

PEER REVIEW REPORT

ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND
THE COORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2. INTRODUCTION	6
3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM	8
4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM	10
4.1 Strengths of the National Statistical Institute in relation to its compliance with the Code of Practice and to its coordination role	10
4.2 Issues and recommendations	11
4.2.1 Modernise governance to improve coordination and to become more outward-facing	11
4.2.2 Enhance efficiency	15
4.2.3 Enhance the value of investment in official statistics	17
4.3 National Statistical Institute views where they diverge from peer reviewers' assessment	22
ANNEX A: PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT	23
ANNEX B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	27

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SOSR) is an independent central body of state administration and the main producer of national and European statistics in the country. The status, tasks and competencies of the SOSR are defined in the Act No. 540/2001 Coll. on State Statistics (hereafter called the Law on State Statistics) that entered into force on 1 January 2002. The Law on State Statistics is also the main legal act regulating the production and dissemination of official statistics in the Slovak Republic.

According to the Law on State Statistics, the SOSR and other producers of statistics shall be independent and impartial in collecting, processing, disseminating and evaluating statistical information and follow the principles of reliability, objectivity, transparency, openness and protection of confidential statistical data. The SOSR has defined its quality policy and dissemination policy and a number of internal rules and directives to safeguard implementation of the fundamental statistical principles in practice.

The SOSR is a service-oriented institution which has gradually developed important initiatives to implement a total quality management approach in its Quality Management System (QMS). QMS is based on international standards and advanced models and implemented across the office. The SOSR has also a strong focus on standardisation in developing processes and implementing its new Integrated Statistical Information System.

The Peer Review team identified three broad issues in which compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP) could be enhanced. These issues are related to modernising governance in order to improve coordination and to become more outward-facing, enhancing efficiency and enhancing value of investment in official statistics.

Many of the recommendations in this report are relating to the legal basis of the SOSR and the National Statistical System (NSS). Several changes to the Law on State Statistics are needed to enhance compliance with the CoP and to bring statistics of the Slovak Republic more into line with other parts of the European Statistical System. Some of the recommended changes are likely to be more straightforward than others to implement. Those considered more substantial should be introduced as legislative opportunities arise.

The coordination role of the SOSR within the NSS is not explicitly specified in the Law on State Statistics. However, the Law offers some formal coordination mechanisms - like the State Statistical Survey Programme and the Statistical Council. The Peer Reviewers came to the conclusions that these mechanisms should be further developed and the coordination role of the SOSR within the NSS should have a formal legal base.

European statistics constitute the majority of the statistics produced by the SOSR. This seems likely to have contributed to a rather production-oriented development work in recent years, in order to meet the challenges of the EU statistical requirements. However, the SOSR is engaging increasingly efficiently with the users of statistics and with other stakeholders and many of the recommendations in this report are intended to support this direction of work.

The SOSR's resources have decreased substantially in recent years and there is evidence of significant resource shortages. As the European statistics work programme develops over time, SOSR's responsibilities grow. The Peer Review team considers that SOSR's ability to produce European statistics is under severe threat. It seems clear that additional resources will be required in the short term in order for SOSR to remain viable and to enhance compliance with the CoP. It is also

important to increase efficiency of the SOSR and the NSS as a whole and to enhance value of the investment made in the statistics of the Slovak Republic. For these reasons, it is recommended for example to streamline the responsibilities of various organisations which have a role in the statistical system of the Slovak Republic, to re-consider the SOSR's regional organisation and to continue work on modernisation and quality management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Modernise governance to improve coordination and to become more outward-facing

1. The Law on State Statistics should use the term "official", rather than "state", statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, all Principles.)
2. The scope of the Law on State Statistics (section 1) should be broadened from "the assessment of the socio-economic development [of the Republic and its parts]" to "to meet the needs of users in a democratic society". (European statistics Code of Practice, all Principles.)
3. The Law on State Statistics should be amended to enhance the role, status and identity of the Statistical Council, broaden its membership, and appoint members for fixed terms. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 11.1 and Coordination.)
4. The Law on State Statistics should be brought into line with latest European thinking about best practice in the appointment and dismissal procedures of the President. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8.)
5. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic's responsibility for coordinating other producers of official statistics – including in relation to methodology, standards and classifications – should be strengthened and made more explicit in the Law on State Statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, all Principles and Coordination.)
6. Consideration should be given to funding a post in the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic to lead on coordination across the National Statistical System. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 3.1 and Coordination.)
7. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should enhance the system of permanent user groups and their remit to include: compiling information about the uses made of statistics of the Slovak Republic; documenting and prioritising unmet user needs; providing formal advice on the State Statistical Survey Programme; and providing a user perspective on quality. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4 and indicators 11.1 and 11.2.)
8. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should strengthen the existing working level arrangements to enable data suppliers to engage more effectively with the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 8 and 9 and indicator 10.2.)
9. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should be given immediate access for statistical purposes to data held on the population register. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 8 and indicators 2.2, 9.4 and 10.3.)

Enhance efficiency

10. The State Statistical Survey Programme should indicate clearly those surveys and administrative sources that are used for (i) European purposes, (ii) European and national purposes, and (iii) for national purposes only. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 3 and Coordination.)

