



Statistics Sweden

Statistiska centralbyrån

Standardization at Statistics Sweden - experiences and challenges

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Statistics Sweden is re-organizing

Since 2007, Statistic Sweden is re-organizing from an organization based on products to a process-oriented organization.

All methodologists (and IT) were centralized to a process department.

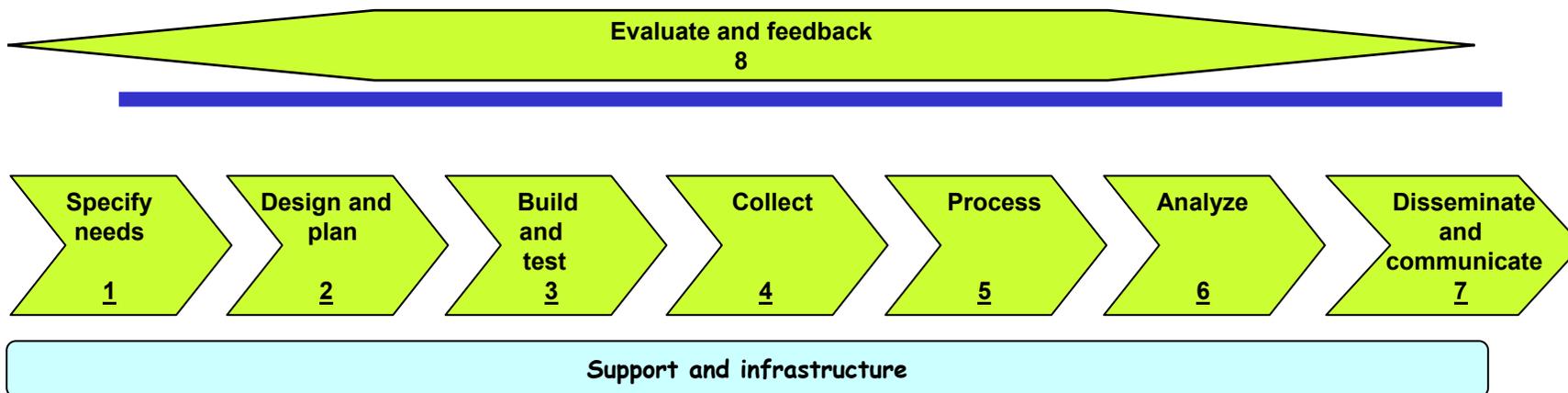


Statistics production process



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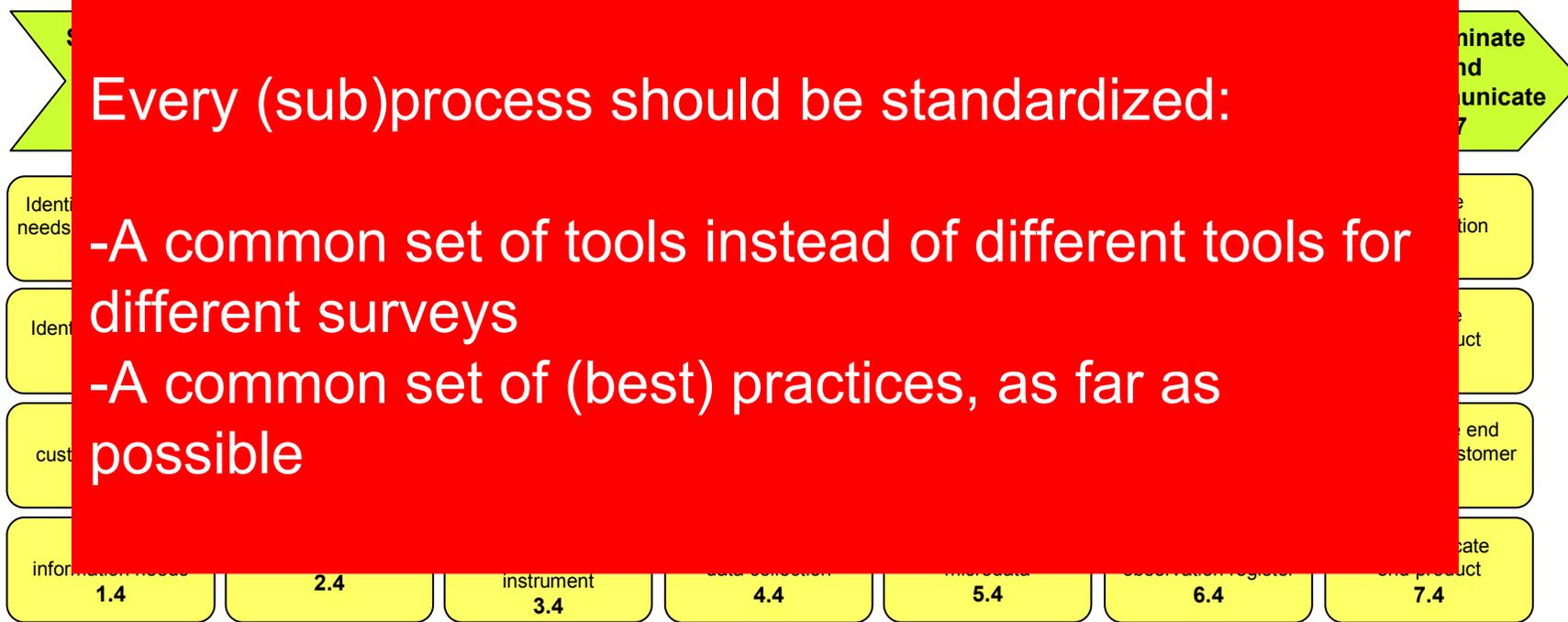
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Statistics production process



Statistikmyndigheten
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Every (sub)process should be standardized:

- A common set of tools instead of different tools for different surveys
- A common set of (best) practices, as far as possible

Why standardize?

