

Summary of the Sessions Attended in the European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics (Q2012)

The sessions that Mr. Atilla Karaman, Researcher, SESRIC attended on 30 May 2012 were as follows:

- **Session 1: Quality Management Models-Implementation**

Chaired by Mr. Stephen Clarke, EuroStat, the Session heard five papers including:

1. **The Quality Assurance Framework in Japan**, Yasunori Sawamura and Susumu Kubo, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), Japan: The Japanese statistical system is decentralized, and the Director-General for Statistical Standards (DGSS) of the MIC is responsible for coordinating the statistical activities. In Japan, some quality assurance processes have been carried out mainly through the examination of statistical surveys by the DGSS of the MIC for over 60 years, and comprehensive measures for quality assurance have been promoted through the full revision of the Statistics Act in 2007 and the Master Plan pursuant to the act.
2. **The Business Case of Quality Management at Statistics Netherlands**, Kees Zeelenberg and Max Booleman (Statistics Netherlands): By looking at the benefits and the costs of quality management, the authors evaluated the business case of the quality approach in Statistics Netherlands and tried to assess which approach fits best in Statistics Netherlands. Tools such as statistical auditing, self-assessments, process descriptions, risk assessments, quality reporting and the quality model were evaluated in terms of costs and benefits. Also, the support by the business of the Dutch approach was part of this evaluation. Finally, the authors made some generalizations to National Statistical Institutes in general and to not-for-profit institutions.
3. **Lessons Learnt from Different Approaches to the Implementation of Quality Initiatives**, Narissa Gilbert (Australian Bureau of Statistics), Katy Stokes and Caroly Fyfe (Statistics New Zealand): The authors examined how sound statistical quality management practices are implemented and championed at the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Statistics New Zealand. They compared and contrasted the agencies' respective approaches, highlighting the challenges faced in each agency and the factors that have contributed to the successful implementation of quality management initiatives. The authors discussed what each agency has learnt from the other and how this knowledge is being used to improve quality management at each agency. In particular, the authors looked at the value of using supportive networks of quality champions and facilitators to promote the quality message.
4. **Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' (PCBS) Experience in Implementing ISO 9001**, Marwan Barakat and Ali Al-Husien (PCBS), Palestine: In their paper, the authors described the quality management system (QMS), importance of applying QMS, quality management principles, Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, how PCBS implemented ISO 9001:2008, PCBS approach in

implementing ISO 9001:2008 Standard, PCBS QMS external evaluation, the benefits from applying ISO 9001 in PCBS, difficulties and challenges faced PCBS related to applying ISO 9001, and PCBS directions in the next years (looking to the future).

5. **Recent Organisational and Technological Reforms of Finnish National Accounts Reflected by the EFQM-Model**, Sari Kuisma (Statistics Finland): The paper first described the EFQM-model in general. Following that, a short introduction about the administrative aspects and traditions of producing national accounts in Finland was given. Additionally, the organisational and technological reforms made in the production of Finnish national accounts and the results of these reforms were presented in the EFQM framework. The paper is a self-assessment for each assessment area of the EFQM-model. Finally, the strengths and challenges of the organisation were pointed out in the paper.

- **Session 2: Code of Practice-Implementation**

Chaired by Ms. Martina Hahn, EuroStat, the Session heard five papers including:

1. **The European Statistical System (ESS) Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and Its Role in Supporting the Code of Practice**, Stephen Clarke (EuroStat): The European Statistics Code of Practice sets the standards for the statistical authorities responsible for developing, producing and publishing European Statistics. These standards cover not only the statistical production process and the statistical output, but also the institutional factors which have a major influence on the credibility of a statistical authority as a whole. Implementing these standards presents challenges for all statistical authorities and recent work within the ESS has focused on the development of guidance for statistical authorities on the methods and tools that should be in place in order to meet the requirements of the Code. The paper described the progress so far and how the work could be taken forward in the future.
2. **Quality Management in Government Finance Statistics**, Alexandre Makaronidis, Colin Stewart and Juraj Hustava (EuroStat): The authors explained how the EuroStat has been developing and implementing a robust quality management approach to government finance statistics, in particular with respect to debt and deficit statistics for the purposes of the Excessive Deficit Procedure. The authors also reflected on the first experiences gained when applying this new approach.
3. **Coordinating Function of National Statistical Institute and Implementing the European Statistics Code of Practice - Enhancing Quality in Statistics at the Portuguese National Statistical System**, Helena Cordeiro and Maria Joao Zilhao (Statistics Portugal): The paper focused on the formal/organisational and operational aspects that allow and facilitate Statistical Authorities to implement the European Statistics Code of Practice as well as the experience developed in this respect between Statistics Portugal and other producers.
4. **From the European Statistics Code of Practice to Review of Norwegian Statistics**, Hans Viggo Sæbø, Jan Byfuglien, Gustav Haraldsen and Peder

Næs (Statistics Norway): The paper presented an overview of how Statistics Norway has developed a system for a systematic review of statistics based on the European Statistics Code of Practice, to improve both quality and effectiveness in the production of statistics. In addition to describing Statistics Norway's auditing and internal control system, the paper discussed some observations and results from the audits.

