague?
  - Q3: How easy was the completing of this questionnaire in your opinion?

- The respondent has the opportunity to comment on his/her responses

- Comments are coded into three groups: eSTAT, questionnaire and reputation

- Each category is divided into several development needs and positive feedback
Comments to PI questionnaire by topic, 2016

- eSTAT - Development need
- eSTAT - Satisfaction
- Questionnaire - Development need
- Questionnaire - Satisfaction
- Reputation - Development need
- Reputation - Satisfaction

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Contact Centre of Respondents (CCR)

- CCR was created in SE in January 2006
- From the CCR, one can quickly obtain information about the respondents’ problems and react to them
- The purpose of the CCR is to assist respondents with submitting data and to provide solutions to problems encountered by respondents of both social and economic surveys
- CCR provides consultation in Estonian, but also in English and Russian; consultation is provided by telephone and e-mail
- To help the CCR consultants to answer respondents’ questions, guidelines for every questionnaire of SE and a list of answers to frequently asked questions are compiled
Topics of incoming calls

- In 2017, we started to code the topics of incoming calls to the CCR.
- This gives us information about the main problems of respondents and the number of similar problems.
- The main problems of respondents are shared with the survey manager, questionnaire team, and main users of data collection environments.
- If possible, the respondents' proposals are taken into account in developing and maintenance of questionnaires or eSTAT.
Topics of incoming calls, May–August 2017

Consultation on eSTAT questionnaire: 67%
Consultation on eSTAT usage: 22%
Consulting on finding information on the website: 10%
Consulting on social surveys' respondents: 1%
Architecture of the information system

- Economic entities
- Persons
- Administrative registers

- iMETA
- VAIS
- eGeostat
- SRS
- Data Warehouse
- Analyse
- PX-Web/.Stat Census-HUB

- KUNDE

Users

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Data processing system VAIS

- SE is implementing the template based data processing system VAIS
- VAIS was first introduced in 2012 to process the 2011 Population and Housing Census data
- Today, the data of about 3/4 questionnaires are processed in VAIS
- This has created opportunities for standardising the data processing of statistical activities and calculating standardised quality indicators in the final microdata database
- Quality indicators are calculated automatically for all statistical activities that are processed in VAIS
Analysing of microdata edits

- For questionnaire developing, we analyse microdata edits.
- We focus on the variables with the biggest number of edits.
- The need for editing indicates that the respondent has had difficulties with collecting and submitting the data or does not understand what data is required to be submitted.
- Problematic questionnaires are evaluated in collaboration between the survey manager, questionnaire team and dataset team.
- At the questionnaire evaluation meeting, the participants analyse how to make questionnaires more understandable to respondents and more compatible with the accounting data of enterprises.

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Designing and building questionnaires

Before designing and building questionnaires for the new survey period, all available feedback information is studied by the questionnaire team.

Available sources are:

- Complaints and proposals of respondents from the PI questionnaire
- Complaints and proposals of respondents to the CCR
- Feedback from the questionnaire evaluation meeting

Based on respondents’ feedback to the PI questionnaire, 21 statistical questionnaires were developed for 2017
Main developments in questionnaires

- wording of error messages
- variable explanations
- added pre-fillings, added auto-sums
- decrease of variables
- changed table structure
- translation into Russian
- changed coding list

In 2017, we shall pilot the calculation of feedback information (ratios) into questionnaires based on the data reported with questionnaires to motivate enterprises to submit data.

In 2018, all questionnaires shall be translated into English to help non-Estonians and e-residents to report data.
eSTAT developments

- The main user of eSTAT regularly analyses the respondents’ feedback on eSTAT
- Smaller improvements can be implemented quickly. As regards bigger improvements, we are dependent on the financing of IT investments
- Currently, an eSTAT design project and two eSTAT developments with financing from Eurostat grants are ongoing
- Planned archiving of eSTAT’s older data is planned to be carried out in October 2017 – this will speed up eSTAT and help respondents to find the right questionnaire more easily
Regular notifications to respondents

- At the end of each year, SE informs enterprises of their obligations in the forthcoming year.
- Upon first contact, we describe more precisely the principles of statistical production and the importance of data provision, and also provide instructions on creating the main user on eSTAT.
- During the year, we specify the activities of new enterprises and add new units to data collection based on sample selection criteria.
- We inform new enterprises of samples of their data submission obligation on the 12th day each month.
Content of eSTAT notifications

- In 2017, the content of the automated notifications was changed
- The most important message is included at the beginning of the letter; the letter is easy to read and is of moderate length
- At first, we are informative and later assertive. The text of the letter is more strict after the deadline has expired
- We only inform respondents about enforcement and penalties 7 days after the expiration of the deadline, as we do not want to alarm conscientious respondents
Timing of eSTAT automated notifications

- In 2017, we changed the number of eSTAT automated notifications: one notification sent out before the deadline was cancelled and the last automated letter is sent out earlier than before.
- New eSTAT automated notifications are sent out by e-mail -5, +3, +7, +20 days from the data providing deadline.
- From October 2017, the eSTAT automated notifications are not sent out at weekends or public holidays. Enterprises were very dissatisfied with receiving letters from SE at weekends.
Promoting usage of eSTAT

- Although the time spent on data collection and contacting respondents has decreased year by year, it accounts for a considerable share of the time spent on statistical activities.
- In 2017, we shall pilot promoting higher eSTAT usage to data providers for reporting data.
- When contacting enterprises, we first recommend the use of eSTAT; secondly we assist with submitting data via eSTAT and thirdly, we receive data by phone.
- Finally, we ask about the main barriers to not using eSTAT.
Trainings for respondents

- SE organizes regular trainings for respondents
- We provide trainings on the eSTAT environment and various most complicated questionnaires
- At the beginning of the year, special training to new data providers is organised
- The main user of eSTAT is responsible for eSTAT topics and the survey manager for questionnaire topics
- We inform potential enterprises interested in training about future trainings via e-mail. Registration for trainings takes place on the website of SE
THANK YOU