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Directorate B: Quality, methodology and information systems
Unit B-1: Quality; Classifications



2011 Eurostat monitoring report
on NSI compliance
with the Code of Practice

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1. Introduction

Following the introduction of the European Statistics Code of Practice in 2005, a series of peer reviews was carried out between 2006 and 2008 to assess how well national statistical systems complied with the new Code. The peer reviews involved an external view and complemented the self-assessments that had been carried out by national statistical institutes at the end of 2005. The peer reviews focused in particular on the institutional environment and dissemination practices in Eurostat and in all EU and EFTA National Statistical Institutes.

The peer reviews identified a total of 868 improvement actions. National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) took responsibility for the implementation of their improvement actions and since 2008 the implementation has been monitored and reported upon annually by Eurostat at a national level. The 2008 results were summarised in a report to the European Parliament and the Council¹ and the results for subsequent years have served as input to the annual report of the European Statistics Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

For the 2011 monitoring exercise two key modifications were made to ensure that the monitoring remained both informative and relevant.

- First, the descriptions used to classify the status of the different national improvement actions were refined so that NSIs could provide more precision on the actual status of their actions. In particular, there was a need to identify actions where further progress was dependent on authorities outside the NSI, such as government ministries. It was also necessary to identify actions for which no further work is planned, for example because they were no longer relevant.
- Second, NSIs were asked to include any new actions that support the implementation of the Code of Practice. In this way the monitoring exercise will continue to provide an overview of relevant activities in Member States.

The Partnership Group of the ESS Committee was consulted on the proposed modifications (Annex 1) before the exercise was launched in April 2011.

This report provides an overall assessment of progress with actions to implement the Principles of the Code of Practice and updates the information provided in last year's report. Section A provides detailed information on the progress up to March 2011 in each country. Prior to its publication, national statistical institutes were given the opportunity to comment on the facts reported.

¹ 2008 Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Implementation of the Code of Practice, COM(2008) 621.

2. Progress between 2010 and 2011

Regular monitoring of the 868 peer review improvement actions began in 2008, by which point already 191 had already been completed and 677 actions were remaining. In 2011, further progress was achieved under all Principles of the Code of Practice:

- 76 peer review improvement actions were completed in the year to March 2011
- Overall, 595 (69%) of all improvement actions have been completed since the peer reviews in 2006-2008.

In particular, progress between 2010 and 2011 has been achieved under the principles of the Code relating to the institutional environment, such as Quality Commitment and Professional Independence.

Although slightly fewer actions were completed in comparison with the year to March 2010, this does not necessarily reflect a slowdown in activity within NSIs, because the resources required for different actions are not comparable (see Annex 2 on the issues to be taken into account when analysing progress over time). Table 1 summarises the progress by Principle between 2010 and 2011.

Table 1: Completion by Code of Practice Principle

Principle		Number of Peer Reviews Improvement Actions (in addition to 191 actions completed by 2008)				New Actions (defined in 2011)
		Total	Completed		Still open	
			Until 31/3/2010	1/4/2010 - 31/3/2011		
1	Professional Independence	34	14	7	13	0
2	Mandate for data collection	25	11	3	11	0
3	Adequacy of resources	48	31	2	15	0
4	Quality commitment	103	37	13	53	4
5	Statistical confidentiality	43	25	6	12	0
6	Impartiality and objectivity	46	27	6	13	0
7	Sound methodology	46	24	5	17	1
8	Appropriate statistical procedures	40	18	4	18	0
9	Non-excessive burden on respondents	54	22	3	29	1
10	Cost effectiveness	48	23	6	19	1
11	Relevance	27	19	4	4	0
12	Accuracy and reliability	35	15	4	16	1
13	Timeliness and punctuality	14	7	3	4	1
14	Coherence and compatibility	33	14	4	15	2
15	Accessibility and clarity	81	41	6	34	2
TOTAL		677	328	76	273	13

2.1. Types of improvement activities undertaken

NSIs have reported progress in a range of areas at the institutional level (Principles 1-6 of the Code). Examples of the activities completed across the ESS between April 2010 and March 2011 include:

- Adoption of new statistical legislation to reinforce statistical independence and to maximise the use of administrative data
- Implementation of a quality management system
- Improved procedures for statistical disclosure control
- Improved business register
- Development of electronic questionnaires
- Introduction of regular customer satisfaction surveys
- Improvements to the timeliness of statistical publications

NSIs also reported the following additional activities that support the implementation of the Code of Practice:

- Reinforcing links with other national providers of statistics, including central banks and academia
- Use of self-assessment tools to monitor implementation of the Code of Practice
- Introduction of procedures to monitor the costs of activities, projects and products
- Creation of appropriate organisational teams, networks and working groups to help to develop and support EFQM² and CAF³ quality management initiatives
- Provision of training in statistical quality and methodology
- Development of common IT systems
- Creation of an English language web portal for users
- National certification of official statistics.

2.2. Status of non-completed actions

The majority of the 273 actions which have not been completed are either not yet due (29%) or have been classified by the NSI as ongoing in nature with no specific deadline (42%). In some cases, progress has been delayed, either within the NSI (13%) or because progress depends on authorities outside the NSI such as government ministries (10%). A small proportion of actions have been incorporated into new actions (4%) and in 1% of cases, no further work is considered necessary by the NSI.

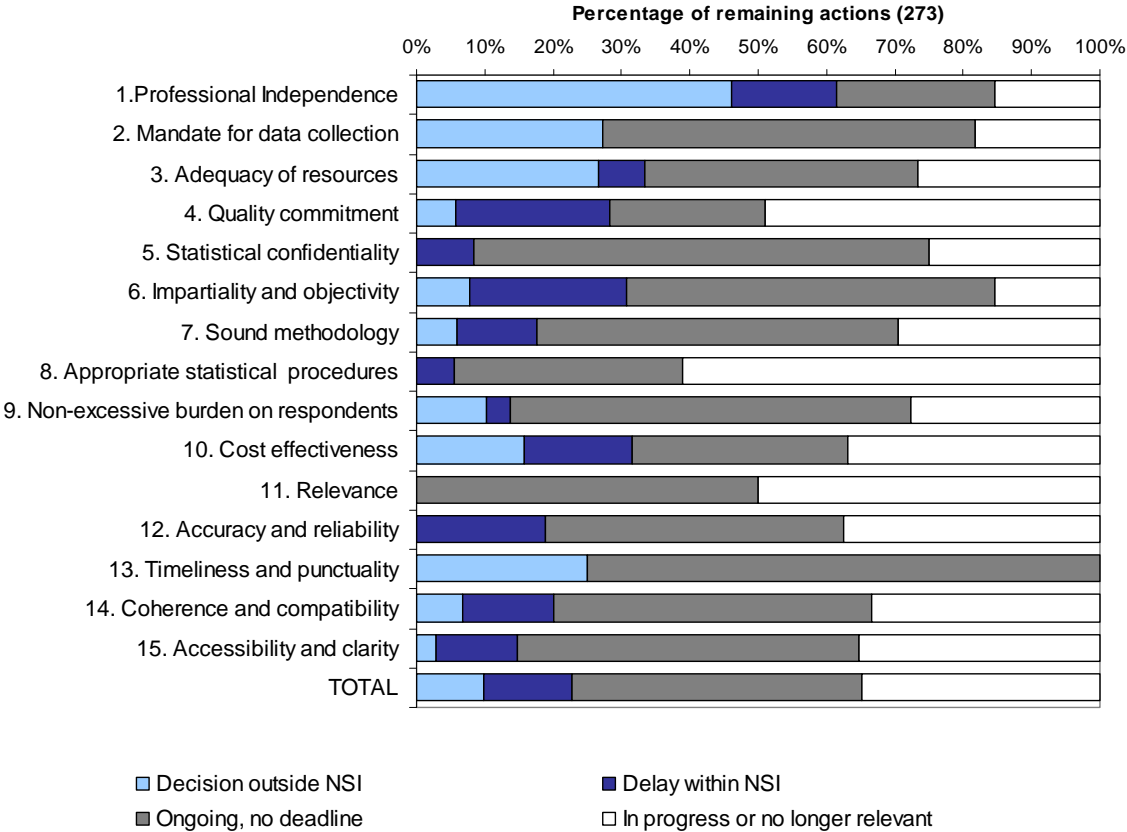
² European Foundation for Quality Management [The EFQM Excellence Model](#)

³ European Institute of Public Administration [Common Assessment Framework](#)

Chart 1 shows the status by Code of Practice Principle. The institutional Principles 1-6 contain a high proportion of actions that are dependent on progress being achieved outside the NSI. Delays within NSIs are more significant for Principle 4 (Quality Commitment), while "ongoing actions" are a marked feature for all the Principles.