5. **Implementing a Quality Assurance Framework Based on the Code of Practice at the National Statistics Institute (INE) of Spain**, Pedro Revilla and Ascuncion Pinan (INE Spain): The paper described the experiences of INE implementing a Quality Assurance Framework based on the Code of Practice and in the Sponsorship on Quality recommendations. A quality structure was created, made up of a Quality Unit, a Quality Manager and a Quality Committee. Through this Committee, all INE units are involved in quality, taking decisions that, once approved by the Board of Directors, are adopted throughout the organization. Moreover, implementing a Quality Assurance Framework based on the Code of Practice is an INE project for 2012. Calculating the indicators of the Barometer of Quality, implementing a reference metadata system including a quality report, implementing a satisfaction survey, and adopting the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) as a good practice are some of the actions put in practice.

- **Session 10: Communicating Quality to Users and Session 37: Web Surveys**

Chaired by Ms. Nancy Xenaki, ELSTAT, the two consecutive Sessions heard four papers including:

1. **Quality Reports Towards Better Meeting Users' Needs**, Vergil Voineagu, Ilie Dumitrescu and Gabriela Popa (National Institute of Statistics), Romania: The purpose of standard quality reports for users of statistical data, elaborated by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), is to support final users to better understand how the statistical data they use were produced and to get a clear picture on the quality of the data they use. The standard quality reports users aim to offer a unitary and coherent framework for drafting them and are determined by the need to have a clear set of rules regarding the content of quality reports for statistical data users. Their objectives are to eliminate the problems that might occur in the process of drafting quality reports and to build a database with information contained in the quality reports, which will be accessible to users from the NIS website. An important part of the information necessary to draft such quality reports is already available for the Statistical Programme, Statistical Methodologies, European Commission Regulations and Decisions. The main novelty included into these reports is represented by the calculation of a set of quality indicators under the form of standardized fiches. These quality indicators will be used in the Quality Barometer, which will the NIS management to make decisions regarding the improvement of statistical processes.
2. **Didactical Aspects in the Dissemination Process and the World of Open Data**, Ulrike Rockmann (Berlin-Brandenburg State Statistical Office), Germany:

Official statistics has a variety of users: other official statisticians, researchers, the administration, politicians, journalists, students, etc. with a big variety of statistical qualifications. Therefore, “users” of statistical data are not “users”. The users’ competency and literacy are located somewhere in between “I have to believe what I got told” and “give me the micro-data, I will recalculate the results”. It must be a concern of official statistics, to enhance the users’ competencies. Therefore, more effort has to be put into the didactical elaborated publication of results. This includes, besides describing the findings as such, the detailed description which consequences can be/cannot be drawn from the data and what would happen when parameters in the methods vary. Clearly, these aspects are underexposed in Germany at the moment. Mostly, more competencies are assumed than existing, especially concerning complex indicators. Berlin-Brandenburg State Statistical Office supports the open data initiative and provides anonymised micro-data. Therefore, the competence issue gets even more important. Thus, these special users must be informed in a way that enables them to take their responsibilities in processing the data.

3. **Choosing a Data Collection Approach: Mixed Mode Design Experiences in Statistics Finland**, Pertti Taskinen and Nelli Kiianmaa (Statistics Finland): The authors discussed the challenges the National Statistics Offices are facing when using the combination of web and interview data collection. In this respect, two continuous European Union (EU) inquiries were compared: the EU Consumer Barometer, a random sample household survey, and the Job Vacancy Survey, an establishment survey with a rotating-panel sample. Cost-efficiency, non-response and data quality were studied using documents and applying a comparative analysis. The Job Vacancy Survey is a mixed mode survey since 2006, whereas the first mixed mode pilot for the Consumer Barometer was conducted in March 2011. For the Job Vacancy Survey, the share of the web responses at present is about one third and the overall response rate is considerably high, while the results of the Consumer Barometer pilot showed a low response rate for the web-phase and a higher non-response rate for the whole data collection. Results suggested that introducing a web phase to a rotating panel establishment survey may reduce the costs of the data collection in the long run. For random sample household surveys, the effect may be the opposite, making it easier for the respondents not to participate.
4. **Boosting Web Pick-Up Rates by Referring to Compliance Principles**, Elisabeth Falnes-Dalheim, Gustav Haraldsen and Anne Sundvoll (Statistics Norway): In 2011, Statistics Norway conducted a survey on education completed abroad. More than 200 000 immigrants had to be contacted in order to fill the gap in the Norwegian education register. A multi-mode approach was chosen. The respondents received a paper questionnaire and a link to a web option. In this survey, Statistics Norway tested the effect of five different motivation phrases based on the following five compliance principles; helping, authority, social validation, reciprocation and scarcity. The experiment was conducted in six sub-groups which represented respondents from different parts

