

ESSNet S D C

A Network of Excellence in the European Statistical System in the field of
Statistical Disclosure Control

Evaluation report of the Training Course on Statistical Disclosure Control in Ljubljana, 9-12 December 2008

Introduction

This was the first course of the ESSNet project. One of the leading ideas of the ESSNet concept is the promotion of the cooperation between NSIs. The more advanced NSIs should take the lead in spreading the knowledge and together bring the European Statistical system at a higher level. Teaching practical courses is one of the instruments. Statistics Netherlands together with IStat and Destatis have a longer tradition in teaching SDC-courses.

This time we have taken a slightly different approach. Instead of teaching 1 or max. 2 participants from each Member State, we now invited 3 or 4 participants from a smaller group of countries. We hope to achieve that after this course not only one isolated expert has been trained, but now a larger group per Member State could spread the knowledge. We concentrated this time on the South-Eastern part of Europe and invited participants from Hungary (4), Romania(4), Bulgaria(2), Czech Republic(2), Slovakia(2), Italy(1) and the hosting country Slovenia(6). The list of participants is an annex to this report. Another new element in this course was that we encouraged the participants to bring their own datasets. The idea behind this is that if participants can use the ARGUS software on their own data the effect and the impact of the training sessions would be much higher.

Organisation

The local organisation of this course was done by the Slovenian Statistical Office. We are grateful for the kind hospitality in Ljubljana. The ESSNet has supported financially the participants of the course. But the ESSNet can only fund up to 70% of the costs. Therefore a grant for the remaining 30% from the Unesco Chair in Data Privacy (Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona) was gratefully acknowledged. This has certainly contributed to the success of the course.

Conclusions

The course has been very successful. The new element of working with the own data sets was a great success. Also the evaluation forms give a very positive outcome. We plan to organise the second ESSNet course in the North-Eastern part of Europe in the autumn of 2009.

Annex 1: Results of the evaluation forms

The tables show the frequencies of the answers given by the participants. The additional remarks have been numbered per participant, but the order has nothing to do with the list of participants. This of course for confidentiality reasons.

course structure

	Far too much	Too much	About right	Too little	Far too little
The <i>length</i> of the course in days was		2	17		
The <i>intensity</i> of the learning process was	1	4	14		
The amount of <i>theoretical</i> content of the course was	1	4	12	2	
The amount of <i>practical</i> content of the course was	1	1	9	8	
The amount of <i>free time</i> during the course was	1	4	14		

Additional remarks on the course structure

- Seeing as most of us were new to SDC, there was perhaps too much theory to start with. But it was OK once we got to the practical part.
- I think that this course is best for those who already have some knowledge on statistical disclosure. Since I am a beginner in the field there was a lot of things new.
- It should start a little earlier with shorter lunch break.

content of the course

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The theme of the course is <i>relevant to my work</i>	4	13	2		
The course provided me with <i>useful information</i>	5	13	1		
The course provided me with <i>useful tools and techniques</i>	6	12	1		
The course met <i>my own expectations</i>	5	12	2		
The course addressed <i>my specific areas of interest</i>	3	10	6	1	
It will be possible to <i>apply the new knowledge at my work</i>	9	7	3		

Additional remarks on the content of the course

- The microdata part was not really relevant for my work right now, but it is good to know at least a little about microdata SDC- at least that it exists- could come in handy some time.
- I worry because I can't always be sure if the program works OK or not, especially with linked tables. I would like to hear something about where to pay attention because something might be wrong.
- The content of the course was in line with the agenda. I liked it.
- Is very good that we worked with our own data.

Assessment of the teachers.

Anco Hundepool

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The lecturer had <i>good knowledge of the subject</i>	17	2			
The lecturer was <i>responsive to questions</i>	17	2			
The lecturer's verbal delivery was <i>easy to follow</i>	10	7	2		
The lecturer provided <i>good course notes</i>	12	5	2		
The lecturer made <i>good use of visual aids</i> (sheets etc.)	12	6	1		

Eric Schulte Nordholt

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The lecturer had <i>good knowledge of the subject</i>	17	2			
The lecturer was <i>responsive to questions</i>	16	3			
The lecturer's verbal delivery was <i>easy to follow</i>	12	7			
The lecturer provided <i>good course notes</i>	14	5			
The lecturer made <i>good use of visual aids</i> (sheets etc.)	12	6	1		

Luisa Franconi

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The lecturer had <i>good knowledge of the subject</i>	15	4			
The lecturer was <i>responsive to questions</i>	15	3	1		
The lecturer's verbal delivery was <i>easy to follow</i>	6	4	5.5	3.5	
The lecturer provided <i>good course notes</i>	12	7			
The lecturer made <i>good use of visual aids</i> (sheets etc.)	13	5	1		

Sarah Giessing

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The lecturer had <i>good knowledge of the subject</i>	14	5			
The lecturer was <i>responsive to questions</i>	13	6			
The lecturer's verbal delivery was <i>easy to follow</i>	3	6	6.5	3.5	
The lecturer provided <i>good course notes</i>	10	8	1		
The lecturer made <i>good use of visual aids</i> (sheets etc.)	9	9	1		

Additional remarks on the lecturers

- Luisa and Sarah were a bit hard to follow sometimes because they were so quiet.
- The initial demonstration with the programs should be slower. Sometimes a microphone would be useful.
- Luisa and Sarah had good presentations and also I agree that they have a good knowledge, but I wish that they had spoken more loudly. It was very noisily because I did not hear very good.
- Too large room for the ladies presenters; not loud enough; suggest to use audio aids: microphone and loudspeakers.
- The lecturers were not only with good knowledge of the subject, but very friendly as well.
- Luisa and Sarah were quietly ☺

What is the most important thing you learnt from this course?