Principle 4 has the highest number of remaining actions, while Principles 11 (Relevance) and 13 (Timeliness and Punctuality) each have only 4 actions remaining (see Annex 3 for details of the absolute numbers).

Chart 1. Remaining Improvement Actions by Principle and Type



2.3. Actions with status "no further work planned"

In response to requests from NSIs to be able to identify in the monitoring exercise any improvement actions which will not be implemented, the status "No further work on this issue is planned" was included in 2011. This status has been attributed to four peer review improvement actions in different Member States due to heavy workloads, insufficient resources or a change in the policy of the NSI (relating to how internal audits will be conducted). These actions will therefore be excluded from future monitoring exercises.

2.4. New actions

For the first time, the annual monitoring exercise includes new actions identified by Member States to implement aspects of the Code of Practice, which can then be tracked in future monitoring exercises. Table 1 shows that 13 new actions were added to the monitoring exercise in March 2011 across eight Principles of the Code. In 11 cases, the new actions incorporated earlier peer review actions that had not yet been achieved. Examples of new activities include:

- Development of the business register
- Enhancing electronic data collection and validation procedures
- Publication of national accounts methodology
- Development of quality reporting and quality assurance
- Improving timeliness of yearbooks
- Improving data consistency
- Provision of data tables in English

Progress with the implementation of the new actions will continue to be monitored annually along with all other remaining actions.

3. Issues arising from the 2011 monitoring exercise

The 2011 exercise established that progress with improvement actions is continuing and that more than two-thirds of the original peer review improvement actions have now been implemented. While this presents a generally positive picture, there are several areas where additional information would be useful in order to ensure the status of the improvement actions has been correctly recorded - completed status, ongoing status and new actions. Further clarification on these issues will lead to a more accurate evaluation of the state of implementation of the Code of Practice.

3.1. "Completed" status

For most of the 76 actions which have been identified as "completed", NSIs have provided useful commentary giving background details about progress with the action. However, there are also a number of actions which have been classified as "completed" without any supporting commentary. Although such commentary was not explicitly requested, for monitoring purposes it is useful to have a short description of the final outcome of the action, together with a reference source such as a link to a document or relevant web page. In the 2012 exercise, NSIs will be asked to provide such commentary for actions completed between April 2011 and March 2012.

3.2. "Ongoing" status

Annex 3 shows that there are 116 actions which are reported to be "ongoing with no specific deadline". However, the progress reports provided by Member States appear to show that the way status is being applied in different Member States is not consistent.

Originally "ongoing" was intended to apply to Peer Review actions which were defined in a continuous manner with no deadline, such as "improve timeliness of publications...", "increase use of administrative data sources...". In the monitoring exercise, it appears that "ongoing" is also being applied to:

- a) actions which may have been completed and which are now in continuous operation as part of standard procedures; and
- b) actions which are under way and not yet finished.

In the first case the correct status should be "completed" and in the second case a more appropriate classification is either "progressing and not yet due", "there have been delays within the NSI" or "further progress now depends on authorities outside of the NSI". The potential result of this inconsistent approach is that the number of completed actions may be undercounted. To ensure a consistent approach to the treatment of ongoing actions, more detailed guidance on the use of the "ongoing" status will be given to NSIs in the 2012 exercise.

3.3. Implementation deadlines

For a small number of improvement actions, information on the implementation deadline is not available. In the 2012 exercise, NSIs will be invited to provide details of any missing implementation dates and to indicate any revisions to existing dates, to give an indication of the expected implementation period for the remaining improvement actions.

4. Next steps

The 2011 exercise indicates that 31% of improvement actions still remain. Where delays have arisen due to factors beyond the immediate control of national statistical offices, close contact should be maintained with the relevant national authorities. In addition, national governments are called upon to support their statistical services in the implementation of the Code of Practice.

The Commitments of Confidence in Statistics, first proposed in Commission Communication "Towards robust quality management for European Statistics" (COM(2011) 211), will help to reinforce the implementation of the Code of Practice in Member States, by focusing government attention on priority areas where compliance with the Code needs to be improved, especially those with the status "further progress now depends on authorities outside of the NSI". Once agreed, the activities identified in the Commitments of Confidence will be incorporated into Eurostat's annual monitoring exercise.

It is important that the information about progress is as up-to-date and complete as possible and to facilitate this, Eurostat will provide additional guidance on what should be included under the different status categories. Eurostat will also request some additional information about implementation deadlines and the outcome of completed actions.

In addition, Eurostat will work with NSIs on the development of the quality assurance framework proposed by the Sponsorship on Quality in September 2011. This framework provides guidance on the activities, methods and tools required to implement Principles 4 and 7-15 and will serve as a useful tool for both implementation and assessment of compliance with the Code.

As has been the case in previous years, the Eurostat annual monitoring exercise is a key input into the annual ESGAB report on the implementation of the Code of Practice across the ESS as a whole and to the overall assessment of EU statistics to be presented at the forthcoming autumn ECOFIN Council.

The timeframe for future monitoring activity is as follows:

Refine the Quality Assurance Framework	2012
Commitments of Confidence defined in a revised Statistical Law	2012
First Commitments on Confidence signed	2012
2012 monitoring exercise	March 2012
2013 monitoring exercise including monitoring of Commitments on Confidence	March 2013
New round of NSI self-assessments and reviews expected	2013

Eurostat
October 2011

Section A: Country analyses

The following gives information by country on progress with the implementation of the peer review improvement actions between April 2010 and March 2011, based on the revised status categories. It concerns only those actions which were still outstanding after the last reporting exercise in 2010. Also mentioned are any important coordination activities concerning the implementation of the Code of Practice within the national statistical system, which took place between April 2010 and March 2011. The original peer review reports providing more contextual information concerning improvement actions can be consulted on the Eurostat website⁴.

A.1. Austria (AT)

Of the six outstanding improvement actions, Statistics Austria has completed two (development of Quality Guidelines and of a Revision Policy both approved by the Statistics Council and Economic Council), and work is on-going on the other four.

It is to be noted that for the action concerning the establishment of formal agreements on data quality with institutions responsible for administrative data, discussions have taken place and resulted in the conclusion that a formal agreement would not be viable, but that cooperation is on-going.

Progress is on-going on the extension of calculation of quality indicators which has been incorporated in the revision of the structure of the Standard Documentation (table containing the most important cornerstones of statistical products).

The extension of an integrated metadata system is ongoing and has been incorporated in the new strategy for 2011-2015 and an IT system is currently being evaluated.

The exchange of experiences on quality with the Austrian National Bank continues. There will be a common presentation comparing both systems of quality work in the framework of the Austrian Statistical Society.

A.2. Belgium (BE)

Of the 13 remaining actions, Statistics Belgium has completed two since March 2010 and work is underway on the others. Although there have been delays in the implementation of certain actions, many are now planned to terminate in 2011 (quality policy aimed at staff, publishing information on quality commitments and data protection policy on website, a system of quality audits and documentation procedures for data validation and error correction).

Concerning staff issues, the strategy to upgrade the Directorate General Statistics and Economic Information (DGSEI) personnel is progressing according to plan. On the other hand, the organisation of training for quality issues now depends on authorities outside the NSI.

⁴ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/quality/code_of_practice/peer_reviews

Actions to extend web-based inquiries to all statistical surveys and to increase statistical productivity are going as planned, as is the action to build a data warehouse to enable easier exploitation and combination of data for dissemination.

With the aim of promoting the implementation of the Code of Practice in Belgium, work has been undertaken since 2007 to implement a "certification process" for the production of statistics. This certification process will be based on principles of the Code of Practice but its completion now depends on the evolution of the Belgian institutional context. Also, a specific space on the official website will be dedicated to the Code of Practice and to quality in general.

