



Measuring Trust in Official Statistics

Cognitive Testing

Report to the OECD of the Electronic Working Group on
Measuring Trust in Official Statistics

June 2011

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Introduction: Report of the Electronic Working Group on Measuring Trust in Official Statistics

In June 2008 the OECD Committee on Statistics held its annual meeting in Paris; one of the topics of discussion was “How to Monitor Trust in Official Statistics?” Several papers were presented, including invited papers from Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

The papers engendered a lively discussion among heads of national statistical systems during which a number of points emerged:

- Several countries are currently carrying out or commissioning regular (typically less frequent than annual) surveys designed to monitor trust in official statistics;
- National circumstances vary a great deal, partly depending on history, the type of statistical system in place, general trust in government and institutions, and other factors.
- Considerable benefit could be derived by learning from the experiences of one another: about the characteristics and attributes that appear to be associated with high levels of trust, as well about circumstances that seem to result in its diminution.
- While highly different national circumstances might well necessitate different national approaches to monitor trust in official statistics, a degree of comparability among such national surveys would considerably improve their analytic usefulness.

Arising out of the discussion in Paris, the OECD Chief Statistician asked Ivan Fellegi whether he would be willing to chair an electronic working group charged with developing a model survey questionnaire on this issue. He subsequently put forward a proposal for such a working group to the Bureau of the OECD Committee on Statistics (CSTAT). His proposal, Annex 2 – STD/CSTAT/BUR(2009)3, emphasizes that:

- “There is little possibility to have an international model survey of the *general image* of NSOs, since there is too much apparent variation between country priorities in what needs to be measured;
- It might be both feasible and beneficial to develop a *model survey of trust* in NSOs, including public awareness of the Office and an assessment of the importance, reliability and objectivity/credibility of the statistics produced.”

It was also understood that, in light of very different national circumstances, there would not be a formal international recommendation on measuring trust in official statistics. Rather, the model questionnaire will be made available to countries and, it is hoped, will be widely used as the basis of national surveys.

The proposal was discussed by the Bureau on February 26, 2009 and accepted.

Countries were subsequently asked to submit any relevant materials on past national surveys measuring trust; and to nominate participants in the working group. This took place during the spring of 2009. The working group started to function in early June 2009. It produced its first report for the Bureau of the OECD Statistics Committee in 2010. That report contained a draft consensus questionnaire, but the Working Group emphasised that it strongly recommended extending the

work of the Group to undertake cognitive testing by volunteer NSO's. The Bureau agreed and authorised the further work of the Working Group.

The following countries/NSOs participated in the cognitive testing:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS),
- Statistics Korea,
- The Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat),
- Statistics New Zealand (SNZ),
- The National Center for Health Statistics (note: abbreviated as the *U.S.* to indicate its national affiliation).

For a comprehensive review of their results, please refer to the respective country reports.

The current report incorporates the recommended modifications arising out of the cognitive testing. Based on the analysis of national materials either discussed at the 2008 meeting of the Committee or subsequently submitted to the Working Group, and taking into account the cognitive testing, the following general points have to be emphasised.

General Principles Agreed by the Working Group

1. *Focusing the model survey on the general population.* Several of the national questionnaires sent to us were customer surveys, not general population ones. While in-depth surveys of particular groups might be of great interest (e.g. regular intensive users, media, critical decision makers), the working group agreed that our mandate is to develop recommendations about a model survey of the general population.
2. *Awareness of official statistics.* The working group agreed that it is important to identify those respondents who have some awareness of official statistics since the views of the rest of the population on trust in official statistics are of less interest. Furthermore, it is intrinsically useful to estimate the proportion of the population that lacks even a basic acquaintance with official statistics.
3. *Centralised versus decentralised systems.* The material collected from NSOs clearly indicates a wide range of national practices in measuring trust. This makes sense since the variety reflects different national contexts and particular circumstances. The British paper that was developed for the CSTAT seminar, held in June of 2008, provided an excellent example of national context: the UK statistical system is quite decentralised and the Office of National Statistics (ONS) is only one of the sources for official statistics. Hence any UK survey to monitor trust in official statistics has to distinguish between perceptions of the overall system and of the main statistical office, i.e. the ONS in the present instance. Given that a significant number of OECD countries operate a decentralised statistical system, the working group agreed to pay attention to this distinction. Furthermore, during the cognitive testing it became clear that at least in the United States the concept of "official statistics" was not clearly understood by

respondents – something that was not observed in countries with more centralised statistical systems. Since there was only one round of cognitive tests, the implication of this finding (and whether or not it has implications for countries with more centralised systems) was *not explored*. The United States recommended the possibility of further cognitive testing to explore the implication of this finding.

