THE USER SATISFACTION SURVEY AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE MARKETING INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE BASQUE STATISTICS OFFICE (EUSTAT).

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Chapter

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Introduction

In the Basque Statistics Office (EUSTAT), the Marketing System consists of three main elements:

-Market Information sub-system

-Product and service design sub-system

-Commercialisation sub-system

The Market Information system is formed by the group of people, activities and processes that ensure the organised flow of information needed to know how Eustat products and services are working in the marketplace, as well as the evolution of the market, its competitors, their characteristics and dimensions.

Its function is market research, in order to provide more and better information to answer the questions: What are the market's needs and demands? Who is making them? What is currently being done to satisfy them? Who are the competitors and what are their products and services?

Actions was previously taken in the information system to improve existing information regarding the demand for products and services. Regular analyses were made of statistics showing visits to the website, requests for information, as well as processing interviews carried out with referential clients.

However, all this was found to be insufficient, given that the information available through the above sources gives no indication as to what the users feel about our activity. Furthermore, they were appropriate for more partial purposes.

Through the Satisfaction Survey, the user becomes a truly active informant, valid to measure the various parameters related to our work. The Satisfaction Survey is a tool that will allow us to better our knowledge of our clients' needs and priorities, their opinions about our own performance, thus completing our internal analyses and evaluations.

All this goes also with the recommendations provided in the report final report from the LEG on Quality (SPC meeting in September 2001) In that report customer satisfaction surveys were considered an important tool to detect user needs.

Chapter

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The survey and main results

The results obtained from the survey have been satisfactory. The vast majority of ratings were positive or very positive. Although the initial reaction to this is a certain degree of satisfaction, some doubts do arise. From what our users tell us, we are doing a good job. But doubt is the basis of science and, by extension, of statistics, so that in analysing the results obtained, we have constantly kept in mind the search for criticism or disagreement among our users. Doubt also leads us to think of something else. The survey is a good method of gauging our users' feelings in general. However, it may turn out that it is necessary to carry out other methods that are more focused on the improvement of our activities through the opinions of our users.

One thing, however, is clear. The greatest degree of satisfaction shown by the users, as can be seen later, was in those aspects more closely related with staff qualities. The special assessment made of the staff is especially gratifying and we should not forget that in official statistics, human resources are an asset of huge importance.

General description

The Eustat User Satisfaction Survey (ESU 2003) was carried out during the recent months of December, January and February.

To carry out this survey we approached users which Eustat had had some type of relationship with during the period between 2002 and the first half of 2003. The users approached were those to whom Eustat sends publications, the media that receives Press releases and all those who have requested information or any of the products or services that Eustat offers.

A total of 1,932 surveys were sent out, from which 562 valid replies were obtained, which is to say 29%. In real terms, this could be put at 30%, since in many cases the same person was the addressee of more than one questionnaire, even though duplicates were controlled. It should also be taken into account that several of the people that we approached could not be traced.

The survey set out to gauge the degree of user satisfaction through questions referring to "Statistical Information", "Information Service and Tailored Requests", "Statistical Operations", "Products and Services". Furthermore, several more general questions were asked, regarding things such as use, assessment of the contact, usage of information, etc.

In those cases where we asked for an assessment of the various aspects related to a subject, the following method was used: Each aspect or item was assessed on a scale of 1 to 5 points, both for its degree of importance and for the degree of satisfaction.

Assesment

In this part the ratings obtained are showed, following the order of the different parts of the questionnaire.