11. Consideration should be given to the transfer of responsibility (and associated resources) for the production of European statistics from small organisations to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4 and 10 and Coordination.)
12. The possibility of further centralising the responsibilities of the Regional Offices should be explored. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10.)
13. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should review whether the work it commissions from the Institute for Informatics and Statistics in support of the production of European statistics should be brought into the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)

Enhance the value of investment in official statistics

14. Work on the implementation of the Integrated Statistical Information System should continue. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 2, 8, 9, 10 and 15.)
15. Work on the implementation of Quality Management System should continue, and Quality Reports should be produced for all statistical domains. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4 and indicator 15.7.)
16. Consideration should be given to enhancing the Quality Management System to enable more transparency about trade-offs between different dimensions of quality. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3 and 15.7.)
17. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should prioritise the production of user-oriented Quality Reports. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3 and 15.7.)
18. Systematic input from external experts in quality and methodology should be sought. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.4 and 7.7.)
19. Response burdens (on data suppliers) should be reported upon in terms of the time taken to provide statistical data. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 9.1 and 9.2.)
20. The Law on State Statistics should stipulate that statistical information should be disseminated free-of-charge to all users. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 6 and 15.)
21. The results of custom-designed (bespoke) analyses (or a list of such analyses to help others to access the analyses) should be published on the website. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6 and indicator 15.3.)
22. The explanation of statistical messages, in bulletins and reports, should be improved. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.1.)
23. The results of User Satisfaction Surveys should be published alongside the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic's plans to address the issues raised. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 11.3.)
24. The ways in which confidentiality protection is assured in relation to microdata analysed both in the Safe Centre and in off-site facilities should be documented on the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic's website. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 5.4 and 15.4.)

2. INTRODUCTION

This peer review report is part of a series of assessments, the objective of which is to evaluate the extent to which National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and the European Statistical System (ESS)¹ comply with the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP).

The CoP, which sets out a common quality framework for the ESS, was first adopted in 2005 by the Statistical Programme Committee and updated in 2011 by its successor, the European Statistical System Committee. The CoP — 15 principles and related indicators of good practice — covers the institutional environment, the statistical production process and the output of European statistics. The ESS is committed to fully complying with the CoP and is working towards its full implementation. Periodic assessments review progress towards reaching this goal.

The first global assessment, a round of peer reviews in 2006–2008, explored how the NSIs and Eurostat were progressing in implementing the parts of the CoP relating to the institutional environment and dissemination of statistics (principles 1–6 and 15). This resulted in reports for each NSI and Eurostat, available on the Eurostat website². These reports also include a set of improvement actions covering all the principles of the CoP; these informed the annual monitoring of the implementation of the CoP in the ESS in the period 2009-2013.

The scope of this second round of peer reviews is broader: the assessment of CoP compliance covers all principles; the CoP compliance of selected other national producers of European statistics (as well as the NSI) in each country is assessed; and the way in which statistical authorities coordinate the production and dissemination of European statistics within their statistical systems is explored.

It should be underlined that there is a fundamental difference between the reports in the previous round of peer reviews conducted in 2006-2008 and the reports from this round. In the 2006-2008 round compliance with principles 1 to 6 and 15 of the CoP was assessed by means of a four-level scale (fully met; largely met; partly met and not met) and improvement actions were agreed on all 15 principles. After five years of continuous development most of the improvement actions have been implemented and significant progress towards full compliance with the CoP has been made. Therefore, rather than stating the state of play for all principles of the CoP, the reports from the 2013-2015 round mainly focus on issues where full compliance with the CoP has not been found or further improvements are recommended by the Peer Review team.

In order to gain an independent view, the peer review exercise has been externalised and an audit-like approach, where all the answers to the self-assessment questionnaires have to be supported by evidence, has been applied. As in 2006-2008, all EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA countries and Eurostat are subject to a peer review.

Each peer review in the Member States and EFTA/EEA countries is conducted by three reviewers and has four phases: completion of self-assessment questionnaires by a country; their assessment by Peer Reviewers; a peer review visit; and the preparation of reports on the outcomes. The peer review of Eurostat has been conducted by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

¹ The ESS is the partnership between the Union statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), the national statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. This Partnership also includes the EFTA /EEA countries.

² <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/first-round-of-peer-reviews>

To test and complete the methodology, it was piloted in two countries, Iceland and Slovakia, over the summer of 2013.

The peer review of the Slovak Republic was conducted by Richard Laux (chair), Marie Bohatá and Marina Gandolfo, who conducted a peer review visit to Bratislava on 15-19 July 2013 and a follow-up visit on 23 May 2014. The programme of the peer review visit is in Annex A and the list of participants in Annex B. The visits provided an opportunity for the Peer Reviewers to discuss the self-assessment questionnaires completed (in a short period, because of the timing of the initial visit) by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and the light questionnaires provided by the Other National Authorities producing European statistics.

This report focuses on compliance with the CoP and the coordination of European statistics within the statistical system of the Slovak Republic. The report highlights some of the strengths of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic in these contexts and contains recommendations for improvement. Improvement actions developed by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic on the basis of this report will be published within the four-week period starting when the final report is sent to the NSI.

The methodology for the peer reviews was adopted and amended following the pilot peer reviews in the Slovak Republic and Iceland. The original pilot peer review reports for these countries were drafted and published before the start of the other peer reviews, which is why the approach and style therein follow a different approach. Therefore the reports have been aligned with the other reports with regard to the approach and style. Harmonisation of the two pilot reports with the other published peer review reports follows the developed guidelines and template. The revised reports are edited by Heli Jeskanen-Sundström with consultation of the Peer Review team. The conclusions and recommendations set out in the original reports remain unchanged.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Legislation

The main legal act regulating the production and dissemination of official statistics is the Act No. 540/2001 Coll. on State Statistics (hereafter called the Law on State Statistics) that entered into force on 1 January 2002 and since then has been amended several times. The law establishes the basic principles of official statistics: independence, impartiality, reliability, objectivity, transparency, openness and protection of confidential statistical data. The population censuses are conducted under special acts, the last one is the Act No. 263/2008 on the population and housing census in 2011.