A.3. Bulgaria (BG)

Of the 23 outstanding actions in 2010, 17 have now been completed. The Bulgarian National Statistical Institute (BNSI) has started work on all remaining actions.

Actions referring to the development of a new IT strategy aligned with the Generic Statistical Business Process Model have been completed. The project "Planning and Design of Statistical Surveys" was closed due to inefficiency. Improvements in on-line dissemination have been implemented including actions on the definition of a clear dissemination policy, preparation for implementation of the Eurostat tools for dissemination of data and metadata, publication on website of a statement of Protection of Statistical Secrecy and improvements concerning the technical means for data protection.

A minimum set of output quality indicators has been outlined in the Guidelines on quality criteria in the National Statistical System of Bulgaria, elaborated by the BNSI. The mechanisms for continuous quality improvement have also been outlined. Evaluations of the quality and completeness of the business registers have been undertaken regularly.

The BNSI has introduced certain procedures to cover the improvement of actions on error reporting, implementation of a quality management policy (including a system of quality audits – action still on-going), drafting of a specific written policy concerning misuse of data, and documenting administrative processes.

An important on-going action concerns the improvement of the internal legal basis for data protection including a confidentiality manual. The BNSI intends to discuss this matter with the Information Protection Council and to approve the application of the internal legal base in the National Statistical System (NSS).

Concerning actions aimed at the reduction of the respondents' burden, a Strategy for Reducing Respondents' Burden has been drafted and the extension of data collection based on electronic questionnaires has been done. The share surveys based on electronic questionnaires has increased to 52% (including the electronic Housing Census in February 2011).

There are plans to implement a Time Recording System in 2011 which should help the BNSI to analyse expenditure according to specific activities.

The National Revenue Agency (NRA) has made some improvements concerning the information system for collection of Intrastat declarations in order to facilitate the work of customers and improve the quality of the information provided. Principles where the NRA has been especially active include 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13 and 14.

A new agreement aiming to improve cooperation, secure data availability and quality, data timeliness and completeness was drawn up between the BNSI and the National Customs Agency (NCA).

In order to promote the implementation of the Code of Practice in Bulgaria, in October 2011 the BNSI organised a Workshop on Quality Assurance in the National Statistical System. The quality activities in the NSS, the Peer Review Recommendations and the follow-up implementation of the Code of Practice were discussed and future joint work on the harmonisation of quality management and assessment was outlined.

The BNSI also monitored the implementation of the Code of Practice among other national producers using a survey on quality self-assessment developed on the basis of the "Self-Assessment Checklist for Survey Managers", the Code of Practice and the NSI Questionnaire for quality self-assessment in statistical departments.

A.4. Switzerland (CH)

Of the outstanding 18 improvement actions, three have been completed by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and work has started on all remaining actions.

A partial revision of the Statistical law has started and will include measures to increase clarity on confidentiality and to apply further restrictions. If a complete revision is deemed necessary, this will take place in a second step.

Actions with the new data and information centre at the University of Lausanne have been completed. They encompass the implementation of a common information system and the building up of research cooperation on questionnaire testing and survey management. Also cooperation with the University of Neuchatel has progressed with an increase in the subsidy for 2011.

The FSO is progressing with work to change from a traditional stove-pipe survey approach to an integrated system based on using registers and supplementary surveys. Regular progress reports are issued to the Board and the work is foreseen to be completed by 2015.

Work has also started on the introduction of the CAF model and first results will be available this year. These results will feed into the final definition of Quality Management based on the Code of Practice. A report on the new Quality Management should be available in December 2011.

A new contract is being drafted between the FSO and the Federal Office for Professional Education and technology in order to establish formal agreements for exceptions to the equal access rules. Also, exceptions are now documented on a special meta-information page.

Actions to improve metadata quality are on-going. The number of standardised metadata descriptions is increasing with the advancement of the MetaStat@SIS project which aims to centralise the statistical metadata and to re-use it wherever possible.

Concerning the implementation of the Code of Practice among other national statistical providers, the FSO is planning to examine this year the situation at the Swiss National Bank, Swiss Federal Customs and State Secretariat for Economic Affairs.

A.5. Cyprus (CY)

Of the 16 remaining actions, four have been completed by the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus (CYSTAT). However, due to the imbalance between the level of staffing and workload, one action has been temporarily abandoned (review of statistical outputs) and four actions have been postponed or delayed (actions include: systematic training in quality matters, publication of information on methods and procedures, review of structural organisation, and more resources devoted to analysis of data). It should also be noted that actions aimed at improving staffing levels are marked as depending on authorities other than the NSI.

The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes has been strengthened. CYSTAT cooperated closely with the Social Insurance Services for the transition of the Social Insurance Register from NACE Rev.1.1 to NACE Rev.2. By December 2010 the change was successfully completed thus making the SIR data ready for use by CYSTAT. The successful updating of the Business Register from different administrative sources (VAT Register, Social Insurance Register, Registrar of Companies) has rendered the holding of a Census of Establishments in 2012 (as originally scheduled) unnecessary.

The Quality Management Unit has been set up and is working towards the development of a policy for quality management that will standardise and systematise practices and applications within CYSTAT. Concerning the monitoring of statistical outputs, a strategic plan for quality based on the Code of Practice has been developed and made public on the website.

Concerning the development of standard metadata, the new website of CYSTAT, launched in October 2010, offers a dedicated section for metadata in each statistical sub-theme. The aim is to make available the metadata information in a standardised format by applying the ESMS standard. In this framework it is envisaged to use the National Reference Metadata Editor as soon as this becomes available.

In order to help staff in their dealings with the media, a 3-day training course took place in December 2010. 25 colleagues (20% of the staff) participated. The course was very successful and CYSTAT already plans to conduct a similar training course in the near future.

In order to ensure the confidentiality of data, it should be noted that the Department of Information Technology Services (DITS) is the competent authority for securing all electronic transmissions from and to CYSTAT. DITS is on continuous alert and takes all necessary measures to prevent any confidentiality breaches and cooperates with the CYSTAT Confidentiality Committee.

The general level of compliance with the Code of Practice of the major data producers in Cyprus is considered as high. This assessment is derived from CYSTAT's experience of cooperation with them and from the self-assessments conducted by each of the six major producers of statistical data in the past.

A.6. The Czech Republic (CZ)

Of the 15 outstanding actions, the Czech Statistical Office (CzSO) has completed one concerning the dialogue with users about micro data agenda (see sub-principle 5.1).

The action concerning the open recruitment of the office of President of CzSO has been started and the CzSO and the Czech Statistical Council have opened the debate about Principle 1 and its implementation in national conditions.

Regarding quality commitment, a new round of internal methodological audits including quality evaluation is being prepared and information on data quality including selected quality indicators (LFS, IT survey) is available on the website.

CzSO is currently increasing the range of statistics for which comprehensive metadata, including data on quality, is available. Meta-information related to statistical indicators and methodological notes (especially in the business statistics area) are accessible on the website.

The project Statistical Meta-information System (SMS) which will integrate various requirements of the statistical information system (objectives, processes and procedures, quality aspects, producers and users aspects, data storing, outputs etc.) has been extended to include the processing of data on the population census. SMS is closely linked with the project concerning the redesign of the statistical information system where work to reduce administrative burden, especially on small businesses, and to replace surveys by administrative data sources is progressing. This redesign project forms the basis for the implementation of a new technological environment at the CzSO. New tools and applications including web forms as a new way of data collection for respondents will be established by 2013.

The Ministry for Regional Development, a member of the State Statistical Service, was informed by the CsZO of the Code of Practice. The CsZO has ensured that all data providers within the State Statistical Service have made progress in implementing the following principles of the Code: non-excessive burden on respondents, cost effectiveness and statistical confidentiality.

Twice a year the CzSO organizes Methodological Days for the members of the State Statistical Service in order to discuss all relevant and topical information for producing statistics including the implementation of the Code of Practice.

The CzSO coordinates statistical surveys within the State Statistical Service, supervises the methodology of the statistical data production process as well as the regular quantification of the administrative burden on respondents, and provides consultations related to issues dealt with by the Code.