Use
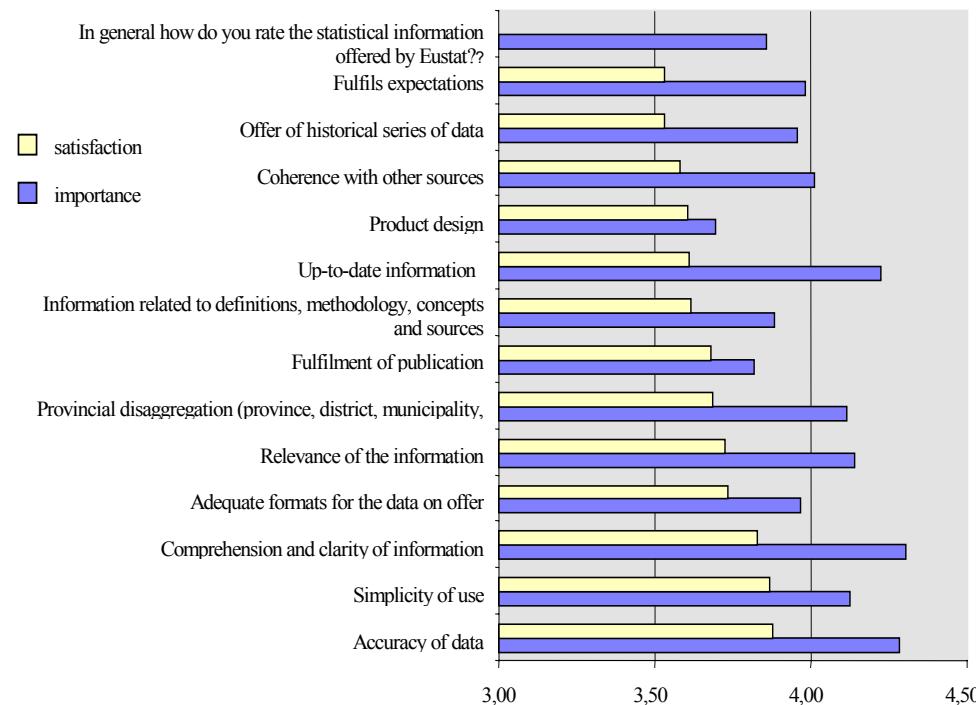
Users employ Eustat services in a variety of ways. 5% daily, 14% weekly, or 25% monthly.

The website is the most common means of accessing Eustat products and services, with 61% of mentions. Receiving publications was mentioned in this section by 32% and e-mail by 21%. At some distance was the telephone with 7%.

Statistical Information

In general, the ratings obtained were high. "Comprehension and clarity of information" (4.3), "Accuracy of data" (4.3) and "Up-to-date information" (4.2) were considered the most important aspects. The greatest degree of satisfaction was with "Accuracy of data" and "Comprehension and clarity of information", together with "Simplicity of use", surpassing, in these three cases, 3.8 points. It should be mentioned the widest gap between the importance given to an item and the degree of satisfaction was in the case of "Up-to-date information".

The following graph shows the ratings obtained:

Information Service and Tailored requests

In this case the ratings were slightly higher than the previous ones. It should be stressed that the highest-rated items referred to functions more related with staff expertise. The outstanding ones were "Simple access to the service", "Efficiency of the service" and "Understanding of the request".

The following graph shows the scores obtained:
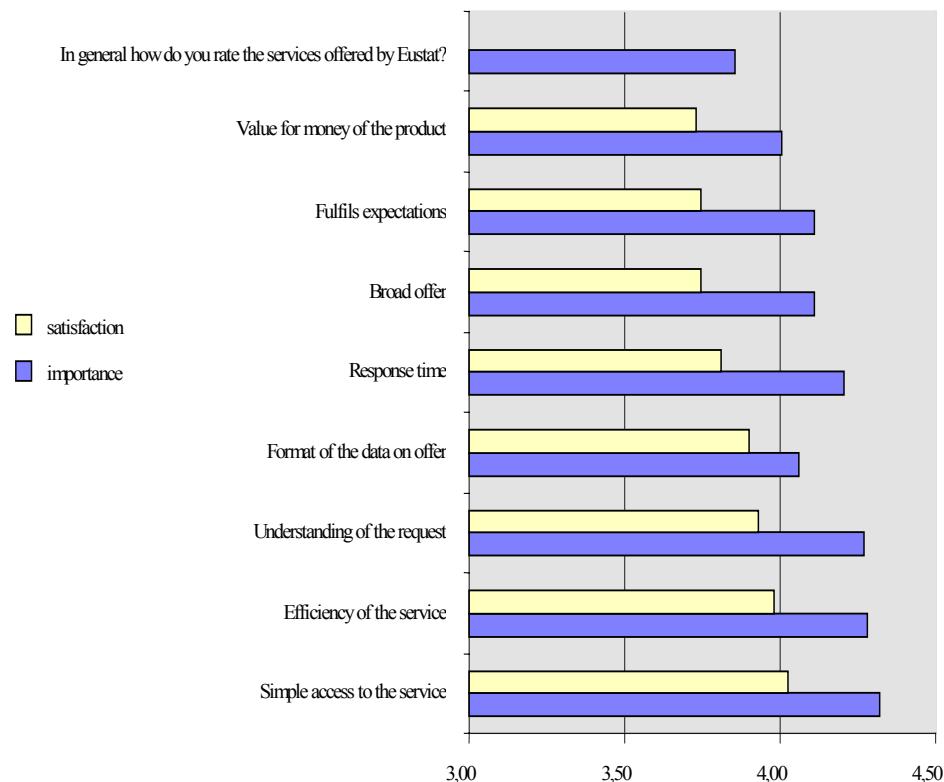
Groups of Statistical Operations