The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SOSR)

The SOSR is an independent central body of state administration and the main producer of European statistics in the country. The status, tasks and competencies of the SOSR are defined in the Law on State Statistics. The SOSR is financed from the state budget through its own separate budget chapter. The budget and also the final financial report are approved by the Parliament.

The SOSR has implemented a quality management system according to the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) standard 9001:2008 which is being enhanced by integration of the requirements of the CoP and by elements of other advanced quality management systems.

Mission and strategy

The mission of the SOSR is to provide high-quality and objective statistical products and services by keeping confidentiality of statistical data with the aim to support growth of information and intellectual capital of its customers. In this way the office wants to contribute to reduction of risk in their decision-making processes and so to support sustainable development of Slovakia.

The development strategy of the SOSR is elaborated for the period harmonised with the multiannual European statistical programme. The strategy sets development directions by formulating strategic objectives and relevant action programmes for the areas of customer orientation, internal processes, learning and growth (including human resources, information systems and information and communication (IT) technology and other supporting systems). The action programmes generally focus on improvement of effectiveness of the statistical production, reduction of response burden and on increased comfort for users of statistical products. At present the development strategy of the SOSR by 2017 is being implemented.

Head of the SOSR

The SOSR is managed by the President, appointed by the President of the Slovak Republic upon nomination made by the Government for a fixed five-year term, renewable once. The SOSR's President is independent from the Cabinet and any ministry. He/she can be dismissed exclusively under very specific circumstances specified in the Law on State Statistics. He/she is deputised by the Vice-President. In line with the Act on Civil Service (2002) the head of a Civil Service Office of the SOSR is responsible for non-statistical matters and activities like human and financial resources and infrastructure.

Organisational structure

The SOSR consists of headquarters (seat in Bratislava) and eight regional statistical offices located in the capitals of the administrative regions. The regional offices are accountable directly to the President of the SOSR. They are responsible for the collection and the conduct of the initial

processing of data on specific domains for the whole country and provide information services to customers in their regions. Statistical research and development activities are the main mission of the Institute for Informatics and Statistics (INFOSTAT, a “contributory organisation”), which is partially managed and funded by the SOSR.

The organisation of the SOSR is composed of three core statistical sections (macro-economic statistics; business statistics; social statistics and demography) and three cross-cutting sections (methodology and registers; statistical products and services; informatics). In addition, there are three departments subordinated directly to the President and three departments managed by the Civil Service Office. As of 1 January 2014 the SOSR had 825 employees in total, 314 of them in headquarters and the rest in the regional statistical services.

Statistical products and dissemination

The dissemination policy and principles focus on improving communication with users and free-of-charge dissemination via internet. The SOSR publishes wide range of statistical information, both in paper and electronic form. The public databases, Slovstat and Regstat, are available on website free of charge. Each publication is backed up with methodological explanations (basic characteristics and definitions of indicators). Publications are issued according to the annual Catalogue of Publications. The release dates of selected data categories are specified in the First Release Calendar (for the forthcoming four months), which is available on SOSR’s website (www.statistics.sk).

Statistical Programme

In collaboration with the ministries and state agencies the SOSR prepares and publishes the State Statistical Survey Programme (SSSP). After discussions by the Statistical Council the SSSP is published as a decree by the SOSR’s President for the relevant 3-year period (the last one for 2012 - 2014). Annual amendments are also issued as decreed by the SOSR’s President. The SSSP includes mandatory surveys carried out by the SOSR, ministries and other state administration bodies. The scope and use of administrative sources for statistical purposes are also covered by the programme.

Statistical Council

The Statistical Council - regulated by the Law on State Statistics - is a permanent expert advisory body for the President of the SOSR in the field of state statistics. It has 26 members representing all main stakeholders. The Council holds plenary sessions twice a year. It deals with strategic issues of official statistics, drafts proposals and recommendations for statistical policy and discusses the SSSP.

National Statistical System (NSS)

The NSS of the Slovak Republic is composed of the SOSR and the other national authorities performing official statistics and conducting statistical surveys covered by the SSSP. Other National Authorities (ONAs) developing, producing and disseminating European statistics are: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (statistics on forest and wood production), Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (education statistics), Ministry of Interior (migration statistics), Ministry of Environment (air emissions data for the European Environment Agency), State Material Reserves (Monthly Oil Questionnaire, Monthly Gas Questionnaire, Monthly Short Gas Questionnaire) and INFOSTAT (statistical methodology and data processing). The coordination role of the SOSR covers among others preparation of the annual SSSP, development and adoption of national statistical classifications and code lists and advice and assistance in implementation of the CoP.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

This section summarises the Peer Reviewers' views on the extent of CoP compliance and the nature and effectiveness of coordination within the NSS of the Slovak Republic. It first summarises SOSR's strengths in these respects, and then explores specific issues including making recommendations that the Peer Reviewers consider would strengthen compliance with the CoP.

4.1 STRENGTHS OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE IN RELATION TO ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND TO ITS COORDINATION ROLE

The status, tasks and competencies of the SOSR are defined in the Law on State Statistics. It has an autonomous position within the state administration of the Slovak Republic. In the state budget it has its own separate budget chapter approved by the Parliament. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1.)

According to Section 3 ("Basic Principles of State Statistics") of the Law on State Statistics, the SOSR and other producers of statistics shall be independent and impartial in collecting, processing, disseminating and evaluating statistical information and follow the principles of reliability, objectivity, transparency, openness and protection of confidential statistical data. The SOSR has defined its quality policy and dissemination policy and a number of internal rules and directives to safeguard implementation of the fundamental statistical principles in practice. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 1, 4, and 5.)