A.7. Germany (DE)

Of the nine remaining improvement actions, six have been completed by the Federal Statistical Office (DESTATIS) since the last review; these include the development and implementation of methodology and tools for ensuring statistical data confidentiality, increasing the percentage of university graduates as total share of staff, the implementation of regular customer surveys and the completion of a project on quality indicators for administrative data. Also actions related to systematically documenting statistical business processes using the UNECE Generic

Statistical Business Process Model have been completed. This should help to ensure transparency and is the basis of a guideline for the standardisation of statistical processes using special IT tools.

In order to push forward the increased use of administrative data, a national law about the use of administrative data came into force on 11 November 2010. Another initiative to amend the 2009 Federal Statistical Law with a provision to make online reporting obligatory is envisaged in this election period.

With the aim of promoting coherence and comparability, a uniform economic identification number is currently being introduced under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Finance. The process should be finished by 2013.

In 2008, a working group on quality of the statistical processes and products with representatives of DESTATIS and the Statistical Offices of the Länder was set up and in 2010/2011 it concentrated on the redesign and standardization of the existing user-oriented quality reports by considering European developments and on the development of quality indicators. Pilot projects on the implementation of regular DESAP self-assessments in the German decentralised statistical system were also launched.

A.8. Denmark (DK)

There are eight outstanding improvement actions, of which four are ongoing, three have no explicit deadline and one has a deadline which concerns principle 3 (deadline 2008). Work on all actions has started.

The proposal to make an amendment to the Danish Statistical Law on the procedures for appointing the Director General and the Board has not been taken forward and further progress now depends on authorities outside Statistics Denmark. Concerning the shortage of staff and possible financing, first meetings have been held with the relevant Ministries e.g. regarding needs within the area of social statistics.

On the basis of pilot projects carried out in 2010, work is continuing to put in place a system to monitor quality according to ESS components.

A project is on-going to establish an integrated metadata system with the aim of improving the general documentation of statistical production processes.

In order to coordinate all national activities regarding European statistics, Denmark has established a Coordination Committee chaired by Statistics Denmark in 2009. The implementation of the Code of Practice is part of the mandate for this body. However, Statistics Denmark has no legal means to monitor or decide upon the implementation of the Code of Practice among other national providers of European statistics.

A.9. Estonia (EE)

According to the last progress report, 15 improvement actions were still outstanding in April 2010. In the meantime, three of these actions have been completed through the adoption of a new Official Statistics Act in August 2010. This Act explicitly states the independence of

Statistics Estonia in the content and timing of statistical releases, clarifies the role of the Director General, includes census statistics as a chapter, and regulates the work of the Statistical Council. A fourth action concerning the implementation of a quality management system through the EFQM model has also been completed.

In order to make information on methods and procedures publicly available, Statistics Estonia foresees to disseminate metadata directly from the metadata system to the webpage in 2012.

Concerning the improved use of administrative data, Statistics Estonia have carried out an analysis of two administrative sources (Register of Roads and administrative data on postal and communication services), based on data renewal. Statistics Estonia also continues its participation in the ESSnet AdminData project. Preparation activities are continuing for using annual accounting reports for making structural business statistics from the beginning of 2012 and preparations for register-based census have been started.

In order to improve procedures, the development of a common system for editing data is ongoing and will be finished in 2011 for Census and some administrative data sources. The system will be enlarged later to cover household and business surveys.

With a view to communicating appropriate accuracy indicators to users, many new tables (with indicators such as response rate and standard error) have been added to the database with a timetable for future dissemination.

In order to ensure accessibility and clarity, most metadata is described according to ESMS and its concepts. Also the government regulation, "Procedure for Protection of Data Collected and Processed by the Statistical Office", will be redrafted in 2011.

The entry into force of the Official Statistics Act in August 2010 has substantially strengthened the links to Regulation (EC) N° 223/2009.

Due to a lack of resources, the action concerning the development of a system of recommendations, guidelines and handbooks has had to be postponed.

A.10. Greece (EL)

Of the 17 improvement actions listed, the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) has completed one action (establishment of the Council of the Hellenic Statistical System), four are new for 2011 and others have been regrouped. Two actions aimed at recruiting more and better qualified staff (both statistical and IT) have been hampered through budget restrictions and now depend on authorities outside ELSTAT.

In order to improve the quality of data, ELSTAT plans to gradually replace all printed questionnaires by electronic ones by 2013. Also, an improvement in process documentation is on-going and should be completed by the end of this year. Another action concerns improvements to planning and includes the study of the results of the quality reports (ongoing process), the DESAP evaluation, and the user satisfaction survey (ongoing process). The DESAP evaluation is expected to be completed within 2011. Furthermore, a formal survey of ELSTAT's ICT needs was carried out in September 2010 and recommendations for a development project were drafted by an external consultant in November 2010. However, the continuation of this action depends on funding.

Work is on-going to improve the quality of ELSTAT's statistical business register. A Working Group was set up in 2010, with the participation of ELSTAT staff and representatives of the main data providers for the statistical business register. It focused its work on variables needed for the register and on relevant sources to collect the related data. An external expert provided consultancy on the statistical business register in January 2011 and compiled a technical report describing the current situation of ELSTAT's statistical business register and proposing a development project.

ELSTAT by its decision published in the Government Gazette, defined the agencies of the Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS) which have the responsibility or obligation to collect statistical data. By decision of ELSTAT, the *Regulation on Statistical Obligations of the agencies of the Hellenic Statistical System* is to be established. The Regulation also sets out the obligations of the ELSS agencies in order to ensure the quality of ELSS statistics.

In order to improve accessibility and clarity, ELSTAT foresees actions relating to IT: the extension to the dissemination formats which is already applied for XLS and CSV formats, and the application of the SDMX template for the metadata of all surveys by the end of 2011. Also, all methodological texts relating to the production of statistics for the national accounts, fiscal data and all other statistics produced by ELSTAT should be published on ELSTAT's website according to a relevant action scheduled in the Joint Overall Statistical Greek Action Plan (JOSGAP). JOSGAP is the result of extensive work undertaken by Eurostat in cooperation with the Greek authorities to identify critical actions needing urgent implementation (particularly regarding public finance statistics) as well as medium term actions designed to enhance the Greek statistical system as a whole.

ELSTAT collaborated with the Ministry of Interior in the development of a new questionnaire and web application for collecting economic data from local authorities. There was also cooperation with the General Accounting Office in the collection of monthly data from several General Government entities.

According to the new statistical law No 3832/2010 adopted in March 2010, ELSTAT certifies as “official” statistics which have been produced by the other ELSS agencies. This certification will be conducted on the basis of quality reports that, according to the above law, the ELSS agencies are obliged to compile and submit to ELSTAT, for the statistics they produce. The degree of implementation of the Code of Practice will be the subject of the certification of those agencies' statistics by ELSTAT.

A.11. Spain (ES)

Of the 19 remaining improvement actions, the National Statistical Office of Spain (INE) has completed one (INE has become an active member in SDMX ESSnet to foster a standard format for dissemination of SDMX).

In order to further agreements leading to the use of administrative data, INE has extensively exploited the data kept in the Tax Agency, as well as the Social Security and other administrative sources.

With a view to improving quality, the Quality Unit is carrying out research in order to identify the good practices inside the INE. Other actions are awaiting the outcome of the Sponsorship on Quality group.

Actions are on-going in order to improve data confidentiality: updating of the data protection manual and implementing security protocols when linking records inside INE. However, due to lack of financial and human resources, no further work is planned on developing special purpose software to systematise data confidentiality matters.

An internal working group has begun updating the methodological notes associated with publication of the results of statistics in order to highlight the aims, uses and limitations, in terms of information and analysis, of the released data.

With the aim of ensuring a sound methodology, INE has been building up cooperation with the academic community and often resorts to them for help in internal training. Also in order to improve metadata information, structural metadata systems are being integrated, especially in the data collection software. In order to improve the sampling frame of surveys, some actions have been launched concerning surveys in households and individuals

On 23rd December 2010, the Council of Ministers adopted an Agreement including five measures aimed at the reduction of the response burdens for enterprises and households.

In order to systematically monitor the conduct of statistical processes and introduce quality improvements, a quality organisation structure is being developed by the Quality Unit.

In order to promote the implementation of the Code of Practice, the Spanish National Statistical Plan 2009-2012 states that all administrative statistical units and all producers of statistics should take into account the principles of the Code of Practice. Also INE organizes an annual seminar on the Code of Practice and all aspects of quality.