Many were given a rating of around 4 points in terms of importance, with the ranking headed by "Labour Market", "Demographic Statistics" and "Directories". As for the degree of satisfaction, the same "Demographic Statistics" were in first place, followed by the CPI (Consumer Price Index) and "Education". In this case, the lowest ratings were for the statistics of the "Primary Sector", with 3.4 in importance and satisfaction, although these ratings could still be considered as high.

Groups of operations	Importance	Satisfaction
Demography and social customs	4.12	3.88
CPI	3.91	3.77
Education	3.96	3.75
Labour market	4.19	3.70
Basque language	3.69	3.68
Economic accounts and Public Sector	3.91	3.68
Industrial production index	3.77	3.68
Joint information (ipri, ici, icgs, icce, ecc)	3.67	3.68
Industry, Energy, R&D	3.80	3.67
Services	3.91	3.66
Information society	3.86	3.65
Health	3.74	3.65
Tourism	3.60	3.64
Directories (Companies and establishments)	4.03	3.61
Foreign trade	3.69	3.60
Construction and Housing	3.81	3.56
Social Protection	3.86	3.55
Others	3.51	3.45
Primary sector	3.44	3.45

Eustat Products and Services

Among all the products and services that the users were asked to assess, the highest rating as regards importance was given to the Website (4.53). The data bank was also considered very important (4.46). The degree of satisfaction in both cases can be considered high (3.9 and 3.8 respectively). However, in the case of products and services there was a great variation in the percentage that replied. While the website was rated by 64% of users, only 38% gave their opinion on the data bank and 28% about press releases.
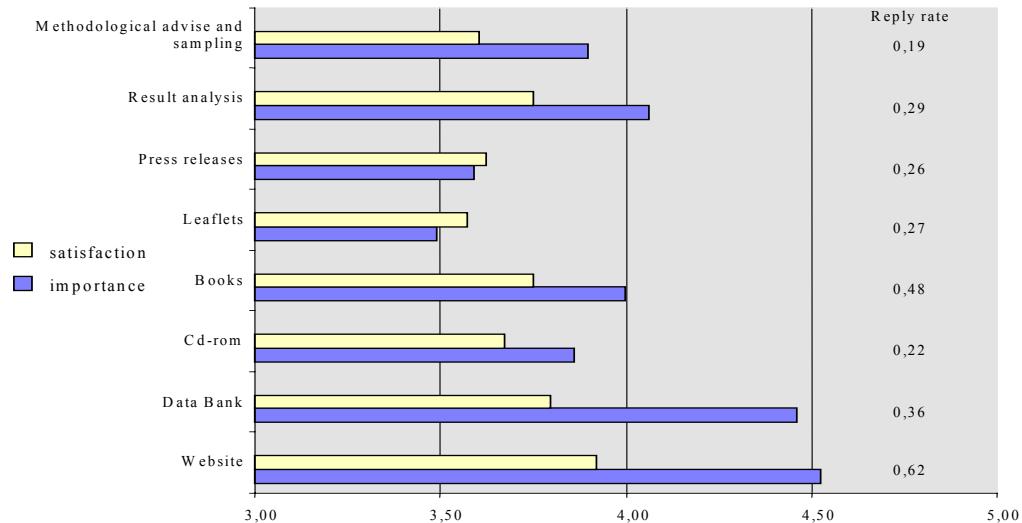
Eustat