Even though the coordination role of the SOSR within the NSS is not explicitly specified in the Law on State Statistics, the law offers some strong formal mechanisms - like the SSSP and the Statistical Council - to implement the SOSR's coordination function in practice. The SSSP is designed for a three-year period and adopted by the President of the SOSR after having been discussed by the Statistical Council. The SSSP includes all the mandatory statistical surveys carried out by the SOSR, ministries and other central administration bodies including ONAs. The scope and use of administrative sources for statistical purposes are also covered by the programme. The Peer Review team was told that formal coordination channels are supplemented by informal communications – for example, other producers send data directly to Eurostat and the SOSR maintains an overview of data flow transmission. The Memorandum of Understanding between the SOSR, the National Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance provides a coordinating framework for the production and use of Government Finance Statistics and Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) data. The MoU and bilateral agreements with other stakeholders appear to work effectively. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.5 and Coordination.)

The Quality Management System (QMS) of the SOSR - which is implemented across the office - is based on the International Standardization Organization (ISO) standard ISO 9001. The QMS has been certified by an internationally acknowledged certification body every three years starting with 2006. Respecting the process approach principle and Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model the system covers issues related to management, resources, operation and measurement, analysis and improvement. It has been enhanced by inclusion of requirements of European statistics Code of Practice and of selected elements of other advanced quality management systems. The QMS of the SOSR with regular external assessments and continuous improvement may also serve as an inspiring example for other European NSIs. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4.)

The SOSR has a strong focus on standardisation, including the implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) within the new Integrated Statistical Information System (ISIS). The ISIS ensures a common solution for the statistical production process from build and test to dissemination via portal. In this way it contributes substantially to efficiency and effectiveness of the production as well as to reduction of administrative burden on respondents and to comfort of users. Alongside rationalisation of internal processes, a cost management approach has been introduced based on the monitoring of working time spent on all statistical and non-statistical projects and related activities. Since 2012 the results have been effectively used for optimisation of decisions on resource allocations and work division. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 8, 9 and 10.)

The SOSR is a service-oriented institution. During the recent years the SOSR has further developed its activities to improve services to users of statistics and to meet better the users' needs. Development of its new internet portal and plans to migrate more material into it, SOSR's strategic action programmes focusing on the needs and expectations of key users and key data suppliers, and development of procedures for the provision of microdata for research purposes clearly show that the SOSR is engaging increasingly effectively with the users of statistics and with other stakeholders. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 11 and 15.)

4.2 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section three broad issues to enhance compliance with the CoP are discussed. These are: modernising governance to improve coordination and to become more outward-facing, enhancing efficiency and enhancing the value of investment in official statistics.

4.2.1 MODERNISE GOVERNANCE TO IMPROVE COORDINATION AND TO BECOME MORE OUTWARD-FACING

Modernisation of terminology in the Law on State Statistics

The Law on State Statistics uses a term "State Statistics" repeatedly in the Act. Whilst this is not inherently problematic in itself (and indeed the Peer Reviewers were told that the term 'state statistics' is useful in compelling responses from surveys), it sounds a little old-fashioned. The Peer Reviewers consider that this term could usefully be replaced as part of a suite of measures both to emphasise professional independence and to emphasise that statistical activity - which is funded by taxation - should be designed to inform decision making by all sectors of society and the economy.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 1. The Law on State Statistics should use the term "official", rather than "state", statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, all Principles.)**

Similarly, section 1 ("Scope of the Act") of the Law on State Statistics reflects a view of official statistics which no longer holds in many other European NSIs as it states: *"This Act shall regulate the conditions for collecting statistical data and statistical information necessary for the assessment of the socio-economic development, position and competencies of the bodies gathering State statistics, the tasks of the public authorities in the field of State statistic, the rights and duties of reporting units, the protection of confidential statistical data against misuse; the provision and disclosure of statistical data, the ensuring of the comparability of statistical information and the fulfilment of commitments arising from international treaties in the field of State statistics binding for the Slovak Republic."*

Even though the activities of the SOSR in practice already follow the broader concept of official statistics, the Peer Reviewers would like to recommend that the Law on State Statistics should also be modernised to reflect the current situation.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 2. The scope of the Law on State Statistics (section 1) should be broadened from “the assessment of the socio-economic development [of the Republic and its parts]” to “to meet the needs of users in a democratic society”. (European statistics Code of Practice, all Principles.)**

The Statistical Council

Section 10 of the Law on State Statistics describes the Statistical Council. This is a permanent expert advisory group for the President of the SOSR, responsible for drafting proposals and recommendations mainly related to statistical policy and the survey schedule. The Council is chaired by the President, and its members are appointed or recalled by the President based on proposals by the heads of the main stakeholder groups.

In the opinion of the Peer Review team, it seems inappropriate for the President to chair a committee which provides advice to her, and whose members might be seen as political appointees. Moreover, membership should include a wider range of users. Alongside Government and state institutions, the Statistical Council should include representatives of the business sector, academic users, of civil society, and of employers and trades unions. It would also seem helpful to provide such a Council with the opportunity to shape its own role and to determine its own working arrangements, such as appointing its chair.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 3. The Law on State Statistics should be amended to enhance the role, status and identity of the Statistical Council, broaden its membership, and appoint members for fixed terms. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 11.1 and Coordination.)**

Appointment and dismissal procedures of the President of the SOSR

Sections 6 and 7 (“President of the Office”) of the Law on State Statistics describe the appointment and dismissal procedures of the President of the SOSR. The key features of the appointment procedures are:

- appointment by the President of the Republic on the basis of a proposal by the Government
- a five year term of office, renewable once.