4. *Routine monitoring of trust rather than measuring trust restoring programs.* Monitoring trust can be quite generic, but trust restoring programs and the measurement of their effectiveness are likely to be country specific. This is illustrated by the British paper which discusses the relatively low level of trust in British official statistics. In 2004 and 2005 only one in six Britons thought that official statistics were compiled without the interference of the government; and only one in three thought the figures were accurate. In a situation like that, clearly a major concern in whatever country it might occur, those responsible might want to introduce special measures to restore confidence in the system – and could well decide on a special survey program to first of all understand the factors underlying such lack of confidence, and subsequently to monitor the effect of special measures taken to restore it. Since such factors will likely be different among countries affected, the measures undertaken, as well as the survey program to monitor their effectiveness, will also likely vary. The lessons learned might well be of great interest to other countries, a survey program launched in such circumstances is likely to be unique. *Consequently the working group agreed to focus its attention on situations where statistical offices wish to monitor trust in a more or less routine manner; it is understood that, in addition, different countries may well want to probe certain issues in greater depth.*

5. *Minimum background information on the population.* Most surveys carry some basic background information about respondents to help analyse and interpret their responses. The working group agreed that it will recommend a *minimum* number of commonly used background variables, again with the understanding that countries might well want to add additional questions of particular interest to them. Indeed, particularly with respect to Module 6 of the questionnaire, which contains the suggested background variables, we recommend that countries take into account their national context not only in choosing the analytically relevant background variables, but also some of the response categories which are particularly influenced by national circumstances (educational classification, income ranges).

6. *Interpretation/calibration of trust.* Most national surveys interpret (at least implicitly) the question of trust in terms of confidence in the *provider of statistical information*. However, at least some agencies appear more interested in other dimensions of trust, e.g. the NSO as a trustworthy protector of the confidentiality of identifiable information. The working group noted that its work grew out of the 2008 seminar where all the papers interpreted trust in terms of providing credible, reliable and timely statistical information free of inappropriate political interference. Consequently it agreed to focus its attention on this latter dimension of trust. It also agreed that different countries might have a different environment of general trust or distrust; consequently, in order

to properly interpret and calibrate country-specific findings, it would be useful to have some questions about trust in institutions other than NSOs. Clearly, while we put forward some examples, the choice of appropriate comparators must be country-specific.

7. *Desirability of a short questionnaire.* For a variety of reasons, it was agreed that we should aim at a relatively short questionnaire. This is clearly desirable to minimise reporting burden. However, it was also felt that, since most NSOs contract out the conduct of opinion surveys about themselves, it is important to keep the implied cost relatively low. It is hoped that a short survey will encourage more countries to adopt our recommended model (or at least to embed our model survey in a more extensive survey, should they probe more deeply). The more countries adopt the model, the more opportunities there will be for valid collective lessons to be derived, not only about the level of trust itself, but also about circumstances that lead to positive and negative changes.
8. *Optional question.* We understand that a full exploration of trust goes beyond the confines of a short questionnaire. Therefore we agreed that we would recommend a shorter questionnaire to be hopefully adopted by many countries. We understand that countries might want to expand on this core set of recommended questions. In addition, particularly knowledgeable users or key decision makers could very usefully explore issues that go beyond what can reasonably be asked in short model survey. We agreed that we will simply highlight this fact, but not propose particular questions: such intensive surveys are likely the result of particular national concerns that could not be captured in a generic tool.