Contact with Eustat

This is the category where the highest ratings were given as regards degree of satisfaction. "Polite treatment", "Staff expertise", and "Simplicity of contact", surpassed 4.3 points. Even the delivery time, which was criticised in some of the suggestions, had a rating of above 4 points..

Usage of the information

Eustat users are also potential users of others types of information. Here, we found that 77% used other information sources. In this ranking, first was the National Statistics Institute with 54%, followed by Provincial Councils, 43% and Town Councils, 35%.

Our research on users tried to ascertain what the statistical information supplied by EUSTAT was used for. We found that the preparation of reports and analyses is the reason shared by nearly half of the users and for 30% the reason was publication.

Uses and purposes

Eustat
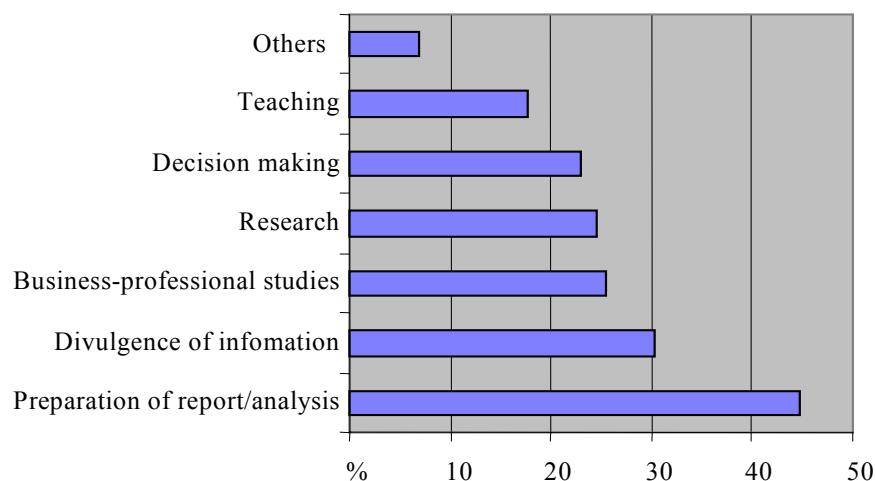
Chapter
3

Detailed results

After the initial analysis of the data, the various groups of users have been investigated to see whether the ratings received could be considered sufficiently homogenous, or whether on the other hand, there are enough statistical elements to differentiate between the groups. Bearing in mind the information at hand, the most significant classification variable is the activity sector that the user belongs to.

For this analysis there are two basic pieces of information. Firstly, we have the information that was available prior to sending out the questionnaires, which was used to locate the users as subjects of the survey. Secondly, in the questionnaire itself the users were asked which activity sector they belonged to.

Creation of the classification groups

The first thing to be checked was the assurance that there was coherence between the prior information and that obtained through the survey. Except for a couple of cases which could be put down to errors made while filling in the survey, they coincide completely, making the use of the proposed classification, namely the activity sector, a viable one.

The activity sector provided diverse results, due to which a new characteristic was created which could bring the information together more efficiently. From here came the variable, titled **group**. This is what we shall really use to make cross-references with the other variables to detect possible differences that there could be between the subjects as regards their belonging to specific activity sectors.

As stated above, the starting variable is the activity sector, giving 17 options, which were later reduced to 7 groups. In this process, those who did not mention any group at all were adjudicated groups.