Section 7(2)(a) says that the President of the Republic shall recall the President of the SOSR only if he/she “no longer meets the conditions for holding his/her office” and presents a number of standard legal and procedural reasons for a possible recall. The Peer Reviewers were told that this was thought to refer to matters of health and incapacitation, rather than enabling the dismissal of the President of the SOSR because of differences of political or statistical opinion.

The Peer Reviewers consider that this matter merits clarification in the Law on State Statistics, to bring it into line with the indicator 1.8 of the CoP which says: “*The appointment of the heads of the National Statistical Institutes and... is based on professional competence only. The reasons on the basis of which the incumbency can be terminated are specified in the legal framework. These cannot include reasons compromising professional or scientific independence.*”

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 4. The Law on State Statistics should be brought into line with latest European thinking about best practice in the appointment and dismissal procedures of the President. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8.)**

Coordination

The Law on State Statistics does not explicitly specify that the SOSR should have a role in the coordination of official statistical activity. Some of the functions of the SOSR (as presented in section 8 of the Law on State Statistics) related to methodological development, classifications, and the collection and processing of statistical data do require coordination, and the Peer Reviewers were told that the current informal approach is quite effective. In effect the Statistical Council is a means of coordination, and the Departmental Coordination Group provides a government-wide input to the SOSR's negotiating position on EU statistical Regulations.

However, several stakeholders who the Peer Reviewers spoke to indicated that the SOSR's coordination role could usefully be strengthened - to reflect, for example, SOSR's technical expertise and leadership, to enhance access to information about the quality of administrative data, and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

During the peer review visit the institutional organisation of the coordination activity was discussed. Whilst it was recognised that it is everyone's responsibility to coordinate in their own sphere of activity, it was also acknowledged that a central coordination unit could play a strong role in ensuring consistency of approach and identifying any problems which could then be brought to the attention of senior management.

The Peer Reviewers believe that a more formal (statutory) and strengthened coordination role for the SOSR, including a dedicated 'coordination unit', would have a positive effect on quality (enhanced access to administrative data, improved methods, adoption of new classifications) and efficiency (reduction of duplication, more use of common software) of the Slovak Republic's national and European statistics.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 5. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic's responsibility for coordinating other producers of official statistics – including in relation to methodology, standards and classifications – should be strengthened and made more explicit in the Law on State Statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, all Principles and Coordination.)**
- 6. Consideration should be given to funding a post in the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic to lead on coordination across the National Statistical System. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 3.1 and Coordination.)**

Engagement with users and data suppliers

The importance of the users of statistics within the NSS is not fully recognised in the Law on State Statistics. For example, section 8 ("Scope and competence of the Office") requires SOSR to "*prepare the State Statistical Survey Schedule in collaboration with the ministries and State agencies*". The Law on State Statistics does not require, or otherwise encourage, the SOSR to engage with non-institutional users and potential users - such as the business sector, academia, or civil society - of official statistics, and (as noted above) membership of the Statistical Council is rather limited.

The Peer Reviewers noted that user engagement does take place - for example, the SOSR holds press conferences, it has run workshops to explain the latest Census results, and it engages with the business community about 'negative priorities'. Since 2009 the SOSR has run a special action programme focusing on learning about the needs and expectations of key customers and on supporting a better interpretation and better use of statistical products. The system covers permanent groups for example of bank and financial sectors (private and state), foreign trade, and construction industry, as well as ad-hoc user groups.

However, a user perspective is not yet reflected enough in SOSR's activities, for example quality reports are rather producer-focused. The Peer Review team considers that the SOSR would benefit by adopting a wider perspective and a more systematic approach in its engagement with users of statistics and other stakeholders.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 7. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should enhance the system of permanent user groups and their remit to include: compiling information about the uses made of statistics of the Slovak Republic; documenting and prioritising unmet user needs; providing formal advice on the State Statistical Survey Programme; and providing a user perspective on quality. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4 and indicators 11.1 and 11.2.)**

Whilst state institutions that supply data to the SOSR appear to have adequate contact with the office, the business suppliers met by the Peer Reviewers raised a number of issues - such as the mixture of data supply modes (paper forms and genuine internet supply), concerns about timing (which experts in the SOSR subsequently explained as a mismatch between Eurostat's cut-off date for data transmission and business accounting periods), and the duplication of information requests from the SOSR and from the National Central Bank. The Peer Reviewers believe that these sorts of issues - and the more general issues of quality and reporting burdens - might usefully be addressed directly by systematic and regular dialogue.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 8. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should strengthen the existing working level arrangements to enable data suppliers to engage more effectively with the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 8 and 9 and indicator 10.2.)**

Access to the population register

Population registers, in countries that have them (such as the Slovak Republic), are a good source of information to the production of population and demographic statistics. The Peer Reviewers understand that although agreement has been reached between the Ministry of the Interior (which owns the population register) and the SOSR about the supply of the register, data have not yet been transmitted because of technical problems which require additional resources to resolve. The Peer Reviewers consider this to be a small investment which seems likely to pay dividends in terms of enhancing the quality of the resulting statistics and informing policy and operational decision making.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 9. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should be given immediate access for statistical purposes to data held on the population register. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 8 and indicators 2.2, 9.4, 10.3.)**

4.2.2 ENHANCE EFFICIENCY

Resources

The SOSR had 1,017 permanent employees in each of the years 2008, 2009 and 2010. This subsequently dropped sharply, and the SOSR had 915 permanent employees in each of the years 2011, 2012 and 2013. In 2014 the number of permanent employees has dropped again, to 825. So, compared to the 2008-2010 period, the number of permanent employees has fallen by 19%.

Between 2008 and 2010, the SOSR's current expenditure budget was € 18 million. It fell by 12% in 2011, in line with the fall in the number of permanent employees, but increased in the two following years. The budget for 2014 shows a fall of 12%, and it was estimated that it may be reduced further.

