Implementing GSBPM – experiences from Denmark

Karin Blix[1]

[1]*Quality Coordinator, Statistics Denmark*

Abstract

In 2009, Statistics Denmark decided that GSBPM should be the process model for the institution. GSBPM was translated to Danish and activities were started to implement GSBPM in the organisation. The implementation had a rough birth. Only parts of the organisation got off to a good start. Many measures have been initiated over the years, but it has been difficult to get a proper hold on the organisation. The latest measures taken in the organisation has partly been the result of a large staff turnover and partly of pressure from outside the organisation.

This paper will describe some of the measures taken to implement and make GSBPM our process model and discuss how an organisation can benefit from adapting GSBPM as its own process model – without modifying the model itself.

Keywords: Quality in statistics, Standardisation, Implementing GSBPM in the organisation, GSBPM

1.   Introduction

Statistics Denmark introduced the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) to the organisation in 2009 – when pilots were conducted on five statistical products for which the production processes where documented related to the phases and sub-processes of GSBPM. This pilots were such a good experience that it was decided to implement GSBPM as the process model of Statistics Denmark. This was done in 2010. The implementation in the organisation had a slow start. This could be due to the lack of an anchoring in the organisation. From 2014, however, the process model has been anchored in the quality unit that was established this year.

Several attempts were made to increase the awareness of the process model and the need for documentation, but none that could get the whole organisation to adapt to the process model. During the COVID19-pandemic and the period after Statistics Denmark experienced an increased staff turnover than ever before and the lack of updated documentation more evident and the awareness in the organisation of GSBPM grew.

2. Making GSBPM the process model of Statistics Denmark

Implementing GSBPM as the process model for Statistics Denmark was done by translating GSBPM 4.0 to Danish and change the colours – that's it.

Figure 1: Making GSBPM the process model of Statistics Denmark
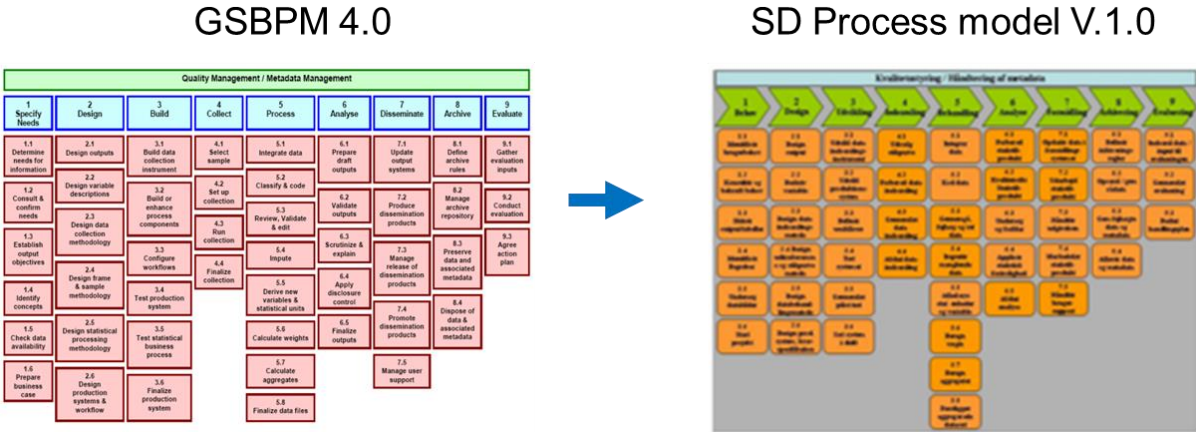
In the first years there were comments like; *The process model does not fit my/our statistics*, *The process model does not follow my/our order* and *The process model does not fit my/our code at all*.

It was emphasised that GSBPM is a generic model, and that it primarily is a common terminology for the processes needed to produce official statistics. It can both be used as a checklist when establishing new statistics production and a basis for documentation of an existing statistics production. And most of all GSBPM can be used as a common starting point for discussing statistics production across domains or even across institutions/countries, but this of course requires that we keep to GSBPM – and not make changes to accommodate specialities in statistics or organisations – it is almost always only a question of interpretation and explanation.

3. Making GSBPM more relevant

To make GSBPM or The Process Model more relevant in the organisation, several measures have been taken over the years. When a quality unit was established in Statistics Denmark in 2014 the process model got an anchoring in the organisation. We updated to GSBPM 5.0 and

Statistics Denmark's process model 2.0 in 2015. Like version 1.0 this was basically just a translation to Danish, but some effort was put into relating the explanations of the sub-processes to our organisation.