Activity Sector:	N	Group	N
Autonomous administration	86	Administration	245
Local administration	123	"	
Central administration	10	"	
Business association	6	Association	19
Trade union	6	"	
Political party	2	"	
University	46	Teaching	143
School	66	"	
Research	17	"	
Business Industrial	3	Business	80
Commercial	3	"	
Banking or insurance	9	"	
Consulting	41	"	
Other	15	"	
Media	27	Media	33
Private user	12	Private	20
Other	24	Other	24

Eustat

Group analyses

Once the analyses were made, they showed that the differences were not so great. We began by analysing those items assessed on a scale of 1 to 5 by the users. There were 17 users who gave no assessments whatsoever.

Statistical information

In this section no important differences were identified between the various items. The only notable issue was that in the case of "Relevance of the information" or in "Fulfils expectations", where higher ratings were given by the "association" and "business" groups, although this difference was never more than 0.4 points.

It was also noticed that in the various proposed items the response rate was slightly higher for the administration group.

Information Service and Tailored requests

In this case a slight difference was observed. The "association" and "business" groups in some cases gave higher ratings to almost all the items, especially when compared with the administration. Additionally, their response rate was significantly higher. This was especially true when compared to the "teaching" and "administration" groups; around 50% for these latter groups, compared to over 60% for the former.

Statistical operations

In this case, the previously mentioned trend of a higher response rate is maintained. The ratings are, however, very similar for absolutely all the groups of statistical operations.

Products and Services

In the case of Products and Services, the Website obtained the highest ratings both in importance and in degree of satisfaction for all groups of users. It is also obtained the highest response rate. It was followed by the Data bank, with high ratings as regards importance and somewhat lower ones in degree of satisfaction. As was the case for the overall results, the response rate was much lower than for the website. Books held great importance for the users from the administration and their response rate was very high. In this respect, it should be remembered that among the users there are an important number of Libraries that are recipients of EUSTAT publications. Finally, attention should be drawn to the fact that journalists offered such a low response rate when rating the press releases: A mere 33.3%, less than the Data Bank (42%) and the Website (64%).

Contact with Eustat

This section included aspects related to contact that the user may have had with EUSTAT. This is the section with the highest ratings of all. In fact, the items that refer to staff expertise and skills were often around 4.5 points. Here again, a low response rate was observed in the case of the "administration" group - 44% - compared to the usually high rate of the "business" group - 72%.

About Eustat

In this case a series of statements about Eustat were given, asking the users to show the degree of agreement or disagreement with them. Here we encountered elevated response rates of around 80% for all groups. The greatest differences were found in the assessment of "Eustat is punctual in its publication of data": 4.4 for the "associations" group, 3.3 for "business" or 3.9 for "media".

Low ratings

The fact that there was no average rating below 3.5 makes it difficult to find clues as to which aspects were the worst-rated by the users. To investigate further, we isolated ratings so as to analyse those users that gave low ratings one by one. This is to say, ratings of between 1 and 2. In this way, we intended to identify the dissatisfied users and whether they were connected with one of the groups. Additionally, we intended to detect, where possible, which were the more problematic items.

Low ratings and users

When the percentage of low ratings given by users was analysed, it could be seen that 75% of users gave a maximum of 10% of low ratings, that 10% gave at least 20% low ratings, or that 18 users gave more than 50% low ratings. Low ratings were seen to be well distributed amongst users; to put it one way, there was no overwhelming group of dissatisfied users. However, this view is incomplete and this information must be checked against the number of low ratings given, since it does not mean the same for one person to have 100% low ratings after having only given one response, as for another who offered a 20% rate, giving 23 low ratings.