A.12. Finland (FI)

After the review in 2010, Statistics Finland had 7 improvement actions on-going. Of these, one action concerning the integration of automatic disclosure control into IT applications has been completed.

The framework for process management (definition of core processes, process owners and their tasks) has been accepted and implementation and consolidation of the new system is on-going. The definition of quality assurance framework is advancing, as is the implementation of a quality reporting system with the development of quality indicators foreseen for 2015.

A project for the development of data editing and imputation should be completed by 2012.

In order to increase coherence and comparability, a project on the internationalisation of enterprises was completed by the end of 2010 as was the project on the measurement of prices and volumes. A further project on data collection from enterprises will be completed by the end of 2011 as planned.

The implementation of common metadata standards for all statistics is on-going as planned and the deadline is foreseen for the end of 2012.

The Code of Practice has been introduced for the first time in the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. Also the quality criteria of Official Statistics of Finland have been updated and they now correspond more closely with the Code of Practice. Quality seminars are organised regularly.

A.13. France (FR)

Six improvement actions are still on-going at the French Statistical Office (INSEE).

There have been delays in implementing the profiling of business statistics due to a lack of resources. However, new staff has since been recruited to deal with profiling groups in business statistics. In order to minimise burden on respondents, INSEE is implementing a new system for structural business statistics. At the current time, a business register (SIRIUS) is being developed and should be completed in 2012.

In the effort to extend the current quality reporting to the full range of business statistics, 31 producer oriented quality reports on business surveys had been carried out by March 2011 and some are available on the website.

A quality assurance framework for household surveys was drawn up at the end of 2010. It will be implemented for two household surveys (family budget survey and information exchange and daily life survey) before being generalised.

INSEE is also implementing an online data collection for population census which should be operational in 2013.

With the aim of promoting the use of the Code of Practice, staff from INSEE followed a training course in 2010 which, in turn, enables them to train others. Also, INSEE undertakes annually a dialogue with the ministerial statistical offices to decide which actions to implement in order to improve the compliance with the principles of the Code. A document called “quality action plan” has been drawn up. It contains action forms which specify the content of the action, the office concerned, the timetable and the indicators of follow-up. A progress report is made twice a year. 36 actions were implemented in 2010 in 9 statistical offices.

A.14. Hungary (HU)

There are currently 22 on-going improvement actions, three of which are new since the last report. Certain actions concerning the strengthening of role of the Hungarian Statistical Office (HCSO), access to micro data for researchers and the use of administrative data depend on the adoption of a new statistical law: the draft should be submitted to the government at the end of this year.

In order to ensure the use of appropriate statistical procedures, the development of the integrated data processing system with quality indicators has been carried out and is currently being tested. This system should also allow the management of information on data receipt. Although the preparation of handbooks for all the process phases has been cancelled due to lack of resources, handbooks on some key methods are foreseen. Also an integrated data capture system for interview surveys is partly finished and is already in use.

With the aim of reducing administrative burden on respondents, the HCSO has reduced the number of questions and direct data collections and steadily increased the use of administrative data sources. Also, electronic contact data of respondents is now a part of the business register and the deadline for the full coverage of all respondent businesses is early 2013.

Improvement actions on the introduction of process quality management and a general production process management system have had to be postponed due to a lack of resources. The project concerning the introduction of mobile devices in surveys for data capture has also been delayed, but implementation and testing for the Labour Force Survey can start in 2012 if financial support can be found. Further actions include the introduction of a new validation procedure and the revision of the quality measurement concept.

Timeliness of the Statistical Yearbook has been improved by bringing forward the publication by two months (traditionally published on 15 October).

Work is on-going to strengthen the coherence of economic data by introducing complex validation of large units through the implementation of new IT tools and the training of staff.

The Code of Practice is a recommendation for all members of the Hungarian official statistical service and the HCSO can provide support if requested. However, the HCSO has no authority at the present time to monitoring the implementation of Code of Practice.

A.15. Ireland (IE)

After the last round of reporting in 2010, the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO) had 28 on-going improvement actions, three of which have been completed (improvements to database dissemination and quality measures in metadata).

Work is ongoing with a group composed of official statisticians across the Irish Public Sector to consider how best to implement the Code of Practice in a standard way with respect to statistics compiled by other organisations. This work will feed into the development of formal agreements with other organisations which disseminate statistics under the CSO web portal.

In order to develop formal agreements concerning the exchange of administrative data, the CSO is developing and implementing 'framework type' Memoranda of Understanding with key departments that transmit or may transmit critical data from administrative sources to CSO. Furthermore, the CSO and Revenue Commissioners have agreed a Common Business identifier to be used between the two organisations.

After the implementation of the structural changes to the CSO, it has moved towards a "process" based organisation and is aimed at eliminating the "stove pipe" scenario that had existed in a number of areas of the organisation. Significant emphasis has also been placed on the exploitation of administrative data and the potential of data linking.

As part of the initiatives on quality commitment, the CSO has committed to an ongoing process of rolling business area reviews. These reviews generate tangible and quantifiable quality improvements (for example in the area of improved timeliness for dissemination). Also, with the aim of critically reviewing statistical outputs, the CSO also hosts a number of standing

liaison groups (Agriculture, Tourism, Transport, Energy, Environment, Prices and Business Statistics).

In order to ensure statistical confidentiality, access control procedures including restrictions to access on identifiable records have been put in place. The rules, procedures and protocols for confidentiality are kept under constant review.

So that administrative records are unbiased and can be used for quality statistical purposes, CSO makes available metadata (including frequency and summary tables on all variables).

Many actions are on-going to reduce administrative burden on respondents: increase the number of agreements in place to use administrative data, co-ordinate Statistical data collection by CSO and other agencies (environmental and tourism statistics), and use of XBRL filling facility for all larger tax entities as from 2013.

In order to improve cost effectiveness, the CSO has launched a new dissemination databank. The data are now served on the web directly from a relational database with replication technology linking the internal dissemination database with the database on the web. Also the CSO is currently redesigning the statistical release processes to give more interactive on-line access.

The needs of users will be better taken into account through the development of a new implementation strategy including a number of new statistical products based on linking data sources.

Following the completion of the specific analysis of revisions of the national accounts in 2008, other statistical domains continue to monitor their data and assess whether revisions are warranted or not, subject to general office revisions guidelines or more specific domain guidelines.

The work concerning the further development of metadata is currently on hold and will be re-examined later in the year. However, efforts to improve the presentation and content of the publications are on-going and substantial progress should be made in 2012. Also improvements in the metadata to include quality measures are on-going.

Elements of the Code of Practice, with particular reference to sub-sections of principle 4 (Quality Reports), have also been introduced to Department of Social Protection and Department of Education by the CSO. Also, a formal network of official statisticians from different organisations has been established in late 2010 to provide input to and seek feedback on various aspects of the development of the Irish Statistical System.

A.16. Iceland (IS)

Nine improvement actions are still outstanding. Statistics Iceland has only made progress on the publishing of the annual work programme, but for all other actions, there have been delays mainly for budgetary reasons. However, it is foreseen that the situation should improve as from autumn 2011. A formal agreement has been made with the Central Bank of Iceland incorporating the Code of Practice in general terms.

A.17. Italy (IT)

According to the National Institute of Statistics in Italy (ISTAT) all eight actions open since the last review have been completed.

On 7th October 2010 a Regulation laying down the provisions for ISTAT reorganisation was published in the Italian Official Journal. The Decree states that ISTAT is an independent public body with scientific, organisational, financial and accounting autonomy. It carries out its activities on the basis of scientific independence, impartiality, objectivity, reliability, quality and confidentiality of the statistical information, thus enforcing the principles of the Code of Practice. This Decree also establishes a specific duty of ISTAT to define methods and standard forms for the collection of administrative information for statistical purposes, as well as to coordinate the changes to administrative forms, in order to maximise the use of administrative data for statistical purposes.

To help identify users' needs, a proposal has been presented to the Committee for Policy-making and Coordination of Statistical Information (Comstat) to establish a National Users Council. The Council will be established in spring 2011.