The quality unit has helped colleagues to document processes related to GSBPM by facilitating the documentation process. The quality unit has in addition to facilitating the documentation process given presentation and conducted workshops for the whole organisation, for departments and divisions on the advantages of GSBPM and how to get started documenting processes related to GSBPM.

The first thing we have always done, is to recommend to our colleagues to organise their working documents, files, etc. in a folder structure according to the process model. In this way, we create a common footing that makes it more intuitive for employees to find relevant material. This will, over time, make it easier for people to change domains, take over from colleagues etc.

Figure 2: Filing structure according to the GSBPM

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∨  📁 GSBPM filing structure
     📁 1. Specify needs
     📁 2. Design
     📁 3. Build
  >  📁 4. Collect
     📁 4.1 Create frame and select sample
     📁 4.2 Set up collection
     📁 4.3 Run collection
     📁 4.4 Finalise collection
     📁 5. Process
     📁 6. Analyse
     📁 7. Disseminate
     📁 8. Evaluate
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When Statistics Denmark implemented the Single Integrated Metadata Structure for quality reporting in 2015, it was made possible to arrange the SIMS-fields according to GSBPM in the metadata system. This was done in an attempt to communicate the advantages of completing the quality reporting (filling in the SIMS-fields) during the production of the statistics instead of having quality reporting as an extra task in the dissemination phase. This was not something

that was widely used. In the version 3.0 of the process model there reference to completion of quality reports (SIMS-fields) is given for each of the phases. First it is described when in the production process a quality report (or just a SIMS-document) should be created in the metadata system. For each of the phases in setting up of the system it is described which SIMS-fields to update and for each of the production phases Collect, Process, Analyse and Disseminate it is described what needs to be updated.

In Statistics Denmark we have performed internal quality reviews since 2015. GSBPM has always been used to assist to make sure the whole production process was covered. In the reports from the quality reviews an overview of the production processes is presented by the phases of GSBPM.

In the latest update of the internal guidelines on statistical methods reference is made to the process model. In all projects updating or modernisation production systems the process model is also actively used.

The latest addition to making GSBPM more relevant in the organisation has been to modernise our document on the process model. In 2024 we updated to GSBPM 5.1 and Statistics Denmark's process model 3.0. This update was more than just translation and change of colours – the phases and sub-processes has to a much larger extent been related to internal relations in Statistics Denmark. Some of the more extensive changes in version 3.0 are:
- Updating of the introduction, the descriptions of the phases and sub-process
- Proposals for quality assurance measures
- Reference to relevant framework systems
- Reference to completion of documentation of statistics (SIMS)
- Description of how to document the sub-process
- Tables and figures should be numbered and references to them must be included in the text.

The proposals for quality assurance measures given, have been inspired by the UNECE document on quality indicators for the GSBPM. Some years ago we had an ambition to make guidelines and checklists based on these quality indicators for all phases. The feedback from the organisation was that this was not very accessible for them, so the proposals for measures given in version 3.0 of the process model are not very complex. For the Disseminate-phase a common checklist has been developed and this list has to be filled out for all statistics when

disseminated. There are no common checklists for the other phases yet, but the proposals for quality assurance measures will be a starting point for developing checklists for the rest of the phases.

Some examples of quality assurance measures for the dissemination phase:
- Make sure you complete the checks on the checklist for the dissemination phase - available on the intranet under Quality and documentation
- Check guidelines for the news release and other information about news releases on the intranet under Communication
- Check the intranet under Communication on how to handle errors
- For evaluation: Write down what went well and what went less well in connection with the communication

To promote the use of common systems, internal framework systems relevant to each phase are listed in all phases. In the Design and Build phases relevant framework systems are mentioned under the relevant sub-processes and repeated under the phases Collect, Process, Analyse and Disseminate for inspiration.

To better facilitate the practicalities in documenting production process related to GSBPM, there is a description of how to how to document the sub-processes. By presenting pencil sketches we try to convince our colleagues that they should not focus on a fancy documentation tool but just start drawing up the activities taking place in the sub-processes. Examples of this can be seen in figure 1.