Given that percentages did not reveal an overwhelming group of dissatisfied users, we went on to analyse the users according to the quantity of low ratings. As a result, we could see that, among the most dissatisfied users, the first 20, there were 8 that belong to the "teaching" group and only 5 from "administration". So as to analyse the data in depth, we carried out a Chi-Square test. The distribution of the survey subjects in groups was compared with the distribution of all the low ratings among the groups. The results were as follows:

```
Comparative test between the distribution of low ratings and the weight within sample 11
                                        09:06   Wednesday,   March
31, 2004


                        The FREQ Procedure


                                        Test    Cumulative    Cumulative
          group         Frequency    Percent    Percent    Frequency    Percent
          ─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────

          administration      900      39.86      43.44         900      39.86
          association          77       3.41       3.37         977      43.27
          business            310      13.73      14.18        1287      57.00
          teaching            605      26.79      25.35        1892      83.79
          media               172       7.62       5.85        2064      91.41
          others              111       4.92       4.26        2175      96.32
          private              83       3.68       3.55        2258     100.00
```

```
           Chi-Square Test
       for Specified Proportions
      ───────────────────────────────

      Chi-Square          23.2965
      DF                        6
      Pr > ChiSq          0.0007


          Sample Size = 2258
```

The results of the test showed that the differences between the distribution of low ratings (Percent) and the distribution of the groups in the sample (Test Percent) were not down to chance; there was a significant difference between the two distributions.

Effectively, it could be seen that the "administration" group lost weight, as did the "business" one, while the rest gained to a lesser or greater extent. It could be deduced that the "administration" group and, to a lesser degree, the "business" one were significantly less critical than "teaching" or the "media".

Low ratings and items

With low ratings, an attempt was also made to ascertain which were worst-rated items, keeping in mind that the ratings themselves were generally positive.

As with the previous case, we first looked at the percentage of low ratings for items and following that, their frequency.

As regards percentages, the majority of high percentages corresponded to the items related to the statements about Eustat.

From this it was deduced that 25% of users that replied do not use Eustat as their main source of statistical information. 18% state that it does not satisfy their information needs and 10% consider that Eustat are not punctual in their publication of data.

A simple analysis as to which users offered the lowest ratings in this section shows that the "teaching" group was the one that gave the greatest amount of low ratings.

In the rest of the groups of items, the low ratings often coincided with similarly low response rates, so that conclusions cannot be drawn by cross-referencing these ratings with the groups. Save in very specific cases. In the case of "Statistical Information" the items "Provincial Disaggregation", "Fulfils expectations" and "Offer of historic series" obtained more than 30 low ratings as regards degree of satisfaction, accounting for 10% of ratings obtained.

Other items with a high percentage of negative ratings were Primary sector (18.75%), Foreign Trade (15.5%) or Press releases (15.5%), with 39, 33 and 24 low ratings respectively. These low ratings, however, referred to the level of importance given and not to the degree of satisfaction.

Analysis of the questions with alternative responses

Next we will look at the results of those questions that had alternative responses (yes/no) or that had multiple choice answers.

The first one, related to frequency of use, did not show differences between the groups. Later, on analysing the most common means of accessing Eustat products and services, no significant differences were noted, except for the slighter presence of the "teaching" group among users of Eustat information through the Internet.

The next analysis concerned the alternative response questions, answering which resulted in going on to the next group of items to assess.

First we considered awareness of the statistical information. Answering that it was not known effectively meant not assessing the proposed items. In this area, the "teaching" group stood out for not knowing Eustat statistical information. This was undoubtedly related to the lesser use of information through the Internet.

The following case was "Information Service and Tailored requests". It is notable that the "business" group had a smaller percentage of responses to "I am unaware of the services offered by Eustat". This is to say that it is the group that is most aware of Eustat services.

With regard to what was previously explained, the groups of statistical operations, it was the "teaching" group who was least aware, as was the case for products and services.

The final case in this block concerned contact with Eustat. The "business" group showed their greater awareness of "Information Services and Tailored requests" with only 13% who declared that they had not had any contact. This contrasts with the 44% for the "administration" and "teaching" groups.

The following block referred to the usage of other sources of statistical information. If we eliminate the "teaching" group, there were hardly any differences among the rest. And in fact, the only outstanding difference was the notably greater usage of information that the "business" group makes of information coming from the Chambers of Commerce.

As for notable differences in the purposes to which the groups put the statistical information, these differences are limited to the close relationship that exists between their actual activity and the purposes that they use the information for. Thus research is closely linked to the "teaching" group, the preparation of professional studies to the "business" group or divulgence to the "media" group.

