

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADISTICA



User Survey 2010: Structured Consultation

**National Statistics Institute (INE)
September, 2010**

Index

1	Objectives and general methodology	3
1.1	Consultation scope	3
1.2	Concepts and definitions	3
1.3	Selection of the informants	4
1.4	Collection of the information: Response rate	4
2	Analysis of the results	6
2.1	Global assessment	6
2.2	Distribution of the assessments by type of user and quality dimension of the products	7

1 Objectives and general methodology

The objective of the Structured Consultation was obtaining an assessment of the official statistical information based on the opinion of a large field of experts, users and producers from the government, both the General and the Autonomous ones.

1.1 CONSULTATION SCOPE

The Consultation assesses the quality of the State Administration official statistics, that is to say, that belonging to the National Statistical Plan. This delimitation is important, as it was not only carried out and analysis of the statistics prepared by the INE, but also of those produced by the ministry services.

In terms of time, the assessed operations were those belonging to 2010 Statistical Program.

1.2 CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The main concept for the assessment is quality. The concept of quality is multidimensional: it can refer both to processes and to results. Within the approach to the quality of the results, we can refer to perceived (subjective) or objective quality. Moreover, quality can refer to a statistical system or to some single statistics. Regarding a statistical system (for instance, health statistics) quality has a direct connection with coverage, that is to say, with the relation between the necessary and the available information. In turn, the quality of single statistics may refer to the information produced, according to its reliability, punctuality, comparability, or its accessibility (quality of dissemination).

In the Structured Consultation an assessment of the statistical quality in terms of results, not processes, is carried out (although there might be assessments on the efficiency of operations). Regarding the quality of the results, the quality in terms of coverage (of each one of the sectors or areas) and the quality of the single operations are assessed, both from the point of view of the information produced and of the dissemination means.

The quality assessed is the perceived one. Experts, users and producers from the government have been selected, that is to say, the persons that know the best the official statistics of Spain. Therefore, this assessment is made with the highest knowledge basis.

The conceptual framework for assessing quality has followed the definitions of the European Statistics Code of Good Practice, as this way the results obtained are internationally recognised.

1.3 SELECTION OF THE INFORMANTS

Informants were selected by the members of the presentation according to their knowledge as State statistics producers, users or experts, and, also, to their possible commitment to the project. That is why each member of the Presentation proposed informants whose collaboration expectations were positive. There is no doubt about the fact that the response rates of the Consultation, quite high as compared to the normal ones for this type of consultations, were due to this pragmatic criterion.

The sample is therefore an intentional sample of statistics experts, and it cannot be understood as a random sample from which results have to be inferred as statistical estimations.

Despite the group of informants being an intentional sample, we aim at representation this is why the global group is divided in users and experts, producers from the central government and, finally, autonomous government producers. The objective was obtaining a representative assessment, but, conversely, the study of the differentiating between groups is not part of the basic analysis.

1.4 COLLECTION OF THE INFORMATION: RESPONSE RATE

The information was delivered to informants via e-mail in an Excel file; each informant received the sectors that were considered to know better.

The date for starting the information for experts and users were 2nd June, with a deadline on 16th June. For informants from the government the collection was later. For the Central Government it started on 24th June.

Finally, for the Autonomous Government the collection was between 24th June and 6th July.

The aggregated response rate are as follows:

	Nº Informantes	Nº Organismos	Nº Sectores	Tasa de respuesta
Expertos y Usuarios	130	72	153	71,12
AGE	76	34	142	90,32
CCAA	31	26	307	100,00
TOTAL	237	132	602	88,56

GSA: General State Administration
AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES: Autonomous Communities

The assessment of National Statistical System statistics has about 5,000 comments, as the average number of statistics assessed in each sectorial questionnaire was slightly higher than eight operations. The requested assessments were discreet and numbered 1 to 5, being 1 the least positive assessment and 5 the most positive one.

