

Organizational Barriers to International Collaboration

Progress to date

Modernisation Committee on
**Organizational Framework and
Evaluation**



modernists
by HLG - MOS

Introduction

- ▶ Overcoming organisational barriers to international collaboration:
 - ▶ Agreed by the HLG-MOS to be on MCOFE 2016 work plan.
 - ▶ Sub-group formed with members from OECD, Eurostat, the Netherlands, Istat and Canada.
 - ▶ Initially 12 barriers identified, then prioritised and narrowed down to 4 to be described in detail.
- ▶ Deliverable is to create a document that describes:
 - ▶ the barriers, identifies existing practices, and make recommendations on possible solutions and best practices.
 - ▶ to be presented to the HLG-MOS in November 2016.
- ▶ Now seeking input of the HRMT workshop participants, in particular for possible solutions and good practices.

Initial list of barriers

- ▶ Legal
- ▶ External communication
- ▶ Burden on lead organization
- ▶ Lack of coordination inside statistical offices
- ▶ Human and financial resources
- ▶ Stakeholder engagement
- ▶ Internal communication
- ▶ Mandate/vision
- ▶ Lack of coordination between organisations
- ▶ Internal vs external barriers
- ▶ Selection of people involved in the international collaboration
- ▶ Work being done 'on the corner of the desk'

List of key barriers being focused on

- ▶ Lack of coordination inside statistical offices
 - ▶ Human and financial resources
 - ▶ Stakeholder engagement
 - ▶ Lack of coordination between organisations
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- ▶ For each barrier, the description, existing good practices, and potential solutions has been drafted by the sub-group
 - ▶ <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/MCOOFE/Organisational+barriers+to+international+cooperation>

Lack of coordination inside statistical offices (1)

Challenge 1: How to coordinate?

- ▶ Need for an organisational model (formal or ad-hoc) to coordinate various international activities.
- ▶ Mechanisms for sharing/collaborating are not horizontal within organisations.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ Having an International collaboration/co-operation division as a permanent organisational unit.
- ▶ Assigning the responsibility for international collaboration to a key senior official (ex. Assistant Chief Statistician).

Lack of coordination inside statistical offices (2)

Challenge 2: Inefficient internal communication!

- ▶ Many activities are not known inside each organisation.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ Centralised structure with one person responsible to gather summary information on activities.
- ▶ Maintain an up to date list of contact persons for efficient internal communication.
- ▶ Install an office-wide structure by appointing international coordinators in each statistical division/department responsible for maintaining an overview.
- ▶ Regular coordinator meetings to share information and status, prepare briefing notes, etc..

Human Resources (1)

Challenge 1: Clear guidelines within organisations on support for international collaboration.

- ▶ It is important that guidelines are clear and supported by senior management.
- ▶ The relative importance and priority of international activities compared to national activities must be clear within the organization.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ Development of an international strategy with a description of tasks, roles and responsibilities to be adopted by the senior management.
- ▶ Adequate internal communication of the international strategy.
- ▶ Documentation of the vision and strategy for international collaboration and how it fits into the broader organizational vision and strategy.

Human Resources (2)

Challenge 2: The same people are involved in multiple activities

- ▶ Can create workload issues with those participating, perception of favouritism to those not asked to participate, vulnerabilities.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ Offering opportunities widely within an organization in order to broaden the knowledge base, and support learning and development opportunities for employees.

Financial Resources (1)

Challenge 1: Clear financial and senior management support for international work, in the context of budget pressures

- ▶ Without clear senior management support and financial commitments, the value and importance of international activities may be questioned.
- ▶ When budgets are being reduced for statistical programs or operations, it can be difficult to justify time or resources spent on international activities.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ Development of an international strategy with a description of tasks, roles and responsibilities to be adopted by the senior management.
- ▶ Adequate internal communication of the international strategy.
- ▶ Investigating with external stakeholders/funding organizations options for funding to support international activities.

Financial Resources (2)

Challenge 2: Role and financing of 'animators' to stimulate the commitment of the group

- ▶ Without clear senior management support and financial commitments, the value and importance of international activities may be questioned.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ Animators to: i) stimulate participation by group members, requesting contributions and linking together the right people ii) organize the meetings iii) monitor compliance with the deadlines, iv) coordinate the activities of the group with other groups.
- ▶ People who cover this role will have to devote at least 20% of their time to the "animation" of an international group.

Stakeholder engagement (1)

Challenge 1: Lack of strategic support and buy in

- ▶ Many international projects quickly fail within organisations due to lack of strategic awareness and support.
- ▶ Rules for collaboration are not always clear or documented.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ The international Collaboration Projects should put in place a governance structure that enforces strategic/Senior Management involvement.
- ▶ Clear and strong messaging from top senior management.
- ▶ Ensure there is regular dialogue between senior managers from each participating organisation.
- ▶ Having a international strategy document and ensure implementation.
- ▶ Having a clear documented framework like in the EU.
- ▶ HLG Statement of Intent.

Stakeholder engagement (2)

Challenge 2: Changing organisational culture

- ▶ It is at times difficult to show the value of international collaboration to stakeholders at various levels within the organization.
- ▶ Different parts of the organisation and levels of management may have different perspectives on the benefits/advantages of international collaboration and within levels of management.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ Clear and strong messaging from top senior management.
- ▶ Explain to employees and managers more fully 'what's in it for them'.

Lack of coordination between statistical offices (1)

Challenge 1: Multiple groups (organisations) working on similar issues

- ▶ Lack of Information sharing mechanisms highlighting workplans across organizations.
- ▶ Often similar organisations work on the same strategic projects and sometimes in a certain competition with each other.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ HLG planning exercise gathering the high level investments over the next few years, along with the business capabilities
- ▶ Agreeing on coordination mechanisms between organisations will contribute to a better division of tasks, making use of each others' expertise and knowledge.
- ▶ Focus on collaboration instead of competition.

Lack of coordination between statistical offices (2)

Challenge 2: It will be good to compare work of the national and international groups

- ▶ There is not one source that compiles the plans and priorities across organizations.

Solutions/Good Practices:

- ▶ A central webpage that provides links to the planning documentation already available on the internet. A second step would be to have resources review, analyze and summarize this planning documentation.

We need your input!

- ▶ 12 barriers identified: have we missed a barrier?
- ▶ 4 barriers of focus:
 - ▶ **ISSUES:** described appropriately? any issues missing?
 - ▶ **DESCRIPTIONS:** adequate?
 - ▶ **SOLUTIONS:** think of other solutions?
 - ▶ **GOOD PRACTICES:** please share them with us?
- ▶ Are there other barriers that should be reviewed in more detail?

Next steps



Incorporate your input and comments

Finalising the paper to be presented to HLG in November

Dissemination of the results via UNECE wiki, HLG members

Thank you for your input!

