

## Response burden measurement: moving from current diversity to standardization

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on Business' Burden and Motivation in Official Surveys  
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### Reason and context of this project

- Many NSIs monitor and try to reduce response burden in business surveys
- Variety in practices
- Purpose of this project: get overview of current practices to start discussion on best practices and standardization

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### Reasons for monitoring burden

- Political / economic concerns for costs of 'red tape' to business world
- Quality concerns because response burden may impact data quality and costs of data collection for NSI

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### Outline

- Reason and context of this project
- Why measure burden
- Measurement models
- Design of the survey
- Results
- Discussion

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### Measurement standards 1) Standard Cost Model

Methodology to measure financial costs to businesses for all types of government regulations

- Small number of qualitative interviews
- Costs for all required activities assessed
- Annual total costs estimated by Price x Quantity

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## Measurement standards

### 2) Perceived response burden

Handbook Dale et al.

- 1) Perceived response burden (perception of time, perception of burden)
- 2) Actual response burden (time to collect information, time to complete questionnaire)
- 3) Perceived causes of response burden (reasons for time consumption, conditions for burden)
- 4) Motivation (perceived usefulness to business and society)

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## Actual burden measurement: data

Data used	# (out of 34)
Information provided by respondents in surveys	29
Estimates from staff/experts	25
Qualitative studies assessing the costs of complying	13

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## Survey Design and Data Collection

- Questionnaire topics
  - If and how do NSIs measure response burden
  - How they try to reduce response burden
- Questionnaire sent to 45 NSIs of 42 countries
  - All NSIs participating in the European Statistical System (and candidate countries)
  - Prominent national statistical institutes from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA
  - Websurvey online from November 2010-February 2011
  - Response from 41 institutes and 39 countries.

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## Actual burden: aspects

Aspects included	#
Filling out the questionnaire	31
Retrieving, collecting and compiling requested information.	28
Reading questions and instructions.	25
Administrative tasks (e.g. coordination)	18
Record formation specifically done	16
Re-contacts	13

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## Results

- 34 NSIs measure actual burden
- 12 NSIs measure perceived burden

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## Used for burden calculation

Number of questionnaires sent	13
Number of questionnaires received	11
Both	6
Neither	3
Don't know	1

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## Conclusions

- Large variety: not only between NSIs but also between surveys within NSIs
- Economic / political considerations seem more important motive for burden measurement
- Impossible to compare

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## Burden measurement for quality monitoring

Aspects of burden

- Actual burden
- Cognitive burden
- Motivation

But: more research needed to assess relevance of these aspects for quality monitoring

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## How to move towards standardization?

- 1) Agree on purposes
- 2) Develop methodology according to good survey practices
- 3) Pilot test & adapt
- 4) Describe in handbook
- 5) Disseminate actively
- 6) Follow up in peer reviews et cetera

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## Burden measurement for quality monitoring

- On the level of questionnaire
- On the level of businesses

Note: national aggregated burden estimates for economic/political purposes can be calculated based on the above.

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## Proposal

Main purpose of burden measurement for NSIs: monitoring and improvement of quality of data collection

- Quality of the data
- Efficiency

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## Further research questions

1. What is the impact of actual burden, cognitive burden and motivation on
  - data quality
  - data collection costs?
2. How to best measure the relevant parts of burden?

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### **Issues to be solved**

- burden for non-respondents
- measurement of burden for very short questionnaires
- when and how frequently should burden in panels be measured
- how to reliably measure burden of others than respondent