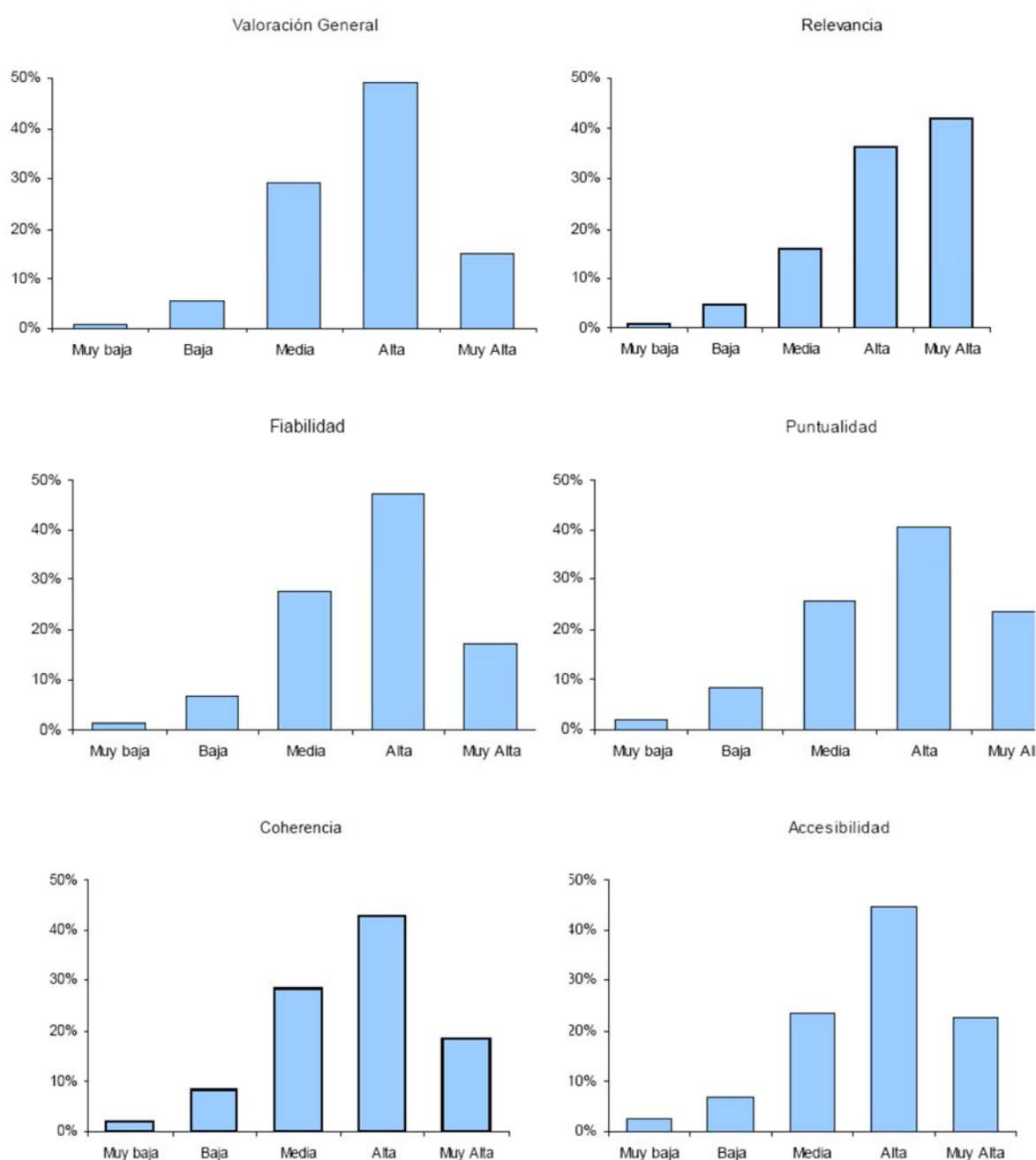
As it was already mentioned, the assessment was formulated in terms of the European Statistics Code of Good Practice and, therefore, it regarded the criteria of Relevance or pertinence (from now on Relevance), Accuracy and reliability (from now on, Reliability), Timeliness and punctuality (from now on, Punctuality), Coherence and comparability (from now on, Coherence) and Accessibility and clarity (from now on, Accessibility). Besides, a general assessment of each statistics was requested. Scores had to be whole numbers. In other words, a score of 3.5 is not admissible.

2 Analysis of the results

2.1 GLOBAL ASESMENT

A preliminar exploitation of the responses consisted on te classificatin of the *global assessment* by categories.

Chart 1. Assessment distribution (%)



As the chart corresponding to general assessment shows, out of 4,908 assessments with response for this variable, only 41 give score 1 (0.84%), 274 (5.58%) give score 2, 1,431 (29.16%) give score 3, 2,419 (49.29%) score 4 and 743 (15.14%) score 5. That is, if we add good and very good assessments we reach almost 65% of the responses. In contrast, if we add bad and very bad assessments the percentage is ten times lower (6.4%). On the other hand, the assessment average is 3.72, above the equivalent value to the high-medium assessment in the scale (3.5).

