



TWINNING CONTRACT

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Support to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics in Improving the Quality of Official Statistics

MISSION REPORT

on

Component A
Quality Management of Official Statistics

Activity A.3
Quality reports, tools and methods

Implemented by

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List of Abbreviations

BC	Beneficiary country
CoP	European Statistics Code of Practice
DDI	The Data Documentation Initiative
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
GAMSO	Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations
GSBPM	The Generic Statistical Business Process Model
ICBS	Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics
MS	Member State (of the EU)
NSS	National statistical system
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System
SIMS	Single Integrated Metadata Structure
ToR	Terms of Reference

Executive Summary

The main purpose of the activity is to streamline and harmonise metadata and quality reporting in the ICBS. At the activity practical implementation of quality reports was discussed and hands-on exercises of the Danish model for quality report were tested on five selected statistics.

The activity included presentations and discussions of guidelines and procedures for quality reports, specifically:

- *The current status of on-going Metadata work within the ICBS (registers and surveys)*
- *The relationships between quality reporting and the Statistics Code of Practice (COP), Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System (QAF), Self-assessment and Quality Audits*
- *General characteristics of the quality report in Europe and the OECD, including a presentation of the Danish model for quality reports and its connection to the Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS)*
- *Quality reports implementation - requirements regarding structure and content*
- *Implementation of the "once for all purposes" quality reporting strategy (Drill down: Internal users, external users and the public)*
- *Working procedures for quality reports including the role and obligations of the subject matter units and the quality coordinator*
- *How to promote harmonised quality reporting across statistical processes and their outputs within ICBS (and the NSS) and hence to facilitate comparisons across processes and outputs*
- *Dissemination strategy of quality reports*

During the hands-on exercises, the Danish model for quality report was tested on five selected statistics. Before the mission, the Danish guidelines and templates were translated into Hebrew and assisted the work. The hands-on exercises were performed by two Danish experts and three experts from the ICBS participated as observers.

Based on the presentations, the discussions and the hands-on exercise, the MS experts came up with the following recommendations:

- *The five test teams should continue their work with the quality reports following the Danish model.*
- *The work on translating the SIMS guidelines to Hebrew should be continued while taking into consideration the possibility of supplying examples from the work of the five test teams.*
- *The quality reports from five the test teams should be discussed and used as best practises for the rest of the organisation in the implementation of quality reports in the ICBS and that the participants from the five test teams are used as ambassadors in the implementation of quality reports.*
- *The ICBS start working on the content of quality reports and construct a plan for completing quality reports for all statistical products disseminated by the ICBS.*

1. General comments

This mission report was prepared as part of the Twinning Project "Support to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) in Enhancing the Quality of Official Statistics". This was the third mission devoted to Quality reports, tools and methods within Component A: Quality Management of Official Statistics.

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- General characteristics of the quality report in Europe and the OECD, including a presentation of the Danish model for quality reports
- Quality reports implementation - requirements regarding structure and content
- Implementation of the "once for all purposes" quality reporting strategy (drill down: internal users, external users and the public)
- Working procedures for quality reports including the role and obligations of the subject units and the quality coordinator
- How to promote harmonised quality reporting across statistical processes and their outputs within ICBS (and NSS's) and hence facilitating comparisons across processes and outputs
- Dissemination strategy of quality reports

The mission assisted the ICBS and the Twinning Project experts in getting an overview of the present situation regarding quality reporting of official statistics in Europe and in Israel.

The experts would like to express their thanks to all officials and individuals met for their kind support and for the valuable information they provided, which highly facilitated the experts' work.

The views and observations stated in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily represent the views of EU, ICBS or Statistics Denmark.

2. Assessment and Results

The first day of the mission started with a meeting with the Twinning team and the experts. There was a discussion on how to proceed with this mission and what the focus should be. There was a concern on how SIMS can be presented to the organisation in a way that will be welcomed and seen as an advantage.

The morning continued with a bigger audience - around 50 persons interested in the quality of official statistics - Ms. Batia Attali and Mr. Ari Paltiel started with a presentation on quality reporting linking this to what has been done in the previous missions in this component and placing the quality reports in the overall quality framework.

With the recommendations given in the two first missions of this component as a starting point, an overview was given of the work done so far in the course of this Twinning project (Annex A3 – 4).