Conceptual Framework

We have tried to come up with a concise definition of trust, but concluded the following:

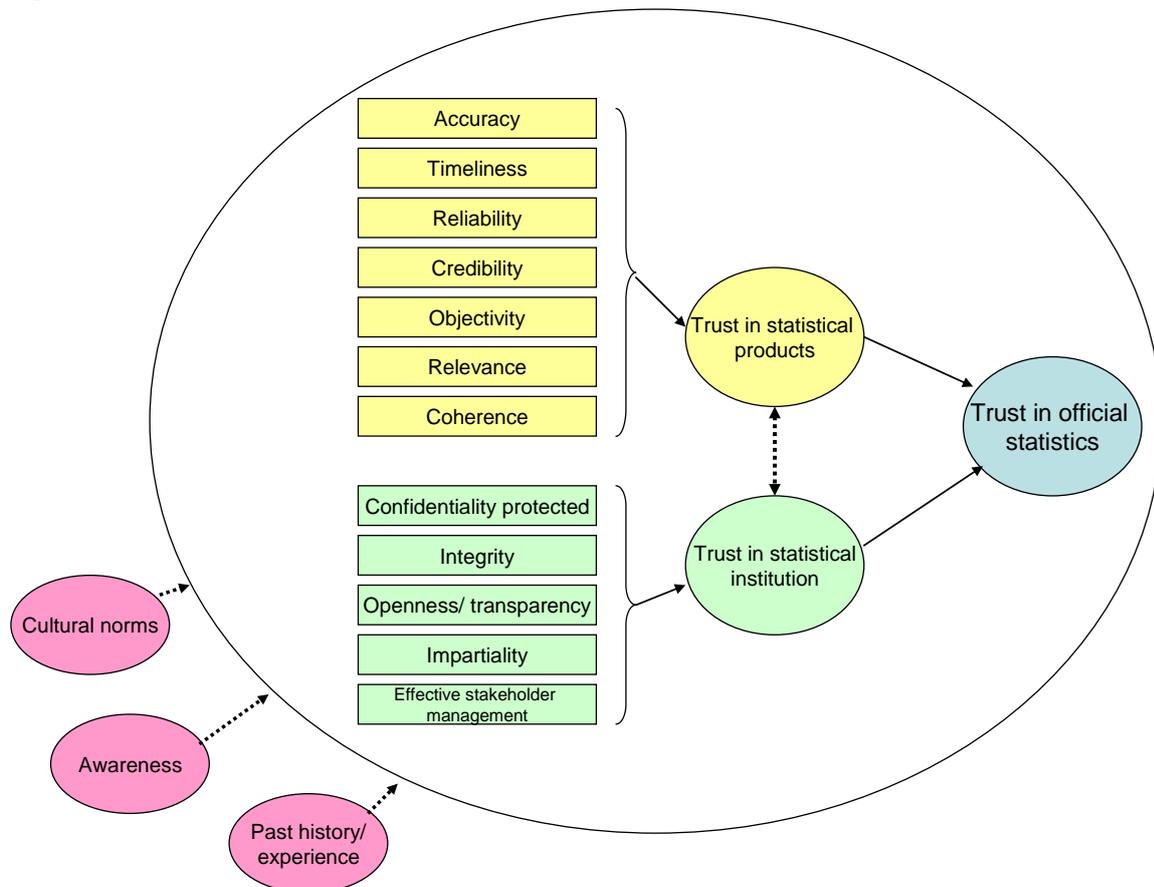
1. There is no single accepted definition in the literature of trust in general, or indeed trust in official statistics.
2. There are three sets of factors underlying trust in official statistics:
 - a. Structural factors, including the extent to which the statistics are, or are perceived as being, objective and independent, impartial and non-partisan (i.e. not subject to political interference) and transparent (e.g., release dates are publicised in advance; clear explanations are given for changes or revisions, etc.);
 - b. Statistical factors (including sound statistical processes and quality outputs);
 - c. Reputational factors which in turn are affected by a number of national practices and considerations: a commitment to informing the public, through the provision of relevant statistics, about major issues of national importance; regular consultation processes; relationship with the media and other key stakeholders; past incidents of erroneous data or unethical behaviour; the preparedness of the agency to openly correct or address misleading or inaccurate media reports; etc.