Figure 3: Example of how to document sub-process 4.1 with one (top) and three actors (bottom) participating in the process (illustration with Danish text)
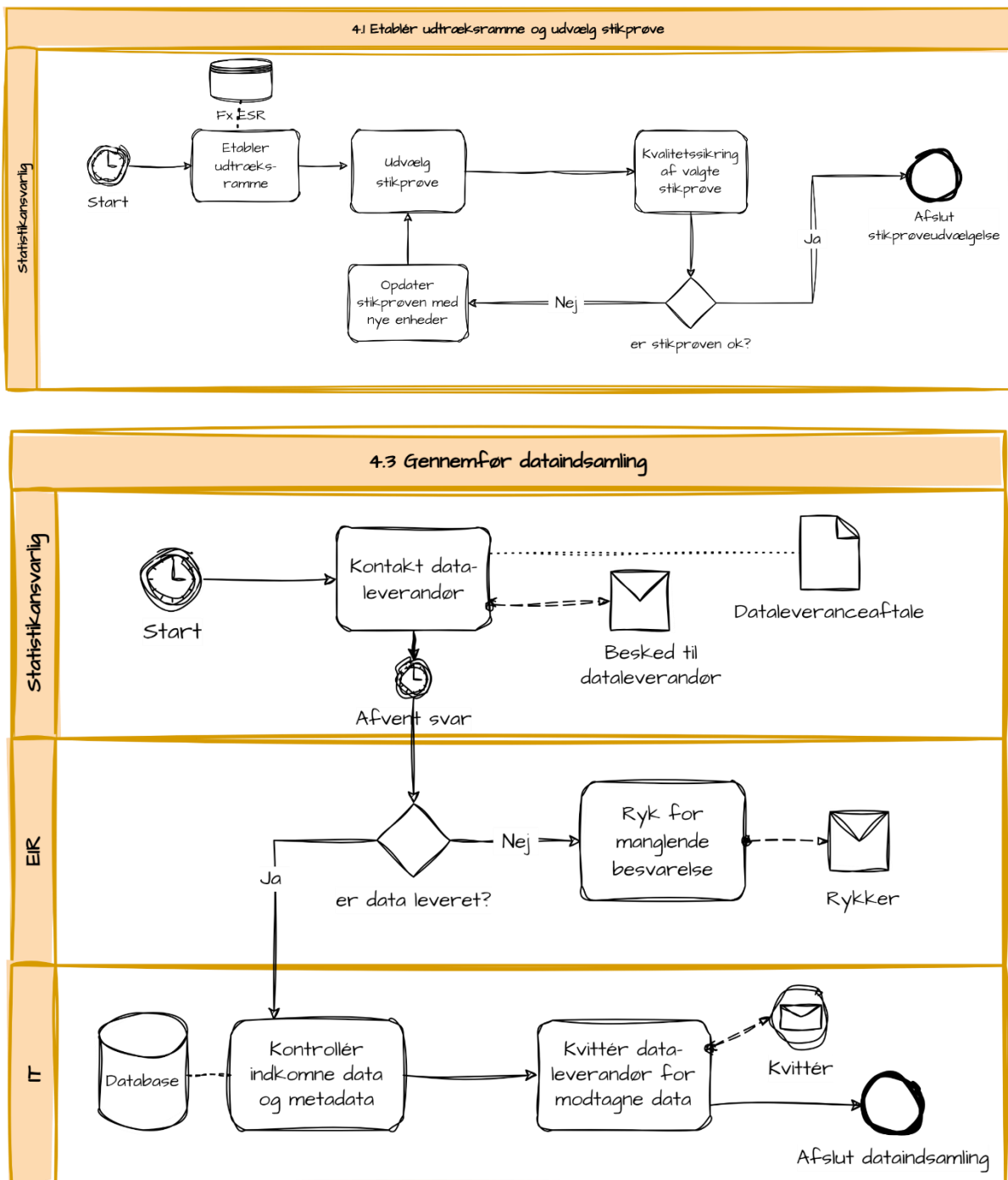
4. Conclusions

The process of implementing GSBPM as the process model of Statistics Denmark has been going on for many years. In the beginning of the process old legacies dominated and there

was some resistance in the organisation to relate to GSBPM. In the past couple of years it the organisation seems to be adapting to the model and accepting GSBPM as part of the way business is conducted. The increased staff turnover has no doubt had an impact on the change in the awareness and willingness to adapt to. Since the beginning of the journey it has been emphasised that GSBPM is a generic model that can be used by *anyone*, for *all* types of statistics. To underline this, it has been explained that even though the model looks strict and linear, the process model is not as such linear and the order of the processes can differ from the order of the numbering system – but the phenomenon that what each sub-process represents is given and the numbering of the sub-processes is given and as such we stick to the structure of the model and use it as a frame – as it is generic. This is what really makes GSBPM useful – even if we do not talk the same language or produce statistics with the same kind of sources etc., we can relate to sub-process 4.2, 5.3, 7.2 etc. – we have a common terminology.

References

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