of the world. The authors looked at the effect of these compliance principles on the web pick-up rate. Moreover, the authors discussed if there were cultural differences in how the compliance principles worked and how these principles affected the web pick-up rate in different age and education groups. Finally, the authors discussed the relation between the web pick-up rate and the response rate.

The sessions that SESRIC attended on 31 May 2012 were as follows:

- **Session 16: Re-Engineering – Process, Improvement and Standards**

Chaired by Ms. Siobhan Carey, Chief Statistician, Ministry for Business, United Kingdom, the session heard five papers including:

1. **Business Process Management at the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (DESTATIS): Process Improvement and Process Standardization based on the GSBPM**, Hans-Peter Lueues (DESTATIS), Germany: DESTATIS is implementing a comprehensive business process management system. The system is supposed to improve the process quality, to standardize the processes of production and to provide a more efficient statistical production in general. For each statistical business process, existing information is gathered or collected additionally. Where necessary, for individual sub-processes detailed descriptions of the process are recorded. All collected data are analysed according to different criteria and evaluated during an iterative discussion process. The investigation levels are the statistics as well as the phases and the sub-processes of the GSBPM. The used methods are comparative analyses (benchmarking), identification and transfer of good and best practices and finally the definition of standards. As results of this process, proposals for process improvements and standardisation activities are developed.
2. **ISO 20252: Turning Framework into Best Practice**, Bill Blyth (TNS Research International), United Kingdom: The paper described the transition of ISO 20252 from inception to an internationally accepted quality standard. The current revision and its highlights were outlined. The conceptual and practical considerations of ISO 20252 implementation in an international context were considered in light of experience drawn from managing the Eurobarometer survey and an internal ISO 20252 global implementation programme.
3. **Improving the Production Process of the Irish Retail Sales Index: Satisfying Customers' Needs Using Lean Six Sigma (LSS) Thinking**, Patrick Foley (Central Statistics Office, CSO), Ireland: The paper outlined the structured approach adopted by the project team in applying the LSS philosophy to resolve the inter-linked problems of a lack of process clarity and poor timeliness. This paper clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the LSS approach in dramatically reducing the median publication date from 46 days after the end of the reporting period to 28 days. Evidence was also provided that the date of publication is now far more predictable and furthermore a revision analysis indicated that changes to the index are now smaller and less varied. The paper demonstrated that, using LSS thinking, public sector

organizations and processes could do better with less. In a challenging environment of austerity, reduced budgets and increased demands, these dramatic quality improvements were achieved while reducing the staffing requirements of the Retail Sales Index by 50% resulting in savings of €170,000 per annum.

4. **GSBPM Contribution to Statistical Business Process Standardization**, Blagica Novkovska, Helena Papazoska, Biljana Ristevska Karajovanovikj (State Statistical Office of Macedonia, SSO): The paper discussed the process of adoption and adaptation of the GSBPM at SSO, as well as the strategic implementation plans in order to result in true commitment of the staff rather than use of authority, which can lead to passive resistance and hidden rebellion. Benefits from common standards recognized by statisticians and clear business case should govern the future model implementation.
5. **Lean Six Sigma (LSS) Techniques and Their Relevance to the Work of NSIs**, Graham Sharp (Office for National Statistics, ONS), United Kingdom: The paper introduced the LSS methodology, shared lessons learned from the ONS experience and provides further information on some of the initial projects undertaken as part of the training. It concluded that where any process exists, involving inputs from suppliers and outputs to customers, the LSS approach can be applied.

