

IRS 2016 Status update

Greetings from MRUC and RSCI!

Following the detailed review of 2016Q1 fieldwork that was carried out by Nielsen team, TechComm, MRUC and EY, various issues had been identified on ground, which we believed had to be corrected before continuing with the fieldwork. We had asked for the fieldwork to be stopped and there were detailed interactions with the Nielsen team on plugging the various loopholes and further ramping up the process to ensure a completely reliable data collection system, which was unparalleled in the industry. We are very happy to report that this exercise has now been completed, and with the active involvement of the senior Nielsen management team, we are now in a position to claim that the IRS 2016 study will be amongst one of the best, globally.

There have been some industry-firsts in terms of a Research Study of this nature, which we would like to highlight, as the next round of fieldwork gets underway.

BPI applied to a Research process

The entire data collection process was reviewed by the Nielsen team, alongwith an independent business process specialist, and the resultant recommendations have helped in streamlining the flow of information across various internal stakeholders, as well as a stronger control on project management.

FTE (full time employee) Model

Nielsen has moved into a FTE Model in Custom Research Space, with 100% FTEs upto a Supervisor level at all their Field offices. 40% of Interviewers have also been converted to FTE's. The scale of this is unprecedented, and a big step towards ensuring tighter control of ground-level operations by the Nielsen team.

Audio scrutiny

Following the detailed audio file scrutiny that was conducted on the Q1 data, by the Nielsen team as well as the Third party appointed by MRUC, it was seen to be a vital piece of information in verifying the authenticity of the data collected on ground. Hence, it was discussed and mutually agreed that going forward there will be a 100% scrutiny of all the audio files that were collected during the interviews, and final acceptance of an interview will include the outcome of this audio scrutiny, along with all other Quality checks that are already in place.

Batch Processing for Quality Control

As an outcome of the Q1 data review, there have been a set of pre-determined audit checks that have been agreed with the Nielsen team, and these will be mandated as a key deliverable for all future interviews. To ensure that these checks will be conducted on a concurrent basis and issues can be identified and addressed in a timely manner, Nielsen has proposed to implement a Batch Processing system – similar to ones implemented in a Manufacturing Industry. Every batch of 25-30 interviews of each interviewer will be checked for quality measures, and acceptance or rejection of those interviews will be decided as per the performance of that batch

of interviews. Repeated rejection of batches of any interviewer will cause action to be taken against that interviewer.

Technology upgrades

A separate technology team has been tasked to handle Tech issues faced by the on-ground team, and maintain a regular health-check on the hardware that is in play. A new set of Tablets have been procured for Supervisors, EIC and Managers, which will be used for the specific purpose of conducting back-checks.

Having worked on ensuring all the changes have been effected as planned, and the systems are in place, the fieldwork has once again kicked off across all the field offices, and the momentum will pick up as days go by. The re-work of Q1 interviews (around 30K+), will be targeted for completion by early Jan'17, and Q2 fieldwork will take off immediately post that. Rest assured that the subsequent rounds of fieldwork will also be subjected to the same, if not greater, level of scrutiny to ensure the quality of data collected is not compromised. The practice of monthly meetings between the RSCI Chairman, MRUC Chairman, TechComm Chairman and the senior Nielsen Management team will continue so that all key stakeholders are updated on issues and action taken immediately, wherever required.

It will be pertinent to point out at this stage that the threat of undue influence being exerted on the field staff by interested parties still continues and we are monitoring the same very closely. A detailed "Name and Shame" policy will be formalised and published very soon, which will hopefully act as a deterrent to such malafide efforts, and we seek your active support in ensuring this malpractice is curbed effectively.

Assuming an uninterrupted process going ahead, we will aim to complete all fieldwork, data validation, and thus release the IRS 2016 data by Q3 2017.

We understand the delay will cause hardships, however we believe that the resultant output will be of a significantly high quality and will be worth the wait, in the long run. We sincerely request your patience and full support on this.