When analysing the components of this general assessment, just as the chart shows, it is confirmed that the distributions obtained are quite similar.

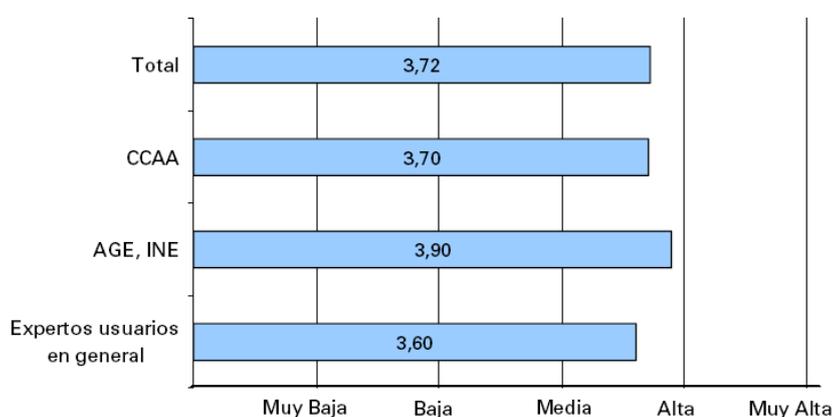
Excepting relevance, whose mode stands at 5 (very high), the remaining features have a modal value of 4 (high). In turn, the relative frequency of this modal value is always within a 40-50% range.

2.2 DISTRIBUTION OF THE ASSESSMENTS BY TYPE OF USER AND QUALITY DIMENSION OF THE PRODUCTS

As it has been already said, the Structured Consultation was aimed at three types of groups: expert users in general, professional statisticians belonging to the General State Administration (GSA) and the INE, and finally professional statisticians from the Autonomous Communities.

The question is whether there are differences in the assessment given by each of these groups. As shown in the attached graph, the average assessment of the total expert users stands at 3.72. Assessments are quite similar, but not identical. Specifically, this average assessment rises up to 3.90 if those responding are INE or GSA representatives, while it stands at 3.6 and 3.7 if we are talking about expert users in general or Autonomous Communities representatives. In other words, the average assessment that the last two groups of informants give to the General State Administration statistics is similar, but a bit lower than that given by ministries and INE representatives.

Chart 2. Average assessment by type of informant



The last question posed by this general examination of responses is dual: in first place, to what extent the responses offered are internally consistent (a questionnaire that, for instance, gives a general assessment over or below all the intermediate items could be internally non-consistent) and, in second place, what is the contribution of single features to the general assessment.

Regarding the first point, out of 4,908 responses, 3 of them had a general assessment higher to the maximum value of the single components and 14 had a lower assessment to the minimum value of single components. That is, only 0.34% of responses can be considered as internally consistent when applying this criterion.

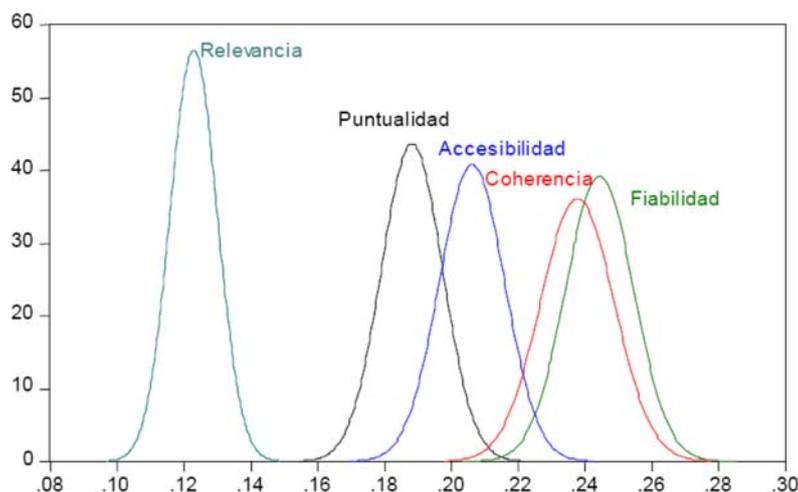
Average assessment by type of informant

Regarding the second point, we can understand the general assessment as the subproduct of single assessments. From this point of view, the general assessment given by "i" informant to the General State Administration (INE and Ministries) can be expressed as:

$$\text{Valoración General}_i = \bar{\beta}_1(\text{Relevancia}_i) + \bar{\beta}_2(\text{Fiabilidad}_i) + \bar{\beta}_3(\text{Puntualidad}_i) + \bar{\beta}_4(\text{Coherencia}_i) + \bar{\beta}_4(\text{Accesibilidad}_i) + \varepsilon_i$$

Where β_j (for $j=1$ up to 4) is an estimation of the average weight for the group of informants that the feature has in the general assessment.