- **Session 22: Census**

Chaired by Ms. Nancy Xenaki, ELSTAT, the Session heard four papers including:

1. **Quality Management System (QMS) on Census in Egypt**, Mohamed Galal Eldean Moawad (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, CAPMAS), Egypt: The paper aimed to focus mainly on importance of QMS on Census in Egypt, especially with an emphasis on Census 2006, with three stages including (i) effect of QMS on field study which contains training of enumerators, and quality control team; (ii) effect of QMS on data preparation and processing; and (iii) tabulation and reports.
2. **Use of Administrative Sources as a Means to Complete and Improve the Quality of the Information from the 2011 Population and Housing Census**, Maria Pilar Martinez Rollon and Enrique Moran Alaez (Basque Statistics Office, Eustat), Spain: The paper tried to explain Eustat's experience regarding the use of administrative sources for Population and Housing censuses. The 2011 Population and Housing Census involved a specific questionnaire to collect the information on a sample of the population. Therefore, the use of statistical and administrative sources was considered to validate, correct, complete and improve the quality of the information for the whole Basque population. Whilst the basis for the 2011 Census was the questionnaires, it involved significant gathering and processing of other information from the current statistics and administrative records relating to activity, education, the Basque Language, dwellings and households. Based on the 2006 experience, Eustat is working to remedy a number of shortcomings relating to (i) population who works or studies outside the Basque Country, in the rest of Spain; and (ii) dwellings,

including records from utilities companies (telephone, electricity, gas and water).

3. **Quality Assurance in the Portuguese Census 2011: The Map of Alert**, Alvaro Rosa, Elizabeth Reis and Paula Vicente (University Institute of Lisbon), Portugal: The Portuguese Population and Housing Census is carried out every ten years by Statistics Portugal. This operation is a multi-stage process with multiple sources of error that could directly affect the quality of Census output. In the Census 2011, the Statistics Portugal had decided, under the quality assurance strategy, to create specific mechanisms in order to diminish the uncertainties and to cope with possible human and technical failures such that the operation might undergo adequate and smoothly. One of those mechanisms was the Map of Alert, a three coloured map – green, orange and red – of all civil parishes of Portugal whose objective was to provide information on the potential risk – reduced, medium and high – of non-conformity of quality standards defined for the fieldwork process of the Census operation. The paper described how the Map of Alert was built and discuss its contribution for the quality assurance in the fieldwork operation of the Portuguese Census 2011.
4. **Quality Requirements to be met by the Register of Addresses and Buildings during the Implementation Phase of the 2011 Census**: Cordula Schöneich, Halina Stepień and Katja Ziprik (DESTATIS), Germany: The 2011 Census in Germany was carried out with a methodological shift from a full enumeration to a register based one. It is the challenge of this approach that there is no identification number for individuals or buildings in Germany by which the various data sources could be linked. For that reason, the address was chosen as a common denominator that connects all Census components to a central register: the register of addresses and buildings (AGR). The AGR serves as a central tool of communication between the Census components and is used as the basis for evaluations of small-area data. When combining data from the heterogeneous sources, the AGR ensures a consistent and harmonised stock of data gained from the Census components. Since the address is not a static variable – as for example street names and municipality names change from time to time – the quality, completeness and up-to-dateness of the AGR must be ensured as of the Census reference date. The paper presented the quality requirements to be met by the AGR. In addition, it examined the practical possibilities of meeting those requirements.

- **Session 12: Managing Resources**

Chaired by Ms. Anne Sundvoll, Statistics Norway, the Session heard three papers including:

1. **Career Planning of Experts as a Tool for Developing Statistical Competence: Case Statistics Finland**, Paivi Koivuniemi, Hanna Barlund and Sanni Jormakka (Statistics Finland): The paper first looked at the purpose of career planning and its links to the strategic goals of Statistics Finland. It then discussed the career planning practices of Statistics Finland. Finally, it presented the contents and learning materials of career planning, and

describes the experiences gained from and new challenges to career planning. The discussion focused on the careers and career planning of experts.

2. **Experiences on Training Human Resources for the National Population Census 2010 in Argentina**, Liliana Severino and Marta Ruggieri (Rosario National University), Argentina: The paper shared the Argentinian experiences concerning the coordination and training of staff for the Argentina's National Population Census that took place on 27 October 2010. The authors mentioned about their good and bad experiences in the Santa Fe region, and how they managed to solve those problems faced during the period of instructor training and what they did to improve quality on these trainings.
3. **Successful Quality Work in Times of Tight Resources**, Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski and Mirko Herzner (DESTATIS), Germany: The authors mentioned about the answer of DESTATIS to the implications of tight resources in combination with increasing quality requirements and user satisfaction. The corporate approach enabled DESTATIS to focus on the relevance of the methods and tools applied while on the same time bringing together all important actors under a corporate approach.