

Many thanks for the opportunity to comment on the draft report on National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) .

The report well summarises the case for a generic NQAF and is a good starting point for further development of the framework. As noted in the report, the ABS has adopted a national data quality framework for assessing, managing and reporting on the quality of statistical information. This framework is used by the ABS as well as other government agencies within Australia, see Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009) ABS Data Quality Framework. We agree that a generic national quality assessment framework will be useful for helping us to share good practices with other national statistical offices (NSOs).

I am please to see a broad approach to quality assurance being proposed for the framework. While there are techniques for managing and assuring quality, for NSOs to achieve a high reputation for the quality of their service, quality has to be a core value and it has to be embedded in the culture of the organisation. (Trewin, 2002). It is important that the generic NQAF will emphasise the importance of building quality into the culture of the NSO. While this emphasis is well evidenced in Annex 1 of the report, it could be made more explicit in the outline of Figure 2.

I agree with the proposed objective of developing an NQAF template rather than a generic one size fit all NQAF (paragraph 41). There are challenges that NSO have to tackle in developing their quality framework and the template should aim to provide some guidance on those issues. For example, the template should assist NSOs to harmonise their national quality assurance framework with the quality framework for international organisations (such as IMF's DQAF). Tools such as a harmonised glossary of terms will assist NSOs to efficiently meet their international reporting commitments.

Many organisations have an approach to managing enterprise and operational risks and it would be useful to connect the approach to quality assurance with the management of quality risks to statistical products and processes.

In relation to the outline of the generic NQAF (paragraph 38 and Figure 2), we would like to propose an additional element - Quality Reporting/Declaration. In the ABS we aim to release a broad array of data, of differing standards of quality, along with quality declarations that enable a user to determine whether the data is fit for their particular purpose. NSO's should be encouraged to disseminate information on the quality of their statistics to external users (Yu, 2003).

Other contents that could be more explicit in the outline of figure 2 are: (a) managing confidentiality of the information (possibly in relation to managing provider relationships), and (b) practices for addressing situations in which errors actually have occurred.

References:

Australia Bureau of Statistics (2009) , ABS Data Quality Framework, Cat. No. 1520.0 , <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1520.0Main%20Features1May+2009>

Trewin, D (2002), The Importance of a Quality Culture, *Survey Methodology*, Vol 28(2), pp. 125-133.

Yu, F, (2003), Making Data Quality Visible in Practice, Proceedings of Statistics Canada Symposium 2003, Challenges in Survey Taking for the Next Decade, Statistics Canada.