The modernisation of statistical production and the use of administrative data are vital for the SOSR to be able to respond to ever-increasing statistical demands. Appropriate human and financial resources must be secured for that purpose, as well as to maintain the quality of existing statistics.

Statistical Programming

The statistical programme of most European NSIs is dominated by European statistical requirements, and the Slovak Republic is no different in this respect. The Peer Reviewers understand that about 95% of the SSSP is covered by the requirements of EU Regulations (whilst recognising that most such information is also needed for national purposes). The remaining 5% of statistical information that is needed for national purposes only includes some detailed questions of the Structural Business Statistics Survey, statistics on culture and criminality, and some non-financial sector information collected for the National Central Bank.

The Peer Reviewers were told that new European statistical requirements are not funded by the Government of the Slovak Republic. In effect this means that the President of the SOSR is facing ever larger demands on the statistical budget, whilst having almost no control over those demands and having very little 'discretionary' expenditure which might be reallocated.

The Peer Reviewers accept that government budgets are tight but consider that it would be helpful - both for Government as an entity, but also for users and potential users who have unmet statistical needs - to indicate in the SSSP the statistical work that is for European purposes and that for national purposes. This might inform a debate about the resourcing of statistical work in the Slovak Republic.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 10. The State Statistical Survey Programme should indicate clearly those surveys and administrative sources that are used for (i) European purposes, (ii) European and national purposes, and (iii) for national purposes only. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 3 and Coordination.)**

Responsibility for the production of European statistics currently produced by Other National Authorities (ONAs)

According to the legal framework (Competence Act No. 575/2001) SOSR is the central body of state administration responsible for state statistics. However, state statistical activity can be also carried

out by ministries and agencies which conduct surveys and use administrative sources in the production of European statistics. Some of the organisations are small, and are responsible only for particular elements of European statistics - yet they require organisational arrangements and statistical infrastructures to enable them to meet the demands of the CoP. This may not be an efficient use of resources in a country whose public administration is relatively small and where budgets are under pressure. The Peer Reviewers were told that the SOSR had already initiated discussions with the Government about transfers of responsibility and resources, but had not yet received a response.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 11. Consideration should be given to the transfer of responsibility (and associated resources) for the production of European statistics from small organisations to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4 and 10 and Coordination.)**

Interface between the headquarters and Regional Offices of the SOSR

The SOSR has eight Regional Offices (ROs) - integral organisation units of the SOSR located in the capitals of the administrative regions (Bratislava, Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice). About two-thirds of the total number of SOSR's staff work in the ROs.

Each of the ROs collects and conducts the initial processing of data for specific statistical domains, for the whole country. They provide data to the SOSR's headquarters, located in Bratislava, for further processing, analysis and dissemination (including transmission to Eurostat and other international organisations).

Following recent changes the SOSR has centralised work on statistical registers, fieldwork and dissemination. The ROs no longer publish statistical information other than that from the Census. The Peer Reviewers consider that this process of centralisation to achieve efficiency savings might be extended further.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 12. The possibility of further centralising the responsibilities of the Regional Offices should be explored. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 10.)**

Institute for Informatics and Statistics (INFOSTAT)

INFOSTAT is an autonomous research and development institute. It participates in particular methodological research projects, including designing and developing methods and tools to support statistical surveys, analyses and presentations of statistical data; in doing so it works closely with SOSR's own methodologists. INFOSTAT also produces demographic and economic projections. INFOSTAT is funded partly by the SOSR and partly by other organisations for which it works. It was previously responsible for seasonal adjustment and the provision of IT support to the previous Automated Statistical Information System (ASIS), but seasonal adjustment is now undertaken by SOSR's methodologists, and IT support for the new ISIS will be provided by a separate organisation.

The Peer Reviewers fully recognise the value of the service provided by INFOSTAT, but felt that SOSR's own statistical capacity would be enhanced, and its resilience strengthened, if some of the remaining work that is outsourced to INFOSTAT was brought 'in house'.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 13. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should review whether the work it commissions from the Institute for Informatics and Statistics in support of the production of European statistics should be brought into the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)**

4.2.3 ENHANCE THE VALUE OF INVESTMENT IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS

User oriented modernisation

In the context of steadily growing demands in an era of scarce resources, on the one hand, and modernisation of public administration in the Slovak Republic on the other, a new ISIS is currently being implemented by the SOSR. It replaces the former automated information system which has become obsolete. ISIS has been designed to:

- Reduce administrative burdens on reporting units (enterprises and citizens)
- Speed up, simplify and improve statistical processes such as data collection, processing, and storing
- Improve the quality of statistical products, and the provision of services.

The single integrated information environment is based on a service-oriented architecture - using data warehouse technology and specific business intelligence applications - in order to support analytical activities and presentations of statistical products. It operates on the basis of Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) standards. The objective is to gradually integrate all data sources and create a simple presentation interface. A horizontal integration aims at covering a wide range of domains and disciplines while a vertical integration allows for the connection of data at local and regional level to the national data.

The portal <http://www.statistics.sk> will become the key environment from which the electronic services of the SOSR will be provided. Moreover, ISIS will be integrated with the existing public administration's information systems, basic registers, nomenclatures, classifications and metadata. The statistical metadata system will become a key component and will be based on an integrated platform of public administration and statistical metadata. Clearly the development and implementation of ISIS is a huge and demanding project but its potential benefits are significant. They are linked to the several principles of the CoP. The Peer Reviewers recognise merits of this work and support its continuation.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 14. Work on the implementation of the Integrated Statistical Information System should continue. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 2, 8, 9, 10 and 15.)**

Quality management

The SOSR is a service-oriented institution which has gradually developed important initiatives to implement a total quality management approach in its Quality Management System (QMS) based on the ISO norms. The first certification obtained in 2006 was re-confirmed in 2009 and in 2012 according to the updated norm ISO 9001: 2008. Since 2009 - in the context of limited resources - the major focus of work shifted to increasing efficiency via an integrated management system aiming at enhancing added value for users. Alongside rationalisation of internal processes, a cost management approach has been introduced based on the monitoring of working time. From 2012 ongoing efforts

have been made to integrate the revised CoP and some elements of other advanced quality management systems in the QMS. The objective of this significant investment of human resources is to enhance confidence in official statistics.

