

7th European Working Conditions Survey

Quality framework

Eurofound has a strong commitment to quality improvement; considering their surveys' impact at EU, international and national levels, it is important that data collected are sound, robust and of the highest quality. Information on quality is therefore made available to stakeholders and the research community.

For the 7th EWCS, as has been the case for all Eurofound surveys, information should be gathered and published, assessing the data against a designated quality assurance framework based on the quality concept of the European Statistical System as developed by Eurostat,¹ as well as other quality frameworks such as the Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines² and the Total Survey Error Approach.³

Eurofound will also commission an external quality assessment report documenting the quality of the 7th EWCS following the quality framework of the European Statistical System.⁴ It is intended to publish an external data quality assessment report on the 7th EWCS and make methodological information available to its stakeholders and the research community.

1. Introduction

This document outlines Eurofound's quality framework, consisting of three elements:

- **Quality assurance:** the planned procedures and activities to ensure that the survey meets quality requirements
- **Quality control:** planned system of process monitoring, verification and analysis of indicators of quality, and updates to quality assurance procedures, to ensure that quality assurance works.
- **Quality indicators:** the list of measurable indicators on the basis of which the quality of the survey processes and output will be monitored and assessed. These are provided in an Excel file.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4392716/ESS-QAF-V1-2final.pdf/bbf5970c-1adf-46c8-afc3-58ce177a0646>

² <http://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/index.php/chapters/survey-quality-chapter>

³ Cf. Herbert F. Weisberg (2005). *The Total Error Approach. A Guide to the New Science of Survey Research*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

⁴ <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-company-surveys/european-company-survey-2013/ecs-2013-methodology/ecs-2013-quality-assurance-and-quality-control>

Tenderers are required to develop their **Quality Assurance Strategy** as a part of their tender proposal. The **Quality Assurance Strategy** should describe: the tenderer's approach to ensuring the *quality of the survey process* and *quality of the survey output*⁵; the outline of the quality control process with quality control measures and actions taken by each party (for example the national agency, the coordination team, or Eurofound); and the quality indicators used to monitor and assess the survey process and survey output.

Some Quality Indicators reflect requirements as defined in the Tender Specifications. These are coloured red and are targets that **have to be** achieved. The indicators that are not marked red have benchmark targets that **are aimed to be** achieved. Benchmark targets are based on previous waves of the EWCS and/or the level of quality that Eurofound seeks to achieve. Tenderers are invited to propose new indicators and their respective target and indicate how these indicators will be monitored.

The quality assurance strategy is submitted by tenderers as part of the tender proposal and is then discussed during the kick-off meeting. The strategy should also include the Quality Indicators file which has been updated by to include benchmark targets which the tenderer aims to achieve and any new targets proposed. The strategy and the quality indicators will be discussed at the kick-off meeting after which the contractor shall produce a Quality Assurance Plan, including the Quality Indicators, which shall be agreed between the contractor and Eurofound.

In the course of the preparation and implementation, the contractor will report regularly on achievements and progress in quality. A quality control report will be produced at the end of the contract which will report on achievements and deviations. The contractor should also produce the final list of Quality Indicators on completion of the project.

⁵ See Eurostat (2003), "Handbook on improving quality by analysis of process variables"

2. Mapping ESS quality criteria and 7th EWCS survey process

The Eurofound quality framework is based on the quality concept of the European Statistical System (ESS) as developed by Eurostat⁶ as well as other quality frameworks such as the Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines⁷ and the Total Survey Error Approach.⁸

In this section the ESS definitions of the quality criteria are provided and mapped to the EWCS survey process. Note that these definitions are taken from the ESS quality glossary, and they are included to keep this document self-contained.

The definitions of the ESS quality criteria are as follows:

- *Relevance* is an attribute of statistics measuring the degree to which statistics meet current and potential needs of the users.
- *Accuracy* is an attribute of statistics measuring the closeness of estimates to the unknown true values.
- *Timeliness* is an attribute of statistics measuring the period between the availability of the information and the event or phenomenon it describes.
- *Punctuality* is an attribute of statistics measuring the delay between the date of the release of the data and the target date (the date by which the data should have been delivered or released).
- *Accessibility* is an attribute of statistics describing the set of conditions and modalities by which users can obtain data.
- *Clarity* is an attribute of statistics describing the extent to which easily comprehensible metadata are available, where these metadata are necessary to give a full understanding of statistical data.
- *Coherence* is an attribute of statistics measuring the adequacy of the data to be reliably combined in different ways and for various reasons.

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality>

⁷ <http://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/index.php/chapters/survey-quality-chapter>

⁸ Herbert F. Weisberg (2005). The Total Error Approach. A Guide to the New Science of Survey Research. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

- *Comparability* is an attribute of statistics measuring the extent to which differences between statistics can be attributed to differences between the true values of the statistical characteristics.

Eurofound has combined and slightly redefined these criteria in order to make them more appropriate for the EWCS. This has resulted in the following five quality criteria. **Relevance & Timeliness** is defined as the relevance for users of the survey data and the survey based reports, both in terms of substance and timing of publication. **Accuracy** relates to the validity and reliability of the survey and can generally be assessed with the Total Survey Error framework. **Accessibility** is the availability of outputs and transparency of processes. **Coherence & Comparability** means the consistency with other datasets as well as internal comparability (e.g. comparability between countries or groups within survey). Finally, **Punctuality** is defined as the adherence to the timeline as set at the start of the project.

Next, the key steps in the survey process are distinguished, in order to identify the relevance and priority of each of the quality criteria throughout the different stages of survey management. The stages comprise several interlinked processes. The table below presents the main stages of survey process with the quality criteria (see Table) to demonstrate the elements (cells of the table) of the expected process and output of the quality assurance work.

The quality indicators that will be used and reported to Eurofound will need to be specified by contractor. The tenderer is requested to propose a list of indicators that cover the relevant aspects of the Table. The blue areas indicate that a quantitative quality indicator is defined; the white areas indicate that there is no quantitative quality indicator. For each of the cells in the table, targets are set in order to be able to measure the survey quality.

For each indicator, there is a benchmark target and tenderers are **required** to specify to what extent they aim to achieve this target. Tenderers are invited to propose extra indicators. During the kick-off meeting, Eurofound will agree with the contractor which targets will be made requirements. Also, tenderers are **required** to indicate what evidence they will use to support the quality indicators.

		Relevance & Timeliness	Accuracy	Accessibility	Coherence & Comparability	Punctuality
Planning & Design						
Sampling & Weighting	Sampling					
	Weighting					
Questionnaire	Questionnaire					
	Translation					
Pre-Fieldwork	Pilot					
	Fieldwork infrastructure					
	CAPI / data entry process					
	Training of fieldwork managers and interviewers					
Fieldwork	Fieldwork					
Post-Fieldwork	Data processing					
	Micro data					
	Paradata					
	Reporting and documentation on the survey					
Analyses & Dissemination						