- To increase the quality
- To have control and flexibility (ex. not depend on individuals)
- Easier and more efficient to support and develop fewer tools than many

Process-support tool

All the standards, checklists, tools etc are going to be available in a **process-support tool** (not fully developed yet).

It's going to be a "work station" in which survey managers can design and document their survey.



What does this mean for the questionnaire designers/pre-testers?

1) Our position in the organization has changed

We used to be a “virtual group” – a cognitive lab
Now we are a unit – Unit for cognitive methods

We have expanded from 9 to 12 co-workers

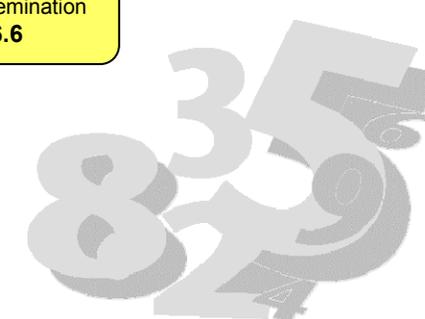


Statistics production process

We are a part of this



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What does this mean for the questionnaire designers/pre-testers?

- 1) Our position in the organization has changed
- 2) **We had to standardize our work as well**





Project - to develop detailed guidelines for *how* to apply each method

- Expert reviews
- Cognitive interviews
- Focus groups
- In-depth interviews
- Usability studies
- Experiment
- Debriefings
- Writing questions
- Questionnaire construction





Project - to develop detailed guidelines for *how* to apply each method

General guidelines:

- Introduction to the method
- Planning/preperations
- Conducting the method
- Analysis
- Reporting the results





Project - to develop detailed guidelines for *how* to apply each method

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General guidelines:

- Introduction to the method
- **Planning/preperations** Checklist
- **Conducting the method** Checklist
- Analysis
- Reporting the results



1 Personell

Done Not relevant

Recruit moderator and assistant (p.5)

2 Defining the groups

Done Not relevant

Decide the number of focus groups (p.7)

Decide the size of the groups (p.8)

Decide to what extent, and concerning which factors, the groups should be homogenous/heterogenous (p.9)

Decide whether new or existing groups should be used (p.11)



What does this mean for the questionnaire designers/pre-testers?

- 1) Our position in the organization has changed
- 2) We had to standardize our work as well
- 3) **Our workload and influence will increase**
→ **We must improve our work and become more efficient**

We used to be a somewhat peripheral service that survey managers used if they were interested in it.

With the new standards, *all* self-administered questionnaires should be tested and our recommendations should be considered/documented.



One way...

... to become more efficient and to improve our work is to *take better care of previous results* (from cognitive interviews), to make these results available to anyone at any point in time

- Then we might not need to test the same or similar questions over and over again
- We would have important information for those situations when new cognitive interviews are not possible
- It would enable us to evaluate both our own work and question/questionnaire design.



One way...

In 2008, we started a project to organize the results from our cognitive interviews in a database

The idea is to allow searches based on question characteristics, question topics (health, economics etc), problem areas and in free text.

It is very similar to **Q-bank** (Beatty, Willis, Hunter, Miller, 2005).

So far we have a draft of a coding scheme and clear ideas about the functionality. However, the second stage of the project have to wait due to lack of resources for developmental work right now.





Challenges – for questionnaire designers

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We probably need to delegate some parts but which? To whom?
Which education is needed?





Challenges – for questionnaire designers

1) How are we going to handle the workload?

We probably need to delegate some parts but which? To whom?
Which education is needed?

2) How should we communicate the results?

Survey managers want our recommendations in an accessible format but that might be risky

3) The most important parts of our work are not very standardized





Challenges – for questionnaire designers

General

- Introduction
- Planning
- Conducting the method

Concerning cognitive interviews:

We have few explicitly formulated procedures on how to:

- Choose what to focus on in a questionnaire
- How to choose cognitive technique
- How to analyze the interviews

Checklist

Perhaps this is a creative process?
A part of the craft and not useful or possible to describe?



Challenges – for questionnaire designers

SCB

Perhaps... but it could lead to:

- Variations in the results (depending on who does the interviews)
- Problems in explaining the methods to others, such as new co-workers coming into out group



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- Problems in explaining the methods to others, such as new co-workers coming into our group
- Problems in developing cognitive interviewing (within our group) due to lack of common ground
- Problems in communicating the design and our ideas to the interviewers (not in our group) who do the majority of the cognitive interviews.





Future work

The database is one step to get an overview of our work and to take advantage of previous test results

We are considering using a coding scheme for the analyses

We are considering software for qualitative data analysis.

We primarily use retrospective verbal probing today but we want to make other cognitive techniques (think aloud, card sorting, vignettes, paraphrasing etc) natural parts of our toolbox





Summary

Statistic Sweden is re-organizing and standardizing the production of statistics

We had to standardize how we design and test questionnaires

However, concerning the design and analyses of our tests, many things are not that standardized at this point

... but we are trying to structure some things.

