Communication with businesses and response burden
Outline

• Overview “communication findings” BLUE-ETS
• Recommendations for NSI communication with businesses
• Directions for further research
Acknowledgements

BLUE-ETS deliverables 2.1 2.3 3.1.3.2 8.1; workshop on communication (Brussels 27-11-21012) [www.blue-ets.eu](http://www.blue-ets.eu)

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BLUE-ETS research on burden and motivation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Measurement and reduction of response burden in official business surveys NSIs practice</th>
<th>Businesses’ perspectives on official statistics e.g.</th>
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<td>Case studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyses of data on burden and response behaviour in Sweden, Norway and Netherlands</td>
<td>Studies on effects of actions to reduce burden and/or increase motivation: Experiments on improving motivation in Sweden and Slovenia, studies on effects of questionnaire design in Norway and the Netherlands</td>
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Slovenian experiment (Bavdaž & Bolko 2013)

Post-it note with statistics suggesting value for business (groups 1 & 2)

Improved text with personalised help contacts (groups 1 & 3)
Framework for NSI communication and response behaviour

- Survey communication
- Communication initiated by NSI
- Output-related communication
- Communication in the media about surveys and statistics
- Corporate image of NSI
- Costs and benefits of responding
- Response behaviour
- Costs and quality of data collection
Results case studies 1

- Response burden related to response behaviour, eg. more burden: lower and later response, more edits needed
- Perceived burden related to actual burden but also by perception of NSI and usefulness statistics
Results case studies 2

- Experiments aiming at increasing motivation by better communication did not show many of the expected effects.
- The two questionnaire studies showed that questionnaire redesign can reduce actual and perceived burden.
Recommendations
Promote consistent and positive image

Show in all types of communication that NSI is
• trustworthy
• friendly
• professional
• produces valuable output
• and cares about both response burden and quality.
Build relationships

• Build and manage relationships with key stakeholders in business world (e.g. advisory councils with representatives of business as users and providers of data; contacts with business organisations; outreach activities).
• Develop and promote dedicated output relevant to target groups in business world (e.g. statistical packages for starting your business, statistical package for market research, quick scan for benchmarking).
• Communicate about these things
• ....
Know respondents (e.g. record keeping studies, profiling of large businesses)
• Keep registers and contact information up to date
• Use survey calendars to help business plan their resources
• ...
• Provide clear address information on envelope
• Indicate Unit / Reporting period / Deadline on letter and questionnaire
• Be clear about mandatory status, but do not stress immediately
• Provide appealing reasons for need of the survey request
• Use incentives (?)
• Provide efficient assistance for questions and complaints (e.g. website, helpdesk, complaint procedures)
• Provide single point of contact for large enterprises
• Document special arrangements for respondents
• Indicate changes in questionnaire
• User-friendly questionnaires
• ...
Post-field survey communication

• Provide feedback about status of submitted questionnaire
• Plan follow-up calls as quickly as possible after submission of questionnaire
• Use information of past response behaviour for design of follow-up strategies / sanctions
• ...
Directions future research

• Focus on communication for SMEs
• What are effective strategies to affect response behaviour?
• What motivates respondents besides surveys being mandatory?
• How to explain the relevance of a survey to a business?
• If and how to work with incentives
• Should we include information in letters about how long it takes to complete?
How to make progress

- Involve businesses organisations and businesses in design of surveys and other communications aimed at businesses
- Bring in theories form various disciplines
- Study actual behaviour of business respondents
- Collect management info to monitor data collection process
- Evaluate results of actions
- Try to do experiments or pilot studies
- Document and share work done