We noted some important limitations of the conceptualisation above:

1. None of these factors operate in a direct, cause and effect, mode. For example, as the UK paper presented in 2008 pointed out, an increase in process or output quality (the second factor above) does not necessarily translate into higher levels of public trust. In other words, while low levels of quality will very likely directly reduce trust in official statistics, high levels of quality may not necessarily reverse this, at least not in the short term.
2. There might well be factors affecting trust that are completely beyond the control of the statistical system. It is well known that there are significant variations among countries and societies in what social scientists refer to as “social capital”, including the level of trust toward other people and institutions. This can have a particularly significant impact on the comparison of country results of surveys on trust. As already mentioned, it was for this reason that we incorporated into our model questionnaire some questions designed to assess trust in non-statistical institutions as a means of “calibrating” for such generalised underlying positive or negative environments.

Taking all of these considerations into account, we accepted as our working model the following diagram as our conceptual framework.

Figure 1. Framework for measurement of trust in official statistics



In effect, the model specifies that there are external factors (the pink oblongs) that are only very partially or not at all under the control of official statisticians. Inside the large ellipse both the yellow and green rectangles are largely under the authority of the NSO (or the different statistical offices involved in a decentralised system). The yellow rectangles represent those characteristics of statistical products which determine public trust in those products. By contrast, the green rectangles depict specific characteristics of the NSO (or of the different statistical offices) that are particularly relevant to generating and maintaining trust in statistical institutions (depicted by the green oblong). And, finally, trust in the statistical products, together with trust in the institutions that produce them, result in trust (or the lack of it) in official statistics as a system.

This conceptual framework, together with the principles adopted by the working group, guided the development of the proposed model survey questionnaire. In fact, there are questions about cultural norms (specifically, the level of trust in a given country toward a variety of organisations); about awareness and past experience, and of course there are questions about trust in both statistical offices and statistical products (high profile statistical products that we thought could be assessed through such a questionnaire). These correspond to the yellow and green rectangles respectively.

Assumptions and Additional Notes

The wording of the proposed questions depends on some factors about which we had to make assumptions. These are listed below:

1. *The survey is contracted out.*
We made this assumption for the obvious reason that respondents are likely to give biased answers to questions about the same organisation which carries out the survey. Furthermore, we noted that most countries which carried out surveys of trust in official statistics have done so by contracting out the operation. However, with slight modifications the questionnaire can be used by those NSO's that wish to conduct their own surveys of trust.
2. *The questionnaire is administered by interviewers (by telephone or in person).*
3. *The questionnaire is adapted to surveys in countries with centralized or decentralized systems.*

We wanted to put forward a questionnaire that, depending on countries' statistical systems, can be used in surveys carried out on behalf of:

- the NSO of a country with a largely centralized statistical system;
- a particular statistical organization in a country with a decentralized statistical system; or finally,
- the entire "statistical system".

The reader will have no difficulty recognising the alternative wording implicit in the questions that is appropriate to these different circumstances.

Concluding Remarks

As chair of the Electronic Working Group on measuring Trust in Official Statistics I want to express my gratitude to every member of my working group: this was a genuinely collaborative effort that benefited enormously from their dedication and hard work.

We hope that OECD countries (and indeed others) will find the model survey questionnaire useful and that, indeed, many of them will actually adopt them (or embed them in larger national surveys). The cross-country pooling and discussion of findings can provide an additional analytic dimension as well as insights over and above those that can be derived from national surveys in isolation.

Submitted to the Bureau of the OECD Committee on Statistics by:

Ivan Fellegi

on behalf of the Electronic Working Group on measuring Trust in Official Statistics

June, 2011

Annex 1: Proposed Questionnaire for the Measurement of Trust in Official Statistics

Module 1 – Awareness of <NSO>

Question 1: Awareness of specific organisations

Q1. I will give you the names of some organisations. Have you ever heard of them on radio, TV, newspapers, or somewhere else?

- <Central bank> (e.g. Bank of Canada)
- Name of well known national non-profit organisation (e.g. Canadian Institute for Health Information)
- Greenpeace
- IBM
- Name of major government department (e.g. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada)
- <NSO>

Question 2: Knowledge of <NSO>

Q2. <NSO> is the organisation that produces official statistics on the state of our economy, society, and our environment. To what extent did you know <NSO> before this survey?

- I knew it well
- I knew it somewhat
- I have only heard the name
- I had never heard of it
- Not sure or don't know

Question 3: Use of <NSO> data

Q3. Have you ever used or referred to statistics produced by <NSO> for any purpose, such as study, work, or personal interest?