Chart 3. Contributin of the single features to the general assessment



Estimated equation:

General assessment =					
0.24·Reliability+0.24·Coherence+0.12·Relevance+0.21·Accessibility+0.19·Punctuality					
<i>Standard error White</i>	<i>(0.0102)</i>	<i>(0.0104)</i>	<i>(0.0072)</i>	<i>(0.0098)</i>	<i>(0.0088)</i>
R2=0.78					
Number of comments = 4710					

Having in mind that in this estimation it is verified that the reliability and the coherence have almost the same weighting and that the two of them together represent 48% of the general assessment. That is, these two features are those that expert users appreciate the most. They are followed by accessibility and punctuality that make together 40%.

Finally, relevance or pertinence take a 12% weighting.

In turn, the chart shows the distribution of the estimators of each average.

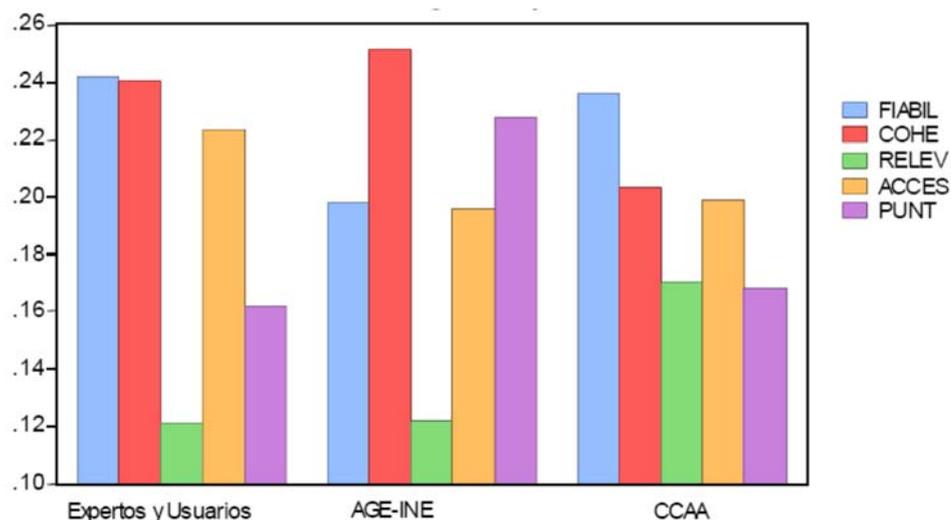
The sharper the distribution is, the higher the accuracy of the estimation of each average. In this regard, relevance has few weight and distribution is quite concentrated. It follows, in terms of consensus degree, accessibility and punctuality and, finally, the ones that weight the most, which are reliability and coherence. These two last features tend to show a bit larger dispersion.

It is worth noting that these contributions to general assessment vary depending on the groups. As comparing to aggregate results, for experts and users we can find scores where accessibility increases its relevance, while punctuality decreases its (0.16). This is not very surprising if we think of the use of information in order to carry out an applied research.

In turn, among the responses of professionals from the General State Administration, punctuality (0.23) and coherence are more relevant, while the relevance of reliability and accessibility decreases. Again, these results can be explained regarding the relevance that timeliness and punctuality might have when taking a decision. The scores of professionals from Autonomous Communities are half-way between experts and users and the informants from the GSA.

The ensemble of results showing the different contribution of the concepts of the Code of Practice to the general assessment of the statistics, according to the type of informant, are shown in the attached chart.

Chart 4. Contribution of the features to the general assessment by type of informant



To sum up, as main features the following ones are worth noting:

- The coherence matters to all informants, but mainly to GSA-INE
- Punctuality is more important for GSA-INE than for the rest of informants.
- In general, relevance does not matter a lot, in the regard that this feature plays a limited role when establishing the general assessment

Finally, we would like to say that, logically, the Structured Consultation has generated many other detailed results, both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative results have been used by the Representation members for the recommendations formulation. Quantitative results will be provided to the Interministerial Statistics Commission, the body in charge for preparing the National Statistical Plan, so that they can be distributed according to the more convenient criterion.