The Italian Code of Official Statistics was formally adopted by the Committee for Policy-making and Coordination of Statistical Information (COMSTAT), and a directive on the implementation of the Code at national level was published in the Italian Official Journal in October 2010. The Code will be applied within the whole national statistical system (mainly made of public administrations), namely by any organizational unit in charge of the production, processing and dissemination of official statistics. Also, a working group for monitoring the implementation of the Code of Practice was established. A new in-depth survey, both with interviews and peer reviews, is scheduled by the end of the year, to monitor and evaluate the implementation progress, anomalies, promote ad hoc solutions, and identify best practices.

A.18. Liechtenstein (LI)

After the last review, the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein had three outstanding improvement actions. In the meantime, the action concerning the use of registers for the next population census has been implemented. However, this important workload meant that the drafting of quality guidelines had to be postponed.

The drafting of internal handbooks has been integrated in the yearly planning process for the individual staff members. The number of internal handbooks increased last year, but the action is not yet completed.

In Liechtenstein, the Office of Statistics is the sole producer of European statistics.

A.19. Lithuania (LT)

Of the six outstanding improvement actions, Statistics Lithuania have completed three: they comprise the implementation of the e-questionnaires in business surveys, preparing a methodological framework for cost-benefit analysis, and developing recommendations on how to deal with quality trade-offs.

A Draft Law on the Amendment of the national Law on Statistics specifying the principles of the Code of Practice and strengthening the coordinating role of Statistics Lithuania was prepared and presented to Ministry of Finance in January 2011. The Ministry is responsible for the submission of this Draft to the Government and to the Parliament.

Work is on-going to test previously approved questionnaires according to the approved procedures. By the end of 2011 it is planned to test 30 questionnaires.

In order to limit burden on respondents, Statistics Lithuania is currently developing a new IT system allowing direct data extraction from business accounting systems. The implementation of the new system should start at the end of 2011.

Statistics Lithuania has been encouraging the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior and the State Forest Survey Service to implement the Code of Practice. Action plans on the implementation of the Code of Practice in other providers of national statistics are on-going and revised on a yearly basis. Other training and awareness raising events include meetings with different user groups, seminars, and the principles of the Code of Practice form part of a teaching programme at the University of Vilnius.

A.20. Luxembourg (LU)

After the last report in 2010, the National Statistical Institute of Luxembourg (STATEC) had 33 outstanding actions. In the meantime five of these actions have been completed. These are mainly actions linked with the drafting of a new statistical law which should be adopted by the end of 2011. Other completed actions include giving feedback to respondents through the publication of a magazine and making clearer the distinction between statistical data and forecasts.

Efforts to access administrative data free of charge have been successful and cover almost all meaningful administrative data. However, some domains are in a process of reengineering at State level (e.g. population register) and STATEC has to wait for completion of these reengineering processes. This issue is also covered by the new statistical law.

In order to improve the adequacy of resources, an action foresees better planning including the drafting of a medium-term business plan. This issue will be raised in December 2011, but at the current time it is partly covered by using the Eurostat 5-year programme. Regular training sessions are carried out on quality and dissemination.

Work is on-going to reinforce the tools to monitor product quality. Methodological documents are available on the Intranet of STATEC, classified by the units producing statistics (presentations, legal bases, quality reports, etc.) and will also be available on their Statistical Portal.

Progress is on-going to improve access to metadata. The French version of a glossary is already available on the portal and the English version will be available in Q2/2011. The glossary will be permanently updated. Documents have also been published on the Internet concerning the system of pre-access to data under embargo and standards on how to proceed in the case of serious errors.

Although work has been on-going, further development of the Quality Management System at STATEC, with a focus on the generalisation and standardisation of the description of processes, can only be completed through an increase in human resources, i.e. with permanent staff dedicated to quality management and methodological issues.

Efforts are on-going to limit the burden on respondents and this is achieved by reinforcing electronic means (questionnaire of the population census, data on tourism statistics, Intrastat, Balance of payments and collection by electronic forms for the Business register) and regular monitoring. Also structured data collection will start in 2012. XML will probably be the first format used although STATEC has urged the State Computing Centre to foresee XBRL in the future.

In the perspective of the new statistical law there has been an internal reorganisation of the office creating a more coherent work process in enterprise statistics and macro-economic statistics. The reorganisation will take some adaption time and further synergies will be looked for in the future. Work is planned to continue in 2012.

With a view to improve accessibility and clarity, STATEC will be informing users of major changes in key statistical products via "Statistics Portal" as from April 2011 which will also be available in English. A first set of definitions of metadata has been elaborated and is available on the website. Training in statistical literacy (both for internal staff and external bodies) is an on-going action.

The Code of Practice has been introduced and explained to the Statistical Advisory Council. Actions to promote the Code of Practice will be reinforced following the adoption of the new statistical law.

A.21. Latvia (LV)

Only three actions remained open for the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (CSB) after the 2010 review. The action concerning the full availability in the CSB internet database of all indicators included in the National Programme of Statistical Information has been completed.

The two remaining actions no longer depend on the CSB: in order to achieve the institutional independence of the CSB, an amendment in the Constitution is necessary; the introduction of a competency-based evaluation system for all public sector staff is currently awaiting decision.

No activities to extend the implementation of the Code of Practice across the Latvian statistical system have been carried out due to limited resources.

A.22. Malta (MT)

The National Statistical Office (NSO) of Malta has two remaining improvement actions.

The Methodology and Research unit is the unit responsible for quality issues within the NSO and due to its wide range of responsibilities and heavy workload it was not possible for the Unit to undertake a user satisfaction survey. The next user satisfaction survey is planned for late 2012.

The NSO has made a considerable effort to gain access to a number of administrative sources to improve the quality of statistical data. The use of these sources served to lessen the burden on respondents, particularly in the field of Business and Social statistics. Other administrative sources were used for the updating of sampling frames and hence, helped to reduce sampling and non-sampling errors present in the surveys.

A.23. The Netherlands (NL)

After the last review in 2010, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) had six outstanding improvement actions, two of which have since been terminated (implementation of a security framework and 25% reduction in the demand for data from companies directly).

In order to improve the quality of the work of steering groups and project management, two programmes have been implemented. One programme foresees professionalising project management and the CBS now has one central pool of project managers. A second action foresees a broad coaching programme for steering groups with the assistance of an external company.

In order to improve the consistency of metadata, a database is currently being developed to facilitate the use of classifications and metadata that have already been approved for use in the dissemination tool StatLine. By making this database the standard for new tables, consistency in classifications and metadata will be improved considerably. There are plans to do the same for all themes available in StatLine.

A new action (which regroups two former actions) concerns the facilitation of the translation of StatLine tables into English. CBS has developed a "code pond" as annex to the StatLine suite, with standardised translations into English.

The text of the Code of Practice has been distributed and explained to all national producers of community statistics. Furthermore, Statistics Netherlands added a webpage "quality declaration of Statistics Netherlands". Statistics Netherlands quality declaration was approved by the Board of directors in April 2008 and has been adapted on 1 February 2011 to the new formulation of the mission of Statistics Netherlands.

Statistics Netherlands opened the discussion with the other data producers about sending all statistical information to Eurostat via Statistics Netherlands.

Three improvement actions remain open. The improvement points related to the dissemination tool "StatLine" have been merged to one new action.

A.24. Norway (NO)

Statistics Norway had five remaining improvement actions after the last review in 2010. In the meantime, two actions regarding the systematic review of statistical outputs and processes, and developing new guidelines for planning new surveys have been completed.

Two actions to improve accessibility and clarity have been delayed due to lack of resources, but the new internet site should be launched in November 2011. Plans are also being developed to improve the infrastructure to provide researchers with access to microdata.

The Code of Practice and the ongoing work of the Sponsorship on Quality have been presented to other producers of official statistics in Norway at the annual meeting of the Statistics Council. Furthermore, a brief introduction to the Code of Practice was given at a seminar on International cooperation organised by Statistics Norway. This seminar was open for members of the Statistics Council.

A.25. Poland (PL)

Work is on-going on all the 20 improvement actions outstanding after the last review in 2010.

