

Quality description review at Statistics Finland

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1. Quality reporting at Statistics Finland

- Quality reporting;
 - Quality descriptions
 - Relatively short, structured documents
 - User orientation
 - Methodological descriptions
 - Detailed, not always structured documents
 - Producer orientation (mostly in Finnish)
 - More information on the home page of each statistics, e.g. the LFS: http://www.stat.fi/til/tyti/index_en.html

1. Quality reporting at Statistics Finland – 2

- Quality descriptions follow the ESS quality reporting structure of 2003 + some general items:
(see http://www.stat.fi/meta/svt/laatuselostet_en.html)
- A QD is obligatory for any statistics that belongs to the Official Statistics of Finland ("label")
- At Statistics Finland there is a template for QDs, which should make it easier to create one for each new release

2. Aim of the review

- The review had three main goals:
 - 1. How well do the existing quality descriptions fulfil the domestic requirements set in the by-laws of the Official Statistics of Finland (OSF)?
 - 2. How well do the existing quality descriptions fulfil the requirements of the ESS quality reporting standard adopted in 2009 and updated in 2014?
 - 3. What kind of changes would the proposed Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) require from the reporting standard and its instructions?

2. Aim of the review – 2

- In addition to real QD's, the evaluators had to check other information from each statistic's home page, especially
 - Language versions
 - Concepts and classifications
 - Releases and revisions

3. Technical process

- The questionnaire was planned by four people having background in quality issues
- The actual review was carried out by two persons with relatively modest knowledge of all statistical domains in general
- The reviewers were given a brief training to carry out the duty, and regular meetings were arranged with the planners to maintain similar interpretation etc.

3. Technical process – 2

- All StatFin official statistics were evaluated (170), the latest version in case of monthly publishing, data stored using an electronic self-administered questionnaire (i.e. CASI)
- The review took place from February to April, 2013

4. Main results

- Main positive findings:
 - Quality descriptions are available as required
 - fulfil most requirements
 - follow the main contents
 - terminology in use in releases is explained
 - visualization good and helpful
 - often contain links to other useful information sources

4. Main results – 2

- Main negative findings:
 - Uneven quality: large variation between documents
 - Shortcomings here and there, e.g.
 - Legislation or other base of statistics (65% missing)
 - Time of foundation (25% missing)
 - Main standards (65% missing)
 - Often similar shortcomings in the same domain (personal effect?)
 - Reporting issues which were not included in the OSF standard were missing as expected

4.1. Relevance

- Subject described well
- Target population should be described more carefully
- Main purpose of statistics missing in certain domains
- User guidance on how to use statistics and their restrictions not good enough

4.2. Accuracy and reliability

- Overall evaluation missing in every third statistics
- Revisions described well
- Different sources of errors missing often, especially those included in the recent quality reporting standard
- Quality indicators not specifically requested in the OSF standard: missing in 80% of cases (even when provided to ESTAT etc.)

4.3. Timeliness and punctuality

- Both issues reported sufficiently
- Short-term statistics: sometimes difficult to find out whether the statistics is preliminary or final
- Quality indicators missing in every second statistics

4.4. Coherence and comparability

- Coherence and comparability described sufficiently in two-thirds of statistics
- Comparability over time the best
- More attention to coherence issues (internal consistency, other statistics of the same domain and national accounts)

4.5. Accessibility and clarity

- Most issues reported sufficiently
- Other forms of dissemination missing in 44% of statistics (e.g. Eurostat, other publications....)

5. Improvement actions

- New quality reporting standard must be accepted now according to ESHQR 2014 (incl. new reporting issues and indicators)
- Templates must request all necessary information items: the most important items should not be allowed to be left aside
- Better instructions and proper training on the contents to be provided for statisticians
- Monitoring of the fulfilment of the requirements
- The same structure for methodological descriptions, too?
- New metadata warehouse for SIMS?

Questions and comments are welcome...

THANK YOU!

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