

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION MAPPING EXERCISE EDINBURGH: 01 DECEMBER 2005

SUMMARY

Definition and Scope

1. The purpose of this document is to summarise the key findings of the mapping exercise and the overall response to the questionnaire. Please note that this exercise is very much an overview and gives an estimate of the perceptions of the participating countries. It is not to be considered as definitive. The findings are not expected to be shared outside of IPSG.
2. The majority of countries responded to the questionnaire. In total, twenty two countries' data have been analysed.
3. There were a few gaps in the data, most notably about federal services. For some this is explained by an absence of federally-funded services, but for others it may be an indication of difficulty of finding information at this level for what can be a diverse group of services.
4. The question about expectations of services was based on a number of different sources of information, not surveys alone. Included here are anecdotes, press coverage and general "feelings".
5. The three questions about differences, challenges and self-perceptions have been made anonymous. Although few actually actively disagreed to the sharing of this information, many did not specify their preference, so rather than offend, no country can be identified.

Overall findings

6. Using a scale of one to five, where one represents "not at all" and five represents "a lot" overall customer satisfaction measurement across the twenty two countries is 3.3, a little above the middle point. There are wide variations between countries, from 5 in Ireland to 1 in Slovakia.
7. The clearest cluster of countries is those that consider they conduct a little customer satisfaction research, ten countries in total. All four Scandinavian countries are in this cluster, joined by Hungary, Slovenia, Belgium, Malta, UK and Austria.



Recommendation: As a start point, these countries (and Ireland) could be considered those who have the most developed customer satisfaction measurement programme and may be in the best position to assume a best practice consortia.

8. Both education and health are the two sectors about which countries have most customer satisfaction data. Norway, Finland and the UK all consider themselves to measure customer satisfaction with Health “a lot”; Ireland, Finland and Austria consider they measure customer satisfaction with Education “a lot”.
9. The overall average for health is 3.5 and for education is 3.3.

Measuring customer satisfaction? ...but not all sectors are covered to same degree

<u>Not very much/at all</u>	<u>A little/lot</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Community Services (federal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Education • Police Force & Criminal Justice • Community Services (local)

Measurement of Customer Satisfaction



Recommendation: As these are the two sectors for which there appears to be most information available, consideration should be given to exploring these further with relevant departments within countries. This would entail seeking further clarification as to what exactly is being measured; frequency of surveying; how the results are analysed and used.

10. For some countries, the Police Force and Criminal Justice are separate departments, although in order to include the data in the overview, an average was taken. The average score is 3.
11. Both federally funded community services (average of 2.4) and transport (average of 2.6) are the sectors least likely to have customer satisfaction measurement. The former because some countries simply don't have such services, the latter because the transport sector may have been privatised and therefore out of government jurisdiction.
12. Seven of the countries that responded do compare results between sectors.

Recommendation: Assess how this is being undertaken. Are the measurements being made the same (allowing easy comparisons)? For what reasons are the comparisons being made, and how is the information being used as a result?

13. The majority of countries say they have an understanding of the level of trust that customers have in public services. For some it is through perception measurement, although for others it would appear that it may

be anecdotal or via other means.

14. Health provision is the sector for which there appears to be most measurement of understanding of levels of customer trust, averaging 2.9. Community services, either local or federal are not perceived to be understood quite so easily, being 1.9 and 1.4 respectively
15. Education, Police Force and Criminal Justice, and Transport average about 2.5.
16. Of the countries that have an understanding of levels of customer trust in services, eight compare across sectors.

Recommendation: Ascertain exactly how trust is measured and consider if this is something that could potentially be measured across countries.

17. The majority of countries say they have an understanding of the level of expectation that customers have of public services. The scores for this section appear to be less clear cut, as even though countries claim to have an understanding, there is less evidence of this when viewing the data by sector.
18. Bearing in mind the above commentary, health seems to be the sector for which there are the highest levels of expectation. Twelve countries feel that the expectations in health are at a very high level.
19. Education, Police Force & Criminal Justice and locally funded community services also appear to have high levels of expectation.

Recommendation: Expectation of services is considered key to understanding what customers want and what would therefore improve their levels of satisfaction should their expectations be met. Consideration should be given as to whether this measure can be incorporated into existing studies as a start point.

20. The open-ended questions regarding differences and challenges are indicate that much consideration is being given to how to improve customer service in line with what it is assumed is required.
21. There is awareness that newer members have different priorities than those who have been members for longer. These vary from the level of federal community services provided, to the economic challenges facing the country, be it, a new or a longer-established country.
22. The growing role of e-government is seen by a number of countries as a key challenge, in particular how it can be harnessed to deliver more efficiently and effectively .

23. Education (and inclusion) of frontline staff is also seen to be key, as their responsibilities in delivering good services and policy as devised at the centre, is integral to any customer satisfaction programme.
24. There is a consistency in how countries view themselves. *Hard-working* is the most frequently chosen descriptor, followed closely by *generous*. Interestingly *slow to change* is chosen as often as *generous*, which suggests that countries are more than aware that programmes such as broad customer satisfaction studies will take time and patience to be accepted and fully integrated.
25. What the research did not uncover, due its basic and simple approach, is the cultural differences and what impacts this may have on how customers respond to public services. It is assumed that those countries with higher levels of satisfaction are perhaps performing better, but it may be that this is because of lower expectations or indeed how they measure their services.

Next Steps

26. We suggest the following next step actions:

1. Best Practice consortia to be convened if the clustered countries are amenable.
2. An exploration of health and education as the two key sectors with relevant departments within countries.
3. Review findings and explore possibility of pan-European pilot perhaps focusing on one of either health or education in the first instance, to assess its usefulness and applicability.
4. Explore in more detail how the information collected is being used, and specifically how it impacts policy. Practicalities and applicability across EU to be examined – are there cross-sector policies? How would the information be used?