

Workshop on Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics

(Geneva, 31 October – 1 November 2011)

Session (ii): From Vision to Strategy

HLG-BAS Strategy and Implementation Issues

Version 0.1 -- 20/10/2011

I. Introduction

1. In discussing the draft strategy for the Workshop on Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics, it became clear that aside from the strategy itself a number of related issues should be discussed at the workshop.

2. For the strategy to be a stable document that can survive at least a few years without major changes, it has to be free of elements that are subject to change and are in fact more related to practical implementations. Although the first aim of the workshop is the formulation of the strategy, the workshop should also deliver practical propositions and solutions for problems that can be seen as lying in the path of a successful execution of the strategy.

3. This document outlines the main issues identified in feedback on the draft strategy from national and international statistical organisations so far. The structure of the document is based on that of the strategy document, with issues allocated to five 5 categories:

- General strategy
- On products
- On processes
- On organisation
- On defining the industry

4. This approach could evolve into an issue tracking system, ensuring that issues are correctly addressed and their solutions are documented.

II. General strategy

Issue 1: The difference between the strategic and tactical levels is not well understood.

Problem: Some reviewers of the draft strategy had different impressions of what is meant by strategic and tactical levels. There may be similar issues with other terminology used.

Solution: Short discussion about the difference between the strategic and tactical layers. A glossary of terms relating to the HLG-BAS initiatives could be helpful to improve clarity.

III. On products

Issue 2: What causes new products

Problem: Is our strategy to create an environment that enables new products (and hope they will emerge)? Or, do we need to actively pursue new products and use them also as drivers to bring the new environment about? Is there a risk if we do not also actively pursue new products in other ways?

Solution: To be discussed

Issue 3: Getting perspective on changing user needs

Problem: It is one thing to agree that user needs are changing, it is quite another to formulate the current and future needs.

Solution: Maybe a short research project on the way the user behaviour has changed in recent years could give some insights into likely future trends. To be discussed

Issue 4: Profiling the competition

Problem: Do we need to profile the competition (Google etc.) to gain insight about their strengths and weaknesses compared to ours?

Solution: To be discussed

IV. On processes

Issue 5: Statistical information management standards

Problem: The core business of the official statistics industry, according to the vision paper, is about acquiring, quality assuring, merging and manipulating statistical data, in volumes far greater than possible today, and in significantly shorter timeframes, made possible by advances in the web based online IT environment. Consequently, information management and the infrastructure to support it are important issues. The strategic focus needs to be on agreeing standards for information management, which will apply across the industry. There

needs to be a strategy to operationalise these standards, driven by the leadership of each statistical organisation.

Solution: To be discussed

Issue 6: Standardisation in practice

Problem: We don't just need high level standards, we need guidance about how to operationalise them in a consistent manner, and we need leadership from top managers to adopt them in ongoing operations.

Solution: To be discussed

V. On organisation

Issue 6: We need better ways to collaborate

Problem: Current practices regarding international cooperation, like meetings and workshops are still needed but we should find new, more effective, ways for international cooperation which will enable regular and sustained cooperation between experts in different organisations.

Solution: To be discussed

Issue 7: Execution

Problem: In the European Union, the presence of Eurostat means that tight coordination and planning of a distributed work program may be feasible. However this approach is less feasible across the wider global statistical community. It may be necessary to find ways to reconcile the more centrally planned and coordinated approach to governance for cooperation activities within the European Statistical System, with the less formal network-based approach to governance elsewhere, so that all countries can play a full part in the actions to implement the HLG-BAS vision.

Solution: To be discussed

Issue 8: Staff profiles

Problem: Cooperation between experts from different specialisms (methodology, IT, analysts etc.), and the need for cross-cutting knowledge will become even more necessary in the future. Can we identify such tactical thinkers from current job profiles, or do we need to define a completely new job profile?

Solution: To be discussed

VI. On defining the industry

Issue 9: Definition of the statistical “industry”

Problem: The boundaries of the statistical “industry” need consideration. How broad should the definition be? Whilst there is general agreement that it should include all official statistical organisations, in all parts of the world, the boundaries with related initiatives and “industries” such as research, data archiving and data journalism are less clear.

Solution: To be discussed.