The Central Statistical Office (CSO) carried out work on five actions to ensure their commitment to quality. Key issues of the annual programme on quality in public statistics are now included in reports for the Parliament's Commission of Public Finance. Rules and procedures for monitoring the quality of outputs of statistical surveys are under preparation as is the description of the implementation of all stages of quality monitoring of statistical production processes. It is foreseen to increase the number of surveys covered by quality records and indicators. Certain information on data quality for external users is available in statistical publications and general information on quality in statistics is available on the CSO website

Work is on-going on the elaboration of methods to automate the masking of confidential data, but full automatic masking is difficult to obtain. However, automatic masking of confidential data is used in surveys of agricultural products procurement, and the implementation of Tau-Argus in SBS is carried out.

Quality improvement of the frames using administrative sources is an important task in the CSO. Different administrative sources are used to update frames e.g. tax registers, social security registers, court registers, the record of hotel facilities, the record of other tourist facilities, the register of health care facilities, organic farms register. Identification of registers and administrative systems has been completed for the National Census 2011 and an assessment of the quality of these sources will be carried out towards the end of 2011. However, procedures are constantly improved with regard to relevance and completeness of a frame, safety of information and data confidentiality.

Work on the development of an integrated statistical information system is currently being carried out in order to compare the coherence of data produced by the CSO to that of other data producers.

Improvement in survey methodology is also on-going and progress has been made in the area of material flow accounts (data will be available at the end of 2011).

The CSO has been working to ensure the application of appropriate statistical procedures: ensuring methods of imputation are used during data processing and analyses, publishing standards and methodological notes on their website and applying new technologies.

Work is on-going to increase the use of administrative data sources in various surveys (accidents at work, business demography, migration statistics, national census) and for many purposes: as a source for updating of the Statistical business register and the list frame for social statistics surveys, for building and updating the Statistical farm register, and also as a

direct source of data, for imputation, estimation of data from surveys, in General Agricultural Census 2010 and in National Census of People and Dwellings 2011.

Improvements on the quality of the frames using administrative sources are still carried out and the updating of state of activity of the frame based on administrative data has been implemented in the survey on micro-enterprises.

In order to improve accessibility and clarity, work is on-going on complex metadata.

Developments in the implementation of the Code of Practice were observed in the national accounts. The publication “GDP quarterly accounts methodological rules” were prepared in October 2010 in line with the principle 6 of the Code of Practice. Additionally, “ESA’95 methodology” training was carried out for Ministry of Finance in November 2010 in line with the principle 6 of the Code of Practice. The Code of Practice as a document is available widely for internal and external users on the CSO website.

A.26. Portugal (PT)

Of the remaining 11 improvement actions, Statistics Portugal (INE) has completed one action concerning the development of a dissemination policy which was undertaken by the Statistical Council.

The INE had undertaken to try to adopt a formal mobility policy, but is facing implementation difficulties due to the scarcity of human resources. However, some staff has been reallocated.

In order to arrive at 100% coverage of all methodological documents, a new structure for the methodological documentation was developed and will be implemented for all the National Statistical System. This new version is clearer and has improved guidelines.

A new version of the Handbook on Statistical Production Process was approved and presented at the Statistical Council to other producers. Wide dissemination was carried out through the National Statistical System.

A Revisions Policy for Statistics Portugal has already been developed and is under implementation. For the National Statistical System it is currently progressing.

A.27. Romania (RO)

The National Institute of Statistics in Romania (NIS) has made further progress on the nine outstanding improvement actions.

The action concerning the use of administrative sources is progressing after the adoption of the Law on Statistics in 2009 creating the legal framework for the establishment of the advisory body, the National Statistical System Committee. In meetings with members of the National Statistical System Committee it was decided to include in the Annual National Statistical Program 2011, the statistical activities carried out by eight other producers of official statistics. The statistical work was thus extended by 33 statistical surveys and three publications which made it possible to eliminate the double data collection in 2011.

A study was undertaken by the NIS to find ways to reduce response burden. Proposals include rationalisation of the regional distribution, development of the methodologies using data from administrative sources (National Health Insurance House and enterprises balance sheets) and estimation of statistical variables, reduction of the response burden of small enterprises (less than 10 employees), extraction of data from administrative sources - in proportion of 42%, of the data for Structural Business Survey, and implementation of online data collection via Web Portal for a total of 20 statistical surveys.

NIS also foresees to increase the number of permanent staff but this was not possible due to budgetary restrictions, nor was it possible to create a new quality unit.

The NIS has progressed in its actions to co-finance statistical surveys through ministries or other institutions.

The project "Web portal for taking on-line the statistical data" was finalised. The planned number of 20 statistical surveys for which data collection will be taken on-line is provided in the Annual National Statistical Programme for 2011. A five-year plan for the gradual inclusion of statistical surveys in the next annual programmes by taking data on-line is being drafted.

Some of the actions foreseen in the multi-annual programme for quality improvement are scheduled in the Annual National Statistical Programme for 2011. They include compiling user-oriented quality reports for all statistical surveys and making them available to the public through the NIS website, carrying out a user satisfaction survey, and assessing the quality of the statistical surveys.

The introduction of a system to monitor the cost of activities, products and projects has progressed and the methodology was finalised in 2010. As from this year the quarterly monitoring of costs of statistical activities will be applied.

A.28. Sweden (SE)

Statistics Sweden has completed three of the improvement actions, from a total of six outstanding after the last report. The completed actions cover the implementation of a quality management system (EFQM) and a project to increase the number and length of time series in the National Accounts.

In order to ensure statistical confidentiality, Statistics Sweden is building guidelines into a common IT system to be used by all surveys. The new IT system should be ready for implementation in May 2011.

With a view to apply sound methodology, work is in progress and common tools, methodological guidelines and work approaches are being added continuously. The approach is long-term: new common solutions as well as revisions of already existing solutions will need to be added for a number of years before the whole statistical process is well covered. Areas currently being focused for development are coding, disclosure control, imputation and a large effort (Triton) to bring several tools for data collection and editing under a common project in order to make them more accessible.

Statistics Sweden plans to implement a system to control and obtain information on quality, including accuracy. As well as monitoring interviews and putting in place coding control, a

new system for data collection and editing, Triton, will provide support for capturing, analysing and reporting process data in different dimensions. A first version of the system, with limited functionality, is in place and a main version is under development and is planned for implementation at the end of the first half of 2011.

Statistics Sweden has organised various activities to promote the Code of Practice including a seminar to which all national providers of European statistics were invited and putting the Code of Practice on the agenda of meetings of the Council for Official Statistics. Also a handbook combining national requirements with the Code of Practice is currently being drafted and should be published later this year.

A.29. Slovenia (SI)

After the last review, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) had three outstanding actions which are still ongoing.

SORS is still reluctant to take any legal action to oblige respondents to reply to surveys. It is thought that due to the current economic situation such an action risks jeopardizing the good reputation and high trust of users in the SORS. It has therefore opted for investigating softer measures and is currently participating in two such projects. The first one is the international project BLUE-ETS where the balance between the gains from official statistics and reporting burden for business reporting unit is being investigated. The second one is cooperation with the Slovenian academic sphere (Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana) where the main goal is to further explore the possibilities to optimize quality and resources in the surveys of official statistics and part of the project is also exploring efficient ways for approaching the reporting units. With the knowledge gained, the SORS hopes to be able to better recognize the needs and problems of the reporting units and thus be able to better handle it over time.

SORS is currently introducing an electronic reporting infrastructure and standardised questionnaires. The electronic data entry application is in the final stage of development and will soon be tested by respondents.

In order to improve coherence and comparability, a system is being set up to compare annual and short-term statistics over time and with national accounts. The first analyses have been prepared within the office, but due to a lack of resources the task has not yet been finished.

Many actions are on-going with national data providers implementing the Code of Practice and they include a pilot project to upgrade metadata and the documentation system, a working group for better coherence with standard classifications, a strategy for better protection of personal data, improved efficiency of statistical production processes, training courses and improvements to the website.

To ensure more standardised reporting about the compliance with the Code of Practice by the authorised data providers, in 2010 SORS prepared a special questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised 42 questions related to almost all principles of the Code of Practice. The questionnaire was used again in 2011 and is planned for future use. The analysis of the results helps SORS to evaluate the compliance with the Code of Practice across the national statistical system and to recognize the possible weaknesses.

A.30. Slovakia (SK)

After the last report in 2010, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SOSR) had seven outstanding actions of which two have since been completed (implementation of software for electronic collection of questionnaires and achieving data comparability of selected indicators of social and economic statistics).

