

7. Lessons learned (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia)

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1.

Participation in pilot projects enables less experienced employees to gain the experience necessary for independent work. Due to the similarity of the statistical process, it is very important for the IT personnel in SORS to gain experience from other statistical offices, which is ensured through participation in expert conferences and bilateral cooperation with foreign offices.

2.

Metadata usage in production tools has shown many opportunities but also a lot of new challenges.

3.

In 2009 within total quality management priorities will cover:

- activities to promote the cooperation of enterprises in data reporting;
- concern for the consistent monitoring and analysis of response burden;
- implementation of the process of standardising questionnaires in statistical surveys;
- preparation of documentation on the consistency and coherence of statistical data from various surveys;
- preparation of internal rules and procedures on revisions of published statistical data;
- establishing internal rules and procedures for keeping documentation for the time series breaks.

4.

Great attention will be focused on the preparation of internal methodological manuals (i.e. textbooks, handbooks, presentations, etc.) for individual parts of the statistical process.

5.

By providing the necessary technical and expert support for establishing statistical methodology, SORS attempts to increase interest in implementing the quality standards of the European Statistical System among authorised producers of national statistics. This will cover also the formulation of methodological explanations and a release calendar. At the same time a short course is being planned on imputing missing values, data editing in statistical surveys, on sampling methods and data dissemination.

6.

SORS has been building a new metadata driven system during the last few years. This information system is designed in a highly flexible and scalable way, based on modern technological approach (SOA), to assure easy adaptation to future changes, reusability of developed services and further development of the SOA end electronic business at SORS. Relevant actors (users) were engaged in testing in early phases of project to know the new system and to be able to start use it after the end of the project in the most efficient way.

6.1 Descriptions of the problems

6.1.1. Complexity of the project / relatively short time for implementation

The new project has been very complex and ambitious. Information system covers metadata management system, entire process of flexible and metadata driven statistical surveying, sophisticated electronic reporting system, Statistical business register and special respondent's management system, seasoned with heterogeneous technological platform and all kinds of integration demands with specific statistic tools.

6.1.2. User specifications

Consultant did prepare technical documentation during analysis and design phases which has described the future information system; however, the technical documentation in most cases was not transparent enough for users to understand the designed system in details before it was built. The main problem was »translation« from »statistical language« to »IT language« and it caused many misunderstandings.

6.1.3 Organizational adaptation of SORS

Information system like the newly developed, inevitable results in fundamental adaptation of organizations. It should enable SORS to turn paper-centric statistical surveying into paperless statistical surveying - it is hard to imagine a bigger change. The organisation of data process has been under process of adaptation to implement the metadata driven system successfully in its processes. Implementation of electronic reporting alone demands entirely different "service and customer-centric" organization of data collection process.

6.1.4. Organization of user testing and bug repair

User testing and bug repair process on some modules was not organized efficiently enough and it did not enable to complete the user testing and bug repair phase timely.

6.1.5 Some recommendation for the future:

We highly recommend to perform smaller projects with strong project leaderships; even smaller projects need two phases: the first is the preparation of business redesign (could be paper-and-pen, no prototypes yet) and the second is the translation of redesign into IT language. The first phase is time consuming and all the details of the data process should be described and explained.