Recommendations from A1:

- Quality strategy should be marketed – the work in this component on quality is one way, but there also needs to be a more formal process.
- Members of the steering group are working closely together and meet frequently
- GSBPM – was introduced in A2 and has been actively used in the quality audits based on self-assessments performed since A2.
- EFQM –civil service guidelines concerning quality and excellence will begin to be implemented and integrated in the quality work of the ICBS.
- Glossary versus international standards – updating of the Glossary is ongoing and it will be integrated into the new website. Its compliance with international standards is not yet transparent.
- NSS – there have been many initiatives over the past months. A proposal for developing mandatory standards including terms and conditions for sample surveys undertaken for official statistics has been adopted. In addition, a project to develop a national sampling frame integrating telephones, emails and geocoding has been drafted.
- Mapping of deliveries to international organisations is not quite in place yet. Mapping of statistics delivered by NSS members to international organisations will be part of the coordination with the NSS planned in next activities of the component.
- Quality labelling – a future study visit (November) will investigate examples in Sweden and the UK in order to assess the possibilities for implementation in Israel.

Recommendations from A2:

- Translation of CoP and QAF into Hebrew – the translations have been initiated, but this is a complex task because the aim is to create documents that are adapted to local conditions as well as being compatible with international requirements. The aim is also to get a product in Hebrew that is easy to understand and use on a local level in the organisation and in the NSS.
- Quality audits – ICBS continued with the audits based on self assessments that were not completed as part of A2 – the audit reports are on the way.

This was summed up by Ms. Sigalit Mazeh in Hebrew who also asked for an open mind and gave an overview of the metadata work. A review of the status of on-going metadata work was given both in the new website and in the metadata system that is under development.

Ms. Mirit Cohen presented the new website of ICBS. She provided an insight into how principals and standards of building the new website give the direction for the different units to create their topic pages. It is planned that all statistical topics in the new website will be accompanied by appropriate structured metadata. At the first stage, the available metadata will be retrieved from existing descriptions of data, sources and methods but in the future is the hope is that this will be standardized and uniform as it will be based on the SIMS (Annex A3 – 13).

Mr. Tom Caplan gave a presentation on the software for metadata in ICBS developed as a *Magic* application (Annex A3 – 5). This system had some interesting features which are not available in Denmark, including facilities for reviewing entries by supervisors and experts. The system is built around SIMS categories. Education statistics have been a pilot in filling in all the SIMS fields in the Magic software.

Ms. Karin Blix gave a presentation on *The relationships between of quality reporting and CoP, QAF and Quality audits including integration and synergetic effect/benefit* (e.g. how text from the quality report can be used in self-assessment etc., reuse) (Annex A3 – 6)

Mr Peter Stolze gave a presentation on *General characteristics of quality reports in Europe and the OECD and their role in Metadata* including: (I) The purpose and function of Quality reports internally in the organization and for Stakeholders and (II) The connection between SIMS and quality reports in general – how quality report support Metadata and how they may be different (ESMS vs SIMS, OECD / DQAF quality reports) (Annex A3 – 7)

The second day of the mission started with a short summing up of the activities of the first day of the mission. Ms Karin Blix gave an introduction to the Danish model for quality reports (Annex A3 – 8). The test teams were introduced to the hands-on exercise. The afternoon was used for the exercise and the experts facilitated the exercise.

From Education Statistics (Experienced SIMS user):

- Team 1: Follow up of high school students to higher education (Dan Sheinberg *et al.*)
- Team 2: Child Welfare (Edna Shimoni *et al.*)

From other Departments:

- Team 3: Births and Fertility (Shoshi Einhorn-Garbarchik, Dvorit Angel)
- Team 4: Tourism Statistics (Tilda Khait)
- Team 5: Environmental statistics (Yaniv Sharabi)

The Test included the following three steps:

- I. **Filling in the Danish model for detailed quality reports**
- II. **Drafting summary version for the web page (which consists of the Introductions to the chapters of the quality report), based on the detailed quality report from Step 1 - for an example please consult <http://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/dokumentation/documentationofstatistics/research-education>**
- III. **Evaluation**

important lesson to the team of experts and Twinning team. In the summing up of the day this experience was discussed and different approaches to meet this challenge were suggested and discussed. One of the important and useful lessons learned was that the Danish model of SIMS implementation had introduced summary and overarching introductory categories which were to be filled out AFTER the detailed SIMS categories had been recorded. These provided a useful basis for constructing user-friendly quality reports with a minimum of additional editorial intervention. In addition the exercise helped focus attention in the ICBS metadata team on the importance of taking into consideration the audience for metadata categories when choosing the language style and phrasing. Another important finding was the importance of linking the glossary to the SIMS while describing statistical concepts and definitions: links to the glossary should be made possible, instead of re-phrasing / copy-pasting definitions; in order to insure that only one copy of definitions is maintained and used for concepts.

The third day of the mission started with a summing up and clarifications of what had been discussed during the first two days. The summing up was done by Mr. Ari Paltiel and was given in Hebrew.

After the summing up, Ms. Karin Blix gave a presentation on Quality reports step by step – on the detailed contents of the quality reports using the Danish Documentation of Statistics as a base (Annex A3 – 9). There were many good discussions on the different fields. These discussions were very fruitful and gave good inspiration to how to proceed with quality reports and also how to improve the guidelines given to complete the quality reports. In the afternoon we had a session with feedback from the test teams. There was also a discussion on strategies for filling out quality reports (and possibly other SIMS fields).

After this thorough discussion on the content of the fields in the Danish model, Mr. Peter Stoltze made a presentation on the strategy of filling in quality reports. The first important point that was emphasised - was that it is important to accept that it is an **iterative** process – you can't start in one end and expect to fill in one field after another.

Start by comparing your quality reports within the five pilots. Have the different fields been filled-in in a similar way? Two benefits of this process:

- The quality reports will appear in a homogeneous way for the end users
- It makes it possible to discover weak definitions within the standard, or descriptions of fields that need to be further elaborated.

For the front page fields (as per the Danish model) we recommend a bottom-up process, where the fields below (say, 5.1-5.8) are completed before attempting to summarize them in the front page field (say, 5).

The more detailed fields will often be based on process data, and these should be entered in the system in conjunction with the production process. This hints at some linkage between quality reports and the production processes (ultimately SIMS and GSBPM), but this linkage should not be exaggerated!

Review of the quality reports could be done on (at least) three different levels:

- By peers within the same statistical domain (to guarantee that domain specific facts are accurate) and/or within methodology (to guarantee that more technical aspects are described in an accurate way)
- By the quality coordinator to guarantee homogeneity of formulation and layout, and quality assurance – this coordinator should have support from the top management
- By end users to guarantee that the information in the quality report is usable (that the quality report is fit for use) – probably very ambitious, but could be done for a couple of key statistical areas

Be open about the fact that writing good documentation or good quality reports takes skill as well as time. The top management should allocate sufficient resources to this work, and there should be a positive culture surrounding the quality reports: They are important to the same degree as the actual figures/tables/time series, and to produce them should be an integrated part of the production process, not just an afterthought.

On the fourth day Ms. Karin Blix gave a short summary of the mission so far. People from the Metadata Steering Committee and from the metadata implementation team were present and there was a discussion on how to proceed with a roadmap for the work ahead.

Integrating metadata and quality reporting

- Engaging the top management
- Linking data and metadata internally in the ICBS
- Developing a structure and order for the publication of metadata on the website
- Developing a process for approving the text of quality reports
- Software – interface
- Instructions to the units
- Strategy of implementation – big bang or gradually

The result from this activity should be transferred to a proposal for a roadmap for implementing quality reports in the ICBS.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1. General Observations

The activities on quality in ICBS have been ongoing since the last Twinning, and the participating staff is highly engaged. There is an increase in work quality, and progress is being made in many areas. Great plans are in place.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the five test teams continue their work with the quality reports following the Danish model.
- It is recommended that the work on translating the SIMS guidelines to Hebrew is continued while taking into consideration the possibility of supplying examples from the work of the five test teams.
- It is recommended that the quality reports from the five test teams are discussed and used as best practises for the rest of the organisation in the implementation of quality

reports in the ICBS and that the participants from the five test teams are used as ambassadors in the implementation of quality reports.

- It is recommended that the ICBS start working on the contents of quality reports and a plan for completing quality reports for all statistical products disseminated by the ICBS.