



Quality, Comparability and Compliance in the European Social Survey

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Outline of Presentation

- Very brief overview of the ESS
- Key requirements for participating countries
- Quality in the survey life cycle
- Identification of quality indicators
- Quality through enhancement meetings

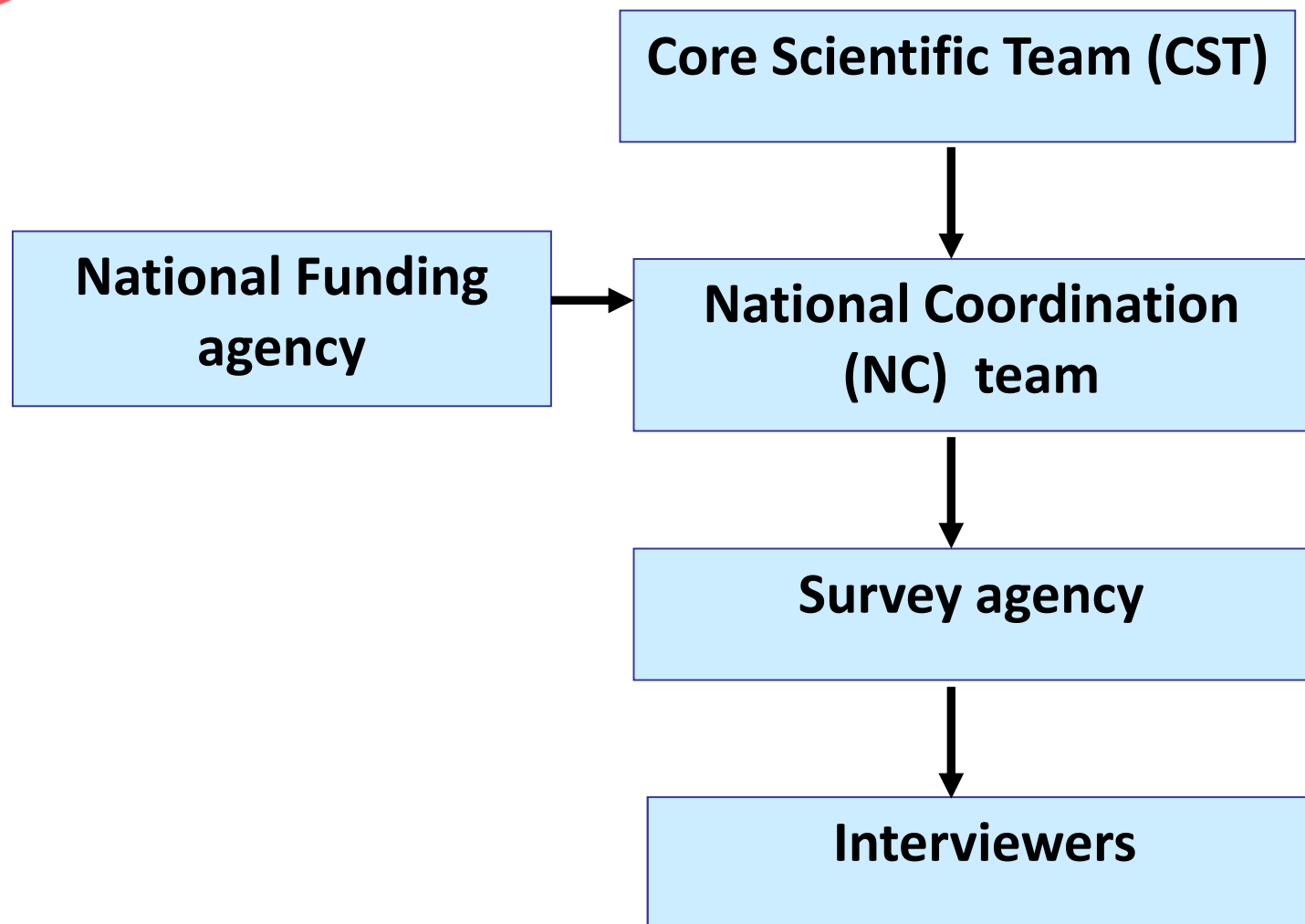
Key points to remember



- Large scale biennial cross-national survey
- Led by a Core Scientific Team (CST), HQ at City University London
- Funding from member and observer countries of the ESS ERIC (R7 onwards)
- National coordinator (NC) – new or continuous; individual or team
- NC or funder contracts survey agency
- Input harmonisation
- Rigorous methodology leading to comparability & equivalence

www.europeansocialsurvey.org

ESS organisation



Project Specification



- Random probability sampling; no substitution/quota sampling permitted at any stage
- Effective sample size of 1500
- Minimum target response rate of 70%
- 3% maximum non-contact rate (of all sample units)
- Minimum 30 day fieldwork period between Sept & Dec
- At least 4 personal visits per sample unit before abandoned as non-productive
- Maximum of 48 issued sample units per interviewer

Quality measures: Survey Life Cycle

BEFORE FIELDWORK

Quality Assurance

- CST country contact & sample expert assigned
- NC intranet available
- Sample design signed off
- Consistency cross-checks
- Interviewer briefing guidance provided
- Data protocol issued

Quality Monitoring

- Consultations on question adaptations
- Fieldwork planning questionnaire completed
- Verification (of translated items)
- SQP coding (of translated items)

Quality measures: Survey Life Cycle

DURING FIELDWORK

Quality Assurance

- Response enhancement guidelines
- Fieldwork monitoring guidance (CST)

Quality Monitoring

- Survey agency monitors interviewers and fieldwork
- NCs monitor survey agency using fieldwork reports
- CST Country contact oversees process and monitors contact attempts, non-contacts, ineligibles, RR

Quality measures: Survey Life Cycle

AFTER FIELDWORK

Quality Assurance

- Data processing & consistency checks
- National Technical Summary & Documentation report
- All data released on time – including SDDF and contact form data

Quality Monitoring

- Fieldwork summary and deviations
- CST analyses carried out – interviewer effects, response & non-response rates, achieved sample composition, question quality, compliance with Specifications

Improving quality – indicators



- Country profile
 - documents aspects of compliance across survey life cycle
 - incorporates some measures of quality assessment
 - aims to identify areas that might warrant further investigation / future improvements

- ESS Quality Assessment
 - Identifying indicators using existing frameworks – European Statistical System & OECD, TQM and TSE
 - create a quality *profile* evaluating the survey as a whole & a quality *report* that evaluates country-level activities
 - difficulties in prioritising and selecting indicators
 - users of data quality indicators unclear

Improving quality - meetings

- CST Meetings
- Scientific Advisory Board and Methods Advisory Board
- Meetings with National Coordination teams
 - specific teams – to give feedback on round
 - briefing for new National Coordinators - before fieldwork preparations start
 - all National Coordinators - two per round
- Field Directors Meetings (infrequent – 2008, 2010, 2014)

Improving quality – meetings 2

- Quality Enhancement Meetings
 - Dedicated to a specific topic area in the ESS
 - Discussions between experts, survey methodologists and CST
 - Produce recommendations for improvements

- 1. Design effects & interviewer effects (2007)
- 2. Measurement of occupational status (2007)
- 3. Qualitative & Quantitative pre-testing (2008)
- 4. Work, family and well-being module (2009)
- 5. Measurement of education (2009)
- 6. Measurement quality of questions (planned for 2014)
- 7. Mixed modes (planned for 2014)

Thank you!

Questions?

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