Eustat

Appendix

1

Appendix I.- Questionnaire

USER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2003

How often do you normally use Eustat products or services?

Daily   Weekly   Monthly   Yearly   Other

Which means do you usually use to access the products and services offered by Eustat? (mark a maximum of three)

        Central office in Lakua
        Provincial offices
        Internet
        E-mail
        Fax
        Telephone
        Postal letter
        Recipient of publications
        Libraries
        Other bodies

For the following questions, indicate the level of importance and the degree of satisfaction that you give to each factor by marking it with an X according to the scale

Level of importance

Unimportant   very important
1   2   3   4   5

Degree of satisfaction

Low   high
1   2   3   4   5

Assessment of the statistical information published by EUSTAT; Internet, books, leaflets, CD-ROMs

Up-to-date information	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Comprehension of the information (clarity of the information)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance of the information	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Fulfils expectations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Coherence with other sources	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate formats for the data on offer	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy of data	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Simplicity of use	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Provincial disaggregation (province, district, municipality, neighbourhood)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Fulfilment of publication schedule	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Information related to definitions, methodology, concepts and sources	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Product design	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Offer of historical series of data	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

In general how do you rate the statistical information offered by Eustat? 1   2   3   4   5

Assessment of services offered by Eustat. Information service, Tailored requests.

Broad offer	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Simple access to the service	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Fulfils expectations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Format of the data on offer	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money of the product	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Response time	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding of the request	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Efficiency of the service	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

In general how do you rate the services offered by Eustat?   1   2   3   4   5

Of the following groups of statistical operations, mark which ones you use, their importance, and your degree of satisfaction

Labour Market	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Industrial production index	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Industry, energy, R&D	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Joint information (ipi, ici, icgs, ecc)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
CPI (Consumer Price Index)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Economic accounts and Public sector	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Tourism	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Services	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Construction and housing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Foreign Trade	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Primary sector	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Demography and social customs	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Education	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Health	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Social protection	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Information society	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Directories (Companies and Establishments)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Basque language	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Others……………………………………………………………	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Of the following Eustat products, mark which ones you use, their importance, and your degree of satisfaction

Website	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Data Bank	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
CD-ROMs	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Books	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Leaflets	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Press releases	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Results analysis	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Methodological consultancy and sampling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Please give your rating of the following aspects related to the contact that you have had with EUSTAT

Polite treatment	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Staff expertise	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Time taken for information service to attend	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding of request made	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Equipment made available in the EUSTAT central office	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Equipment made available in the provincial offices	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Simplicity of contact	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Eustat library	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Delivery time of the information requested	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Level of Basque	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

As well as the statistic information offered by Eustat, do you use statistical information produced by other bodies?

National Statistics Institute (INE)   Provincial Councils   Town Councils Chambers of Commerce
        Others…………………………………………………

Why……

What type of
information……….

For what purposes do you use the information offered by EUSTAT? Please mark a maximum of three.

Research
Professional/business studies
Decision making
Divulgence of information
Teaching
Preparation of reports/analyses
Other…..(please specify)

Below there are some statements about the relationship between EUSTAT and its clients. Please mark your level of agreement or disagreement.

Eustat produces statistics that I find very useful for my activities	1	2	3	4	5
I use Eustat as my main source of statistical information	1	2	3	4	5
I recommend Eustat to others	1	2	3	4	5
Eustat products satisfy my information needs	1	2	3	4	5
Eustat is punctual in its publication of data	1	2	3	4	5
I intend to continue using Eustat products and services	1	2	3	4	5
Eustat is a reliable and independent body	1	2	3	4	5

In the space below please make any comments or suggestions that you feel could help improve the service offered by EUSTAT

………
………
………
………
………

Please indicate the activity sector to which you belong

Autonomous administration
Local administration
Central Administration
Business association
Trade union association
University
School
Research
Company
        Industrial
        Commercial
        Banking or Insurance
        Consulting
        Other
Media
Private user
Other