The implementation of the development strategy of the SOSR by the end of 2012 will bring considerable improvements such as the further development of the Quality Management System including measurement and monitoring, implementation of cost management, and optimisation of process interfaces.

After completing the national version of the self assessment questionnaire with data providers regarding the implementation of Code of Practice, eight organisations adopted 100 improvement actions. By the end of 2010, a total of 89 improvement actions had been completed, and 11 actions had started and will be completed according to specified deadlines.

Various actions have been on-going to promote the Code of Practice in Slovakia. The most important is probably the amendment of the Act no 540/2001 on state statistics, in force since April 2010, which more explicitly specifies the role of the SOSR within the NSS. The SOSR has also been active monitoring the improvement actions in the NSS and reporting to the Statistical Council on an annual basis. A seminar on the implementation of the Code of Practice for the key stakeholders was prepared and took place in April 2011 in Bratislava and the Eurostat report on Annual progress with peer review improvement actions was discussed in the Statistical Council meeting in November 2010.

A.31. The United Kingdom (UK)

Work on all seven remaining improvement actions is progressing, but none has been completed since the last review.

In order to make best use of resources and to be cost effective, the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) modernisation strategy has moved away from a system which aimed to deliver an all-encompassing solution to one which delivers tangible incremental outputs. A new strategy for prioritising and modernising IT systems has been introduced. During 2010-11, new systems were delivered for the Labour Force Survey and National Accounts (quarterly and monthly). Work also began on the modernisation of the Retail Price Index and the Consumer Price Index and the systems are due to be delivered in March 2012. Progress continues to be made with all the systems under production and further modernisation is planned.

Further to the initial development of the Quality, Methods and Harmonisation Tool (QMHT) within the ONS, this tool has been further developed and tested across the UK Government Statistical System (GSS) during 2010/11 as part of the work of the GSS Quality Taskforce. The guidance notes have been developed and the tool has been piloted within the ONS in February and March 2011. The use of QMHT as a tool for reviewing all statistical surveys and outputs is being rolled out as part of an updated ONS Quality Management Strategy which is being launched in May 2011. The use of QMHT is also being rolled out across the GSS as part of the work and output of the GSS Quality Taskforce.

In order to improve accessibility and clarity, it was foreseen to improve the website. However, the launch of this site has been delayed as more time is needed to make the transition to the new website design and publishing processes. The site should be launched in August 2011 and will provide improved search and navigation facilities.

Within the ONS, there has been continuing work to ensure that all ONS outputs are covered by appropriate levels of reporting in terms of the quality and methodology. In addition to the push to have 'Summary Quality Reports' in place for all outputs, there has also been a review of the guidance surrounding this reporting and new templates provide a central location for information relating to Quality and Methodology of the relevant outputs. Work is also ongoing on developing the template for the more dynamic quality and methodology information that is included within Statistical bulletins to ensure that the necessary and relevant quality information is provided to users.

In addition, work has been ongoing (across the GSS) to further develop the Quality, Methods and Harmonisation Tool (QMHT), which provides a self-assessment tool to review surveys and outputs. This is currently being piloted in the ONS and has been endorsed by the National Statistician. The updated ONS Quality Management Strategy will encourage use of QMHT and the reporting templates mentioned above.

Some work is also ongoing (across the GSS) to develop guidance on the measurement of compliance costs and reducing costs to statistical producers and in terms of respondent burden. This guidance will, in time, be implemented within the ONS.

Revised status codes for monitoring NSI improvement actions related to the implementation of the Code of Practice used in the 2011 monitoring exercise

In response to the question "What is the current status of remaining improvement actions identified in the Peer Reviews?" the most appropriate option from the following should be chosen:

- This action has been completed
- The work is progressing as planned and is not yet due
- This concerns work on Peer Review improvement actions that has started or that is expected to start as planned.
- This work is considered to be ongoing with no specific deadline (please explain ...)
- This concerns improvement actions with no specific deadlines, which were identified as ongoing or continuous in the Peer Reviews. It also includes other Peer Review actions that the NSI now considers to be ongoing in nature – a brief explanation should be provided if this is the case.
- Further progress now depends on authorities outside of the NSI (please explain ...)
- This concerns improvement actions which the NSI has implemented as far as possible and which now require a decision or approval from outside the NSI, for example, from an external committee or government ministry. A brief explanation should be provided.
- There have been delays within the NSI (please explain ...)
- If the implementation of the action will be later than planned because of delays that have occurred within the NSI, a brief explanation should be provided, together with the planned completion date.
- The work has been included in a new action (please provide details ...)
- If the work has been included in a new action defined after the Peer Review, details of the new action should be added to the spreadsheet.
- No further work on this issue is planned (please explain ...)
- If the improvement action has been cancelled, for example because it is no longer relevant or no longer achievable, a brief explanation should be provided.

New actions to be added

New actions, related to the implementation of the Code of Practice and defined after the Peer Review, should be added to the spreadsheet. New actions may include work that was previously identified as a separate Peer Review improvement action (see above). The following information should then be provided:

- The principle to which the action relates
- The planned deadline
- The title of the new improvement action
- The status of completion as at March 2011

Note on analysing progress with improvement actions

Care should be taken when analysing progress with improvement actions over time:

- Improvement actions are unique to the national situation in each country; progress depends on the institutional structures and the human and financial resources in place;
- The time available to countries to implement the actions depends to some extent on when they had their peer review. Although the majority of reviews took place in 2007, the first 6 were in 2006 and the last one was early in 2008;
- The improvement actions vary considerably in both their importance and the amount of effort required for implementation. A simple count of actions completed gives no reliable indication of the amount of effort that has been made or that has yet to be made, nor does it provide information about their relative contribution to compliance with the Code;
- Not all the improvement actions were due to be implemented straightaway; in some cases implementation was scheduled for 2012 and in one case for 2015;
- Finally, it should be kept in mind that a high number of improvement actions agreed during the peer review may point to low initial compliance levels, but may also signal high ambitions by the national statistical institute. This concerns in particular the improvement actions relating to statistical processes and outputs (Principles 7-14 of the Code of Practice), which were not subjected to peer reviews.

Summary of status of improvement actions (as at March 2011)

Principle	Number of Peer Reviews Improvement Actions					Number of Outstanding Peer Reviews Improvement Actions (Mar-11)							New Actions (defined in 2011) (c)	Total Remaining Actions (b-a+c)
	Total	Completed				Further progress outside of the NSI	No further work is planned	Progressing and not yet due	Delays within the NSI	Ongoing - no specific deadline	Included in a new action (a)	Total (b)		
		Feb-08	May-09	Mar-10	Mar-11									
1 Professional Independence	34	1	9	4	7	6	1	1	2	3	0	13	0	13
2 Mandate for data collection	25	1	8	2	3	3	0	2	0	6	0	11	0	11
3 Adequacy of resources	48	1	18	12	2	4	0	4	1	6	0	15	0	15
4 Quality commitment	103	1	28	8	13	3	1	22	12	12	3	53	4	54
5 Statistical confidentiality	43	2	19	4	6	0	1	2	1	8	0	12	0	12
6 Impartiality and objectivity	46	2	16	9	6	1	0	2	3	7	0	13	0	13
7 Sound methodology	46	3	15	6	5	1	0	4	2	9	1	17	1	17
8 Appropriate statistical procedures	40	2	10	6	4	0	0	11	1	6	0	18	0	18
9 Non-excessive burden on respondents	54	0	16	6	3	3	0	7	1	17	1	29	1	29
10 Cost effectiveness	48	0	16	7	6	3	0	7	3	6	0	19	1	20
11 Relevance	27	1	11	7	4	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	0	4
12 Accuracy and reliability	35	1	7	7	4	0	0	4	3	7	2	16	1	15
13 Timeliness and punctuality	14	0	5	2	3	1	0	0	0	3	0	4	1	5
14 Coherence and compatibility	33	1	9	4	4	1	1	3	2	7	1	15	2	16
15 Accessibility and clarity	81	2	29	10	6	1	0	9	4	17	3	34	2	33
TOTAL	677	18	216	94	76	27	4	80	35	116	11	273	13	275
(%)	100%	3%	32%	14%	11%	4%	1%	12%	5%	17%	2%	40%		