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Developing a mobile fieldwork management and monitoring system (FMMS) - Challenges of cross-national implementation

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Background

- Builds on previous work under DASISH project (2012-14), development of the first prototype of the mobile app

- Currently part of SERISS WP4 'Interactive tools for cross-national surveys'

- Collaboration between ESS HQ & programmers at CentERdata

- Mirrors the ESS contact form but will be open source tool

ESS fieldwork monitoring

- Fieldwork not centralised

- National Coordinators (NCs) appoint a survey agency for data collection

- NCs send weekly/fortnightly fieldwork progress reports to the ESS Central Scientific Team (CST)

- Contact form data is only available after fieldwork is finished

Goals

- Up-to-date "real time" information on fieldwork progress

- Standardisation of contact data collection and fieldwork progress reports

- Data collection on the doorstep

What is FMMS?

Two components:

- Mobile "app" to replace paper contact form and enable data collection on the doorstep; stand alone app not linked to CAPI; designed for mobile devices but can be also used on laptops

- Centralised case management system (CCMS) to manage the transfer of information between interviewers and agency; enable access to up-to-date contact data by the NCs and CST; produce standardised fieldwork progress reports

1. Each survey agency (SA) uploads their sample file (including personal identifiers) to centralised case management system (CCMS) via secure file transfer

SA can view completed records once returned from interviewer

2. Case level data for each country (in a given round) available in centralised case management system (CCMS) (in "the cloud", hosted by CentERdata)

3. Sample records transferred from CMMS onto (password protected) interviewer devices

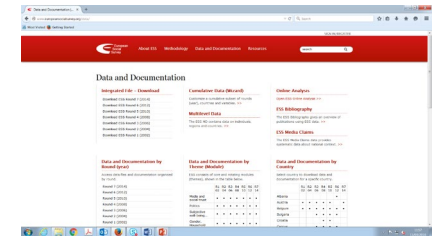Interviewers transmit back completed records to CCMS

4. NCs and CST can view anonymised case-level data for their own (NC) and all (CST) ESS country

Aggregated fieldwork progress reports can be downloaded from CCMS

5. Anonymised contact form data transferred to the archive at NSD at end of an ESS Round

APP

CCMS

CCMS

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Implementation feasibility exercise

What are the main challenges of cross-national FMMS implementation?

- Webinar for survey agencies (SAs) and NCs (Feb 2016)
- Online survey for SAs (10 countries)
- Feedback form for NCs (15 countries)
- Follow-up calls with NCs and SAs
- Consultations regarding data protection issues

Implementation challenges

Differences across ESS countries

- Different sample frames (individual vs. address) & different respondent selection procedures

- Different IT resources (PAPI vs. CAPI, various bespoke sample management tools and CAPI programs, access to mobile devices, IT infrastructure in general)

- Different survey cultures and ways of working (standardisation vs. local expertise)

Implementation challenges

Technological issues

- Absence of technological support, limited IT resources (e.g. for user support)

- Internet availability

- No connection with CAPI programs

Implementation challenges

Reluctance by survey agencies

- Compatibility with agencies' in-house systems and procedures. Some agencies have their own (more advanced) tools that are used for multiple surveys. Implementing a new system is seen as unnecessary duplication of tasks.

- Unwillingness to invest additional resources for mobile devices, additional IT staff and interviewer training

- Unwillingness to be closely monitored by NCs/CST (impression of 'distrust' from NC/CST), loss of autonomy (e.g. dependence on central technical support)

- Potential disapproval by interviewers (often older persons, habit of using an established system, more errors if using two systems)

Implementation challenges

Data protection issues

- Transfer of personal data to central server accessible by third party (CentERdata)

  Possible solution: transfer of personal data via local servers at SA in countries where transfer via central server not possible

Next steps

- Testing of the app with the UK interviewers (October 2016)

- Decisions to be made:

  Should the tool be implemented in the future ESS rounds?

  Should it be compulsory or optional for the ESS participating countries?

  If optional – possible solution: regular upload of anonymised (case-level) fieldwork data to the CCMS