- Yes, frequently [referred to as “frequent users” from here on]
- Yes, occasionally
- Yes, at least 5 years ago
- No

Question 4: Participation in <NSO> surveys

Q4. Have you participated in the Census, Labour Force Survey, <major social survey> or any other survey carried out by <NSO>? Note to the interviewer: Check all that apply.

- Census
- Labour Force Survey
- <Major social survey> (e.g. Canadian Community Health Survey)
- Other survey, please specify: _____
- No
- Not sure or don't know

Question 5: Confidentiality

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I believe that the personal information I provide to <NSO> will be kept confidential."

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure or don't know

Question 6: Is the respondent a user?

Q6. For approximately how long have you been using statistics from <NSO>?

- Not a current user
- For less than 1 year
- For 2-5 years
- For 6-10 years
- For more than 10 years
- Not sure or don't know

Question 7: (Asked of "Frequent Users" only)

Q7. Approximately how often have you used or referred to statistics from <NSO> during the last year?

- Daily
- A few times a month
- A few times a year
- Never
- Not sure or don't know

Module 2 – Trust in National Organisations

Question 1: Trust in different organisations

Q1. I will name a list of institutions. For each, please indicate whether you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.					
	Trust it a great deal	Tend to trust it	Tend to distrust it	Distrust it greatly	Not sure or don't know
The media ; do you...					
(The federal) Parliament ; do you...					
(The federal) government ; do you...					
The public service ; do you...					
<NSO>; do you					
The justice / court system ; do you...					
The police; do you...					
The <central bank>; do you...					
Banks, financial institutions ; do you...					

Module 3 – Trust in Official Statistics

Question 1: Trust in official statistics

Q.1 Personally, how much trust do you have in statistics produced by <NSO>? For example, the statistics on unemployment, inflation, economic growth, or life expectancy?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Trust them greatly <input type="radio"/> Tend to trust them <input type="radio"/> Tend not to trust them <input type="radio"/> Distrust them greatly <input type="radio"/> Not sure or don't know

Module 4 – Assessment of Statistical Agency

Question 1: Assessment of statistical agency

Q.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding statistics produced by <NSO>?					
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure or don't know
(1) Statistics produced by <NSO> on our economy or society are important to understand our country; do you...					
(2) The statistics provided by <NSO> are free from political interference; do you... <i>Note: if respondent is not clear about the meaning of "political interference", explain that it occurs when politicians successfully apply pressure on <NSO> to change statistics, their date of release, or their analysis.</i>					
(3) Overall, I have a generally positive opinion of <NSO>; do you...					

Module 5 – Trust in Selected Statistical Series

Question 1: Trust in selected statistical series

<p>Q1. Next, I would like to ask you about some specific statistics published by <NSO>. Let us start with statistics on the Census:</p> <p>a. Have you ever used or referred to the Census for any purpose, such as study, work, or personal interest?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes, within the last 5 years <input type="radio"/> Yes, but not in the last 5 years [Skip to Module 5, Q2] <input type="radio"/> No [Skip to Module 5, Q2]

b. Which of the following statements express your views about the Census?					
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
It gives me useful information; do you...					
It gets released quickly; do you...					
Changes over time in the statistics accurately reflect what is changing in <country>; do you...					
It is free from political interference; do you...					
<i>Note: if respondent is not clear about the meaning of "political interference", explain that it occurs when politicians successfully apply pressure on <NSO> to change statistics, their date of release, or their analysis.</i>					

Question 2: Specific statistics; CPI

Q2. Now I would like you to think about statistics on inflation, called the Consumer Price Index or CPI.					
a. Have you ever used or referred to it for any purpose, such as study, work, or personal interest?					
<input type="radio"/> Yes, within the last 5 years <input type="radio"/> Yes, but not in the last 5 years [Skip to Module 5, Q3] <input type="radio"/> No [Skip to Module 5, Q3]					
b. Which of the following statements express your views about the Consumer Price Index (CPI)?					
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
It gives me the information I want; do you...					
It gets released quickly; do you...					
Changes over time in the statistics accurately reflect what is changing in <country>; do you...					
It is free from political interference; do you...					
<i>Note: if respondent is not clear about the meaning of "political interference", explain that it occurs when politicians successfully apply pressure on <NSO> to change statistics, their date of release, or their analysis.</i>					