- Overview theoretical & orientation in software.
- The τ -ARGUS was very useful, because the secondary suppression is not solved in my office.
- How to solve the practical problems with our data.
- Protecting tabular data- I'll be able to do that for my department now and not burden another dept. with the task.
- Statistical disclosure is not a simple thing, where you hide all the cells where $n < 3$. There is a lot more behind.
- About protection of microdata and about linked tables.
- Now I know much more about this subject and this course will be useful for my future work.
- I have got a first experience with the Argus software.

- A complete new topic of statistics opened for me.
- How to solve the practical problem with own data.
- First knowledge.
- We have the base knowledge about this software and theoretical part (disclosure and suppression).
- The basis of disclosure control (the theoretical part).

Additional *general remarks*

- The computer room was too small.
- The course should be held in a place, where each participant can use a different PC or at least the room should be larger.
- The computer room was very small and crowded.
- The course was very successful.
- Great course in general; it exceeded my expectations.
- I am glad I took this course; I have learned a lot!
- I think that this course would be shorter (2 or 3 days) and I wish that it would be more practical (more exercises on the computer).
- Good course in general.
- Some suggestions for software improvements found.
- The course was very useful. Probably it would be better if there was more time for exercises.

Annex 2. List of participants

	Name	Country	Function
1	Ms. Cristina NITULESCU	RO	Labour Market Statistics Department
2	Ms. Anca DIACONU	RO	Foreign Trade Statistics Department
3	Ms. Cristina DRAGHICI	RO	Short-term Economic Indicators Department
4	Mr. Emil PANAITESCU	RO	National Centre for Training in Statistics
5	Ms Jitka Prokop	CZ	Dept. for Methodology of Performing Statistical Processing
6	Ms Hana Marsalkova	CZ	Dept. for Methodology of Performing Statistical Processing
7	Boyka MILEVA	BG	Senior expert, IT Division
8	Emilia ALTANOVA	BG	Senior expert, Industry Statistics Division
9	Ms Beata BARANYAI	HU	staff member of our IT Department
10	Ms Katalin GAJDOS	HU	staff member of our Statistical Research and Methodology Department
11	Ms Lilla SARKADI	HU	Staff member of our Business Statistics Department
12	Ms Annamaria SZIRONY	HU	Expert of our External Trade Statistics Department
13	Peter Oravec	SK	
14	Peter Teslik	SK	
15	Barica Razpotnik	SI	SORS
16	Doris Kuhelj	SI	SORS
17	Manca Meglič	SI	SORS
18	Samo Rubin	SI	Bank of Slovenia
19	Matjaž Jeran	SI	Bank of Slovenia
20	Darja Lavtar	SI	Institute for Public Health
21	Flavio Foschi	IT	Research department

Annex 3 Course Program

Lecturers: Anco Hundepool and Eric Schulte Nordholt (Statistics Netherlands)

Luisa Franconi (IStat)

Sarah Giessing (Destatis)

Date day 1

Time	Title/Topic	Lecturers	Room
9:30- 10:00	Introduction to course, lecturers and participants	Anco Hundepool	Conf.
10:00- 10:45	General introduction to Statistical Disclosure Control	Anco Hundepool/ Eric Schulte Nordholt	Conf.
10:45-11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>		
11:15-12:00	Theory/methods of SDC concerning micro data (General)	Luisa Franconi	Conf.
12:00-14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>		
14:00-15:00	Risk assessment, microdata protection and data utility	Luisa Franconi	Conf.
15:00-15:30	Exercises microdata/examples (1)	Eric Schulte Nordholt/ Luisa Franconi	Conf.
15:30-15:45	<i>Coffee break</i>		
15:45-16:45	Legal issues; Onsite facilities and remote access/execution	Eric Schulte Nordholt	Conf.

Date day 2

Time	Title/Topic	Lecturers	Room
9:30- 10:45	Demonstration and exercises with μ -ARGUS	Anco Hundepool	Compu.
10:45-11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>		
11:00-12:00	Exercises microdata/examples (2)	Eric Schulte Nordholt/ Luisa Franconi	Compu
12:00-14:00	Lunch		
14:00-16:00	Work with own data and μ -ARGUS	Anco Hundepool/ Eric Schulte Nordholt/	Compu.
16:00-16:15	<i>Coffee break</i>		
16:15-17:15	Theory/methods concerning tabular data (General)	Eric Schulte Nordholt	Compu.

Date day 3

Time	Title/Topic	Lecturers	Room
9:00- 10:30	Theory/methods of SDC concerning tabular data (Methods)	Sarah Giessing	Conf.
10:30-10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>		
10:45-12:00	Exercises tabular data (1)	Eric Schulte Nordholt/ Sarah Giessing	Conf.
12:00-14:00	<i>Lunch</i>		
14:00-15:30	Demonstration and exercises with τ -ARGUS	Anco Hundepool	Compu.
15:30-15:45	<i>Coffee break</i>		
15:45-16:00	Exercises tabular data (2)	Eric Schulte Nordholt/ Sarah Giessing	Conf.

Date day 4

Time	Title/Topic	Lecturers	Room
9:30- 11:00	Work with own data and τ -ARGUS	Anco Hundepool/ Eric Schulte Nordholt/ Sarah Giessing	Compu.
<i>11:00-11:15</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>		
11:15-12:00	Special topics in tabular SDC	Sarah Giessing	Conf.
<i>12:00-14:00</i>	<i>Lunch</i>		
14:00-14:45	User Case studies and remaining questions	Anco Hundepool/ Eric Schulte Nordholt/ Sarah Giessing	Conf.
14:45-15:15	Evaluation and conclusion	Anco Hundepool/ Eric Schulte Nordholt/ Sarah Giessing	Conf.