This module is part of the

Memobust Handbook

on Methodology of Modern Business Statistics

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Theme: Dissemination of Business Statistics

Contents

General section

1.   Summary

Before the dissemination starts, the business statistics are produced, examined in detail and made ready for dissemination. For statistical outputs produced regularly, the analysis of outputs, their validation and application of disclosure control occur in every iteration, before the dissemination of the statistical products can start. In this module the dissemination of statistical products is described as in phase 7 "Disseminate" of the GSBPM (Eurostat, 2009), as related to other phases in the GSBPM, for instance phase 1 "Specify needs" (cf. the module "User Needs – Specification of User Needs for Business Statistics"), phase 2 "Design" (cf. the module "Overall Design – Overall Design"), and phase 9 "Evaluate" (cf. the module "Evaluation – Evaluation of Business Statistics"). These phases are applicable fully to the production and dissemination of business statistics. The value of statistical products does not depend only on the amount and quality of data produced but also on the use that is made of them. We refer to the Code of Practice (Eurostat, 2011) principles 11 on Relevance: European Statistics meet the user needs, and principle 15 on Accessibility and clarity: European Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance. An adequate dissemination policy applies in order to maximise user satisfaction.

2.   General description

According to the GSBPM the dissemination phase of a statistical production process manages the release of the statistical products to customers. This phase occurs in each iteration for statistical outputs produced regularly. In GSBPM phase 7 "Disseminate" five sub-processes are distinguished, which are generally sequential, but can also occur in parallel and can be iterative. The sub-processes are described in the following sections.

2.1   *Updating the output systems for dissemination products*

This sub-process manages the update of output systems (databases) where data, and metadata, will be stored for dissemination purposes. It includes:

- Formatting data and metadata, ready to be put into output databases.

- Loading data and metadata into output databases.

- Ensuring data are linked to the relevant metadata.

The formatting, loading and linking of the metadata should preferably mostly take place in earlier phases, but this sub-process includes a check that all metadata are in place, ready for dissemination.

2.2   *Production of dissemination products*

This sub-process produces the products (from the output systems), as previously designed to meet user needs. The products can take many forms, tailored to specific demands and needs of different user groups, such as users in the public domain, governmental users, local and national authorities, and commercial users. These products include printed publications, press releases and web sites. Typical steps include:

- Preparation of the product components: explanatory text, tables, charts etc.

- Assemblage of components into products.

- Editing the products and checking that they meet publication standards.

In the preparation of quantitative tables an important issue is statistical disclosure control. This is an activity aimed at the protection of data that are to be released by an NSI. Protection means that individual entities (such as businesses) are not (readily) identified, and more particularly, confidential or sensitive information about such entities is not released to third parties. This to prevent misuse of data intended for statistical purposes. See also the modules "Statistical Disclosure Control – Main Module" and "Statistical Disclosure Control – Statistical Disclosure Control Methods for Quantitative Tables". Disclosure Control is part of phase 6 "Analyse" of the GSBPM, as is also the preparation, validation (quality assessments) and finalisation of the statistical output products, immediately before the dissemination phase, but here it must be checked that disclosure control was carried out for all different user groups and dissemination channels. In many cases the production of statistics is iterative, so at first a preliminary value is derived with a lower data quality, and it is followed later on with a higher quality final value of the statistic. When planned these are called 'revisions', as opposed to corrections of individual values as part of the regular production process or during evaluation, or rare unplanned corrections after publication.

Publication standards are used to prevent ambiguous or unclear tables, hardly readable charts and figures, unexplained or incorrect metadata, missing or incorrect explanations in text or tables, etc. The dissemination products can take a more flexible form that allows additional user interaction. In that way the user needs can be met at the moment that a user searches for information. For instance users who want to choose which dimensions of an output table are visible, and who want to change the layout of an output table for tailor-made information. See also the module "Repeated Surveys – Repeated Surveys" for examples of iterative steps for production and validation of business statistics. Also in all cases of more flexible output products the necessary disclosure control should prevent publication of data on individual enterprises and businesses. For different user groups, different output channels can be used. For business microdata, remote access or access to data in a safe environment are sometimes possible options. In all cases statistical disclosure control may directly interfere with the user needs, and may result in dissemination solutions that do not fully satisfy user needs (see the module "User Needs – Specification of User Needs for Business Statistics").