Question 3: Specific statistics; Labour

Q3. Now I would like you to think about employment and unemployment statistics.					
a. Have you ever used or referred to them for any purpose, such as study, work, or personal interest?					
<input type="radio"/> Yes, within the last 5 years <input type="radio"/> Yes, but not in the last 5 years [Skip to Module 5, Q4] <input type="radio"/> No [Skip to Module 5, Q4]					
b. Which of the following statements express your views about the employment and unemployment statistics?					
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
It gives me the information I want; do you...					
It gets released quickly; do you...					
Changes over time in the statistics accurately reflect what is changing in <country>; do you...					
It is free from political interference; do you...					
<i>Note: if respondent is not clear about the meaning of "political interference", explain that it occurs when politicians successfully apply pressure on <NSO> to change statistics, their date of release, or their analysis.</i>					

Question 4: Specific statistics; GDP

Q4. Now I would like you to think about the Gross Domestic Product or GDP.					
a. Have you ever used or referred to it for any purpose, such as study, work, or personal interest?					
<input type="radio"/> Yes, within the last 5 years <input type="radio"/> Yes, but not in the last 5 years [Skip to Module 5, Q5] <input type="radio"/> No [Skip to Module 5, Q5]					
b. Which of the following statements express your views about the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)?					
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
It gives me the information I want; do you...					
It gets released quickly; do you...					
Changes over time in the statistics accurately reflect what is changing in <country>; do you...					
It is free from political interference; do you...					

<p><i>Note: if respondent is not clear about the meaning of “political interference”, explain that it occurs when politicians successfully apply pressure on <NSO> to change statistics, their date of release, or their analysis.</i></p>					
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Question 5: Specific statistics; Crime

<p>Q5. Finally, I would like you to think about crime statistics.</p>					
<p>a. Have you ever used or referred to it for any purpose, such as study, work, or personal interest?</p>					
<p> <input type="radio"/> Yes, within the last 5 years <input type="radio"/> Yes, but not in the last 5 years [Skip to Module 6] <input type="radio"/> No [Skip to Module 6] </p>					
<p>b. Which of the following statements express your views about crime statistics?</p>					
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
It gives me the information I want; do you...					
It gets released quickly; do you...					
Changes over time in the statistics accurately reflect what is changing in <country>; do you...					
<p>It is free from political interference; do you...</p> <p><i>Note: if respondent is not clear about the meaning of “political interference”, explain that it occurs when politicians successfully apply pressure on <NSO> to change statistics, their date of release, or their analysis.</i></p>					

Module 6 – Demographics

Question 1: Age

Q1. Which age group best describes you?

- 15-19 years
- 20-34 years
- 35-49 years
- 50-64 years
- 65 and over years

Question 2: Sex

Q2. Instruction to interviewer: please enter here the gender of the participant

- Female
- Male

Question 3: Education

Note: National differences in education systems should be reflected in the response categories

Q3. What is your highest level of completed education?

- Primary school
- Secondary school (including academic and vocational schools)
- Post-secondary non-university degree
- University diploma, bachelor or equivalent
- Post-graduate degree or diploma
- Other (please specify)

Question 4: Income

Note: National difference in income distribution should be reflected in the response categories.

Q4. Which of the following best describes your income before taxes?

- Less than \$14,999
- \$15,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- Over \$75,000
- Refused (**Note to interviewer: do not offer this option. Only record if participant refuses to answer**)

Question 5: Occupation**Q5. Which of the following terms best describe your situation?**

- Student or studying
- Looking for work
- Retired or pensioner
- Full-time homemaker
- Public sector worker
- Private sector, including self-employed
- Other (specify)

Question 6: Place of residence

Note: It is recognised that the response categories listed below have to be adapted. This classification is problematic and has to be adapted to the national geographic classification.

Q.6 What is the approximate population of the place where you live?