The work on quality follows a large number of detailed guidelines which are accessible to the public, and the approach is highly standardised. The Peer Review team was told that staff members are well trained and that training plans are in place.

Quality is regularly monitored if required by EU sectoral statistical legislation and quality reports for those statistical domains are produced. This approach is complemented by internal audits which form an integral part of total quality management philosophy. SOSR plans to conduct internal audits, to verify each requirement of ISO 9001, once a year while currently the minimum is once in three years. In the event of unexpected problems ad hoc audits can be conducted. The outcome of all internal audits is monitored by the top management of the SOSR in a systematic way, and corrective and preventative actions are introduced if necessary.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 15. Work on the implementation of Quality Management System should continue, and Quality Reports should be produced for all statistical domains. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4 and indicator 15.7.)**

Total quality management systems aim at permanent improvements of processes. This philosophy leads to a "universal" approach to quality. However, statistical quality is a relative concept as quality is defined by user needs. The quality of statistical outputs (characterised by the quality criteria, such as relevance, timeliness, accuracy, comparability), and quality assurance processes to guarantee the necessary quality, have to be fit-for-purpose. The Peer Review team was told that the introduction of a concept of "acceptable quality" is being considered. In the opinion of the Peer Review team the motivation is not led by a focus on the specific needs for quality assurance of different users; instead it is rather resource-driven and aims to produce statistics of a uniform level of quality.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer reviewers recommend that:**

- 16. Consideration should be given to enhancing the Quality Management System to enable more transparency about trade-offs between different dimensions of quality. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3 and 15.7.)**

Quality Management, Quality Assurance and Quality Reporting tools are key components of a statistical QMS. It is crucial that QMSs are developed to meet the needs of users. The SOSR is a user-oriented and service-minded organisation but its quality reporting is rather producer-driven. The producer's perspective is important in order to identify possible improvements but users expect clear and straightforward guidance (metadata) in order to use the information properly.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 17. The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should prioritise the production of user-oriented Quality Reports. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3 and 15.7.)**

Use of external experts

In compliance with the Principle 7 of the CoP, the overall methodological framework used by the SOSR follows European and other international standards and practices. Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority. Cooperation with the scientific community is organised to improve

methodology. Technical discussions on methodology take place also with representatives of the state administration who are in charge of administrative data. International cooperation is developed. However, external experts are not involved in the evaluations or audits of the methods used.

With the implementation of the QMS, the SOSR has introduced systematic quality reviews. These are conducted in the form of internal audits of systems and methods according to the requirements of ISO 9001:2008 and of the SOSR itself. The programme of audits covers all statistical processes, including sub-processes and activities. External experts are not involved, although external experts do take part in ad hoc assessments, such as the ROSC (Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes) of the International Monetary Fund and peer reviews.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 18. Systematic input from external experts in quality and methodology should be sought. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.4 and 7.7.)**

Monitoring response burdens

Since 2009 the SOSR has introduced systematic monitoring of response burdens and has embarked on a systematic rationalisation of statistical surveys with the aim of optimising the response burden. Opportunities to use administrative data have been explored in detail. As a result, the response burden on enterprises and entrepreneurs - measured by number of items of information requested - decreased by 48% between 2008 and 2011. This was achieved by abolishing duplications, reducing variables of questionnaires and cancelling entire surveys. However, the situation as regards response burden of households has worsened, with an increase of items in the household questionnaires by almost 16% during the same period. Information on the reduction in response burdens is published on the SOSR's website.

These figures show some trends in the development and may be useful for planning of further measures to decrease response burden. However, the most NSIs measure response burden in terms of the time used by a respondent to answer a questionnaire. This kind of measure can be used to comparisons and benchmarking with the other NSIs.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 19. Response burdens (on data suppliers) should be reported upon in terms of the time taken to provide statistical data. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 9.1 and 9.2.)**

Dissemination

The dissemination policy adopted includes the facility for users to access statistical information produced by the SOSR using modern tools to download publications, tables etc. The set of rules for the dissemination policy is based on the provisions of the Law on State Statistics, which defines certain categories of users (mainly state authorities and international organisations) to whom statistical information is provided free of charge.

Besides these cases, the SOSR, according to the Law on State Statistics, has the right to provide statistical information obtained from statistical surveys for a price agreed in line with pricing rules. The Principles of Release and Provision of Statistical Information, published on the SOSR's website, include the pricing policy for standard and non-standard outputs. The public databases, Slovstat and Regstat, are available free of charge on the SOSR's website. The Peer Reviewers consider that official statistics - being a public good - should be disseminated free of charge equally to all users.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 20. The Law on State Statistics should stipulate that statistical information should be disseminated free-of-charge to all users. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 6 and 15.)**

The SOSR has a clear Dissemination Policy covering standard outputs and offering scope to produce custom-designed analyses based on specific requests. However, the results of the custom-designed analyses (for example, of detailed structural business statistics) are not published via the website. The Peer Review team was told that requests for custom-designed analyses cover very specialised information and that the fees paid to the SOSR for such analyses are not retained by the SOSR, but are transferred to the government. The Peer Reviewers were concerned that users might regard this set of circumstances as providing unequal access to tax-payer funded statistical information, and that steps should be taken to enhance the equality of access.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 21. The results of custom-designed (bespoke) analyses (or a list of such analyses to help others to access the analyses) should be published on the website. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6 and indicator 15.3.)**

