

Case study: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics

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Summary*

The Israeli Central bureau of statistics is facing the challenges inherent to insuring a smooth and cost effective migration from old-fashioned self-production of statistics to modern, standardized production, in coordination with other national producers of official statistics and in compliance altogether with international standards regulating several different but overlapping domains: Statistical business processes, metadata, quality, data and metadata exchange and more.

Metadata strategy

ICBS has decided in 2014 to adopt the ES CoP with the adjustments made to the region. Planning is led by selected principles. The discourse in ICBS includes CoP conceptualization. The first ICBS strategy (2015-2020) is organized around seven prioritized CoP principles, and this method will be adopted for the following strategies.

ICBS is willing to adopt common internal policies and tools derived from the EU Code of Practice and QAF, seminars and workshops are planned to ensure knowledge and acceptance.

The ICBS strategy (2015-2020) focuses on three metadata objectives within the implementation of the fourth CoP principle - commitment to quality:

	Strategic Objectives	Activities toward the objectives
5	Adoption and implementation of international standards and framework for statistical metadata	5.1 Select and adjust metadata standards for the production of clear and meaningful statistical information: provide quality declarations, explanations and definitions, online glossary of terms and system of FAQ -"frequently asked questions", standardization in the presentation of the information 5.2 Training workers 5.3 Adoption of documentation standards in the business processes of statistical production
6	Having an updated central system for documenting and managing metadata	6.1 Review current status 6.2 Set up documentation objectives regarding the four central components of the system: concepts, quality declarations, variables, classifications and codes. 6.3 Characterize uses of the system: building and updating quality declarations, supporting internal processes, providing metadata to the website and to the international organizations. 6.4 Choose/purchase/adjust the system to the required standards. 6.5 Plan the implementation of metadata projects 6.6 Set up an organizational structure to enable the implementation. 6.7 Train workers to use the system and to produce metadata 6.8 Ongoing uploading of metadata to the system and automatic generation of dissemination metadata 6.9 Characterize and implement processes of metadata quality control

7	Using metadata system in management of production processes	7.1 Harmonize metadata 7.2 Questionnaires design and production 7.3 Define files for users 7.4 Measure and document needs and satisfaction of internal and external users
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Current situation

Metadata exists everywhere in ICBS. Generally, it is produced independently for each purpose or destination using partial and non-formal guidelines. In some specific domains, metadata production is much more standardized but in general, there is no reuse of metadata across domains or over time and metadata quality is only self-assessed by subject units or individuals.

A (non-exhaustive) list of metadata initiatives already taken in ICBS:

1. Catalogue of questions in surveys.
2. Glossary of concepts.
3. Thesaurus (under construction, for the benefit of the new website).
4. Catalogue of code lists for programmers.
5. Catalogue of variables for programmers.
6. First metadata prepared for SDMX, transferring data and metadata to the international organizations
7. Introductory sections in publication; chapters in the Annual Abstract; subject matter web pages in the website.
8. Metadata for IMF and other international organizations, for example, metadata for SDDS series published in ICBS website.
9. Methodological documents created and published by the subject matter and methodology units, and at their responsibility.

The challenges in the current situation are:

1. Statistical illiteracy of the public at large, difficulties to know what data to use and where to find it, incomplete metadata on the website, users' needs have not been systematically assessed.
2. Transmission of data to international organizations is not cost-effective, (web services and use of SDMX are partial); the production of metadata is perceived as time consuming by subject matter units; there is a lack of common guidelines for its production; staff is not acquainted with standards (DDI, SDMX). Few cross cutting processes are implemented and units are used to work autonomously.
3. Relevant metadata is missing at the process level - for systematic planning, methodology, management and integration; metadata production is not integrated with processes; there is a lack of harmonization of standards and metadata across departments; De facto metadata (parent variables, dictionaries, reference metadata) do not correspond to DDI, SDMX and international standards in general.
4. Although willing to set up a common integrated metadata system, ICBS is well aware of the challenges in maintaining such metadata updated and active without it being perceived as an administrative burden on the organization.

Metadata Classification

Metadata system(s)

Costs and Benefits

Implementation strategy

IT Architecture

Metadata Management Tools

Standards and formats

Version control and revisions

Outsourcing versus in-house development

Sharing software components of tools

Overview of roles and responsibilities

Metadata management team

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Training and knowledge management

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Partnerships and cooperation

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Other issues

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Lessons learned

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Links:

Attachments