- City/town of more than < 1 million > people
- City/town between 500,000 and 1 million people
- City/town between 100,000 and 500,000 people
- City/town between 25,000 and 100,000 people
- City/town of less than < 25,000 > people
- Rural area

Annex 2: MEASUREMENT OF TRUST IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS: PROPOSAL TO CREATE AN ELECTRONIC WORKING GROUP [STD/CSTAT/BUR(2009)3

Introduction and background

1. In June 2008, during its annual meeting held in Paris, the OECD Committee on Statistics (CSTAT) organized a session on the topic “How to monitor trust in Official Statistics?” The session generated a good deal of interest and resulted in a lively discussion. This note is to raise the question whether there is an interest to pursue a follow-up project with the objective of developing a degree of consensus on a good approach.
2. It is clear that trust in official statistics is crucial: since few people can verify the information provided by statistical offices, a general trust in their quality and objectivity is a prerequisite for their acceptance and use. It is also a prerequisite for respondent cooperation in surveys. While the question was not explicitly discussed in Paris, there might be reasonable agreement among heads of national statistical offices that, given the importance of the issue, periodic monitoring of public trust in official statistics is desirable.
3. The Bureau of CSTAT was invited to “discuss how an initiative aimed at identifying good practices in this field could be established by the OECD” (STD/CSTAT/M(2008)1).
4. This note, requested by the OECD Chief Statistician, provides a proposal to organise an electronic working group to formulate a “recommended approach” to the measurement of trust in official statistics.

Papers presented in Paris

5. In an attempt to assess the degree of commonality of approaches currently used by NSOs to monitor trust in their outputs I reviewed again the papers presented in Paris. Presenters included Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The following are the main findings:
 - Of the presenters only Canada and Finland appended the questionnaire used in their respective surveys.
 - The range of topics covered by the Canadian and Finnish surveys was different: both went beyond simply asking questions about “trust” but in somewhat different directions. However, the core questions exploring trust per se are remarkably similar.
 - The Estonian paper explores the results from a variety of public opinion surveys of which three were labelled as “reputation surveys”. The questions used, however, were not appended to the paper so it is impossible to say whether they were similar to the corresponding Canadian and Finnish ones.
 - The German paper showed the results of a general image survey of which questions about trust appear to be a small part. The questions were not shown in the paper.
 - Finally, the British paper emphasized the importance of context (centralized versus decentralized systems). It appears to have had a separate survey of “opinion

formers” and the “British public”. These surveys appear to be somewhat more narrowly oriented than those of the Canadian and Finnish papers, with a focus on assessing perceived interference from government.

6. In reviewing these papers it is clear that there are a variety of possible explorations of the image of NSOs and other providers of official statistics: as providers of trusted information, as a convenient source of information, as (trusted) collectors of possibly sensitive information, as a well managed organization, as subjects of inappropriate government interference, and so on. The appropriate focus for such surveys is clearly dependent on national contexts.
7. Unlike substantive economic, social or environmental statistics, international comparisons resulting from a common approach would have few substantive uses or users, at least outside national offices. However, given the fundamental importance of trust, it might be in the interest of NSOs to try to learn from one another approaches that appear to be successful in improving trust or avoiding its deterioration. Should this hypothesis be confirmed, a degree of commonality in the monitoring measures might facilitate peer comparisons and international learning.

Summary and proposal

8. The conclusion of this review shows that:
 - there is little possibility to have an international model survey of the general image of NSOs, since there is too much apparent variation between country priorities in what needs to be measured;
 - it might be both feasible and beneficial to develop a model survey of trust in NSOs, including public awareness of the Office and an assessment of the importance, reliability and objectivity/credibility of the statistics produced.
9. Therefore, it is proposed to organise, with interested countries, an electronic working group to formulate a “recommended approach” to the measurement of trust in official statistics. The proposed timetable is the following:
 - February 2009: Decision by the CSTAT Bureau on the establishment of the working group;
 - March 2009: Identification of volunteers and establishment of the working group;
 - May 2009: Progress report to be distributed, for information, to the June 2009 meeting of CSTAT;
 - September 2009: Final report, to be submitted for approval to CSTAT.

*Ivan Fellegi
Ottawa
January 2009*

***Annex 3: PARTICIPANTS TO THE ELECTRONIC WORKING GROUP ON
'MEASURING TRUST IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS'***

Country	Nomination	Position	Email
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