Explanation of the messages in the statistics

The bulletins and reports published by the SOSR are well regarded by users, and data are presented clearly using tables and charts. However, the presentation could usefully be complemented by further explanation of the data which adopts a narrative (descriptive and analytical) approach. The Peer Reviewers believe that this would help ensure that users (including the media and the general public) understand the statistics - including reasons for changes in trends, the wider social and economic context, and the degree of coherence with other related statistics - and make them increasingly useful. Indeed the Peer Reviewers consider that there would be some benefit in working with the scientific community, academia and the media in bringing together SOSR's sectoral information in the form of an accessible annual statistical overview on the state of Slovak society.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 22. The explanation of statistical messages, in bulletins and reports, should be improved. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.1.)**

User satisfaction

A periodic User Satisfaction Survey (USS) is carried out by the SOSR, focusing on known users. In 2013 SOSR received 1,700 responses to its USS. The results are analysed by the top management in order to inform planning. Typical feedback includes calls for the greater use of electronic data collection and web-dissemination. The Peer Reviewers were told that these developments are in place.

USS results, and associated plans, are published on the SOSR's website, although detailed (question by question) results from the USS are not published. The improvement actions, which address groups of the users' suggestions / requirements that are accepted by the SOSR, are included in annual plans.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 23. The results of User Satisfaction Surveys should be published alongside the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic's plans to address the issues raised. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 11.3.)**

Microdata access for scientific research

Access to microdata for scientific research and to anonymised confidential data for domestic and foreign researchers is governed by a legal framework and supported by published procedures. The SOSR has established a Safe Centre from which specific users can access microdata on the basis of a project plan and a specific contract with the office. The SOSR has also developed procedures enabling less sensitive microdata to be provided to researchers working (off-site) in their own institutions.

The researchers' application form includes a list of the outputs and publications that they plan to produce from the microdata that they are seeking access to. The institute/researcher has to submit their outputs for checking before they may be used. If the conditions of the contract are breached, sanctions may be imposed against the research institute in accordance with the Law on State Statistics.

The Peer Review team was told that the SOSR has never had a problem related to breaches of confidentiality and that the Safe Centre approach works well, but that the monitoring of other projects and the outputs of researchers is such a resource-intensive task that the SOSR is not able to check all outputs thoroughly. The Peer Reviewers' view is that in order to maintain trust in official statistics it is important to elaborate and publish clear rules and procedures relating to the confidentiality protection of microdata.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 24. The ways in which confidentiality protection is assured in relation to microdata analysed both in the Safe Centre and in off-site facilities should be documented on the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic's website. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 5.4 and 15.4.)**

4.3 NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE VIEWS WHERE THEY DIVERGE FROM PEER REVIEWERS' ASSESSMENT

Comment to text preceding the recommendation 16

The SOSR provides statistical products / services that consistently meet requirements (specified, not specified) of users and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements (i.e. incl. defined statistical quality standards). In the requirements the intended use of product / service is implicitly reflected (fit-for-purpose perspective). The QMS implemented in the SOSR assists the SOSR in ensuring such products and services and provides framework for continual improvement to enhance user satisfaction.

Acceptable quality is neither a synonym for not meeting requirements nor a result of purely resource driven approach. Acceptable quality is the term to denominate the state of the statistics life cycle where the requirements of users and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements (incl. defined statistical quality standards) are exactly met. This state is also the result of trade-offs consideration between different dimensions of quality.

Thus the acceptable quality is unequivocally linked to requirements of users and to statutory and regulatory requirements (incl. defined statistical quality standards). Since the requirements are different the concept of acceptable quality does not aim at production of statistics of a uniform level of quality.

ANNEX A: PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT

PEER REVIEW VISIT TO THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

15-19 July 2013

AGENDA

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
Day 1 – Monday 15 July 2013			
From-To	Subject	Institution	Name
09.00 – 09.30	Welcome and introduction of programme, and organisational matters	SOSR	Members of top management
09.30 – 10.30	Principles 1, 2 and 3 of the CoP, meeting with management and senior staff	SOSR	Ľ. Benkovičová, L. Sliacka, J. Horkay, H. Glaser-Opitzová, P. Smutný, J. Papol, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 11.30	Principle 5, meeting with management and senior staff	SOSR	H. Glaser-Opitzová, B. Frankovič, Š. Tóth, L. Sliacka, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
11.30 – 12.45	Principles 6 and 15, meeting with management and senior staff. Note: it might be convenient to discuss Principles 6 and 15 together as last time, since Principle 15 is closely linked to impartiality and objectivity. Additional discussions on for example the results of the user survey could find place on day 4, after meetings with main users	SOSR	O. Dzianová, Š. Tóth, B. Neborásek, L. Sliacka, S. Jenovčíková, F. Bernadič, L. Kolesárová, Ľ. Ivančíková, H. Glaser-Opitzová, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch		
13.30 – 14.30	Principle 4, meeting with Director General and quality manager/responsible director	SOSR	Ľ. Benkovičová, M. Dologová, H. Glaser-Opitzová, L. Sliacka, M. Holubová
14.30 – 14.45	Coffee break		
14.45 – 16.15	Principles 7, 8 and 10, meeting with managers and senior staff	SOSR	H. Glaser-Opitzová, M. Mravcová, P. Rozboril, S. Jenovčíková, L. Sliacka, P. Smutný, J. Papol, Š. Tóth, L. Kolesárová, E