2.3   Managing the release of dissemination products

This sub-process ensures that all elements for the release are in place and the managing of the timing of the release. It includes briefings for specific groups, such as the press or ministers, and the provision of products to subscribers. Relevant in this context of the timing and availability of release products is Code Of Practice (Eurostat, 2011) principle 6: Statistical authorities develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably. In this principle indicators 6.3 through 6.8 are particularly relevant for the dissemination of products:

- Indicator 6.3: Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.

- Indicator 6.4: Information on the methods and procedures used is publicly available.

- Indicator 6.5: Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.

- Indicator 6.6: Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies.

- Indicator 6.7: All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.

- Indicator 6.8: Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.

2.4 *Promotion of dissemination products*

Whilst marketing in general can be considered to be an over-arching process, this sub-process concerns the active promotion of the statistical products produced in a specific statistical business process to help them reach the widest possible audience. It includes the use of customer relationship management tools to better target potential users of the products, as well as the use of tools including web sites, wikis and blogs to facilitate the process of communicating statistical information to users.

2.5 *Managing user support*

This sub-process ensures that customer queries are recorded and that responses are provided within agreed deadlines. The queries should be regularly reviewed to provide an input to the over-arching quality management process, as they can indicate new or changing user needs (see the module "User Needs – Specification of User Needs for Business Statistics").

3. Design issues

4. Available software tools

In this version of the module no standard tools for the dissemination of output product are mentioned. There is only a general incentive to link data to metadata, and an indication of the many different forms the output products can take, including printed publications, press releases and web sites.

5. Decision tree of methods

6. Glossary

For definitions of terms used in this module, please refer to the separate "Glossary" provided as part of the handbook.

7. References

Eurostat (2011), *European Statistics Code of Practice for the National and Community Statistical Authorities*. Luxembourg.

UNECE (2009), Generic Statistical Business Process Model. Version 4.0 – April 2009 (prepared by the UNECE Secretariat). Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Work Session on Statistical Metadata.

Interconnections with other modules

8.   **Related themes described in other modules**

1. General Observations – GSBPM: Generic Statistical Business Process Model

2. User Needs – Specification of User Needs for Business Statistics

3. Overall Design – Overall Design

4. Repeated Surveys – Repeated Surveys

5. Statistical Disclosure Control – Main Module

6. Statistical Disclosure Control – Statistical Disclosure Control Methods for Quantitative Tables

7. Evaluation – Evaluation of Business Statistics

9.   **Methods explicitly referred to in this module**

1.

10.   **Mathematical techniques explicitly referred to in this module**

1.

11.   **GSBPM phases explicitly referred to in this module**

1. Phase 7: Disseminate

12.   **Tools explicitly referred to in this module**

1.

13.   **Process steps explicitly referred to in this module**

1. Dissemination

Administrative section

14.   Module code

Dissemination-T-Dissemination of Business Statistics

15.   Version history

Version	Date	Description of changes	Author	Institute
0.1	14-02-2013	first version	Rob van de Laar	CBS (Netherlands)
0.2	27-03-2013	updated version after review NL	Rob van de Laar	CBS (Netherlands)
0.3	14-11-2013	updated version after review PL	Rob van de Laar	CBS (Netherlands)
0.4	16-01-2014	updated version after second review PL	Rob van de Laar	CBS (Netherlands)
0.5	10-03-2014	updated version after second review EB	Rob van de Laar	CBS (Netherlands)
0.5.1	14-03-2014	preliminary release		
1.0	26-03-2014	final version within the Memobust project		

16.   Template version and print date

Template version used	1.0 p 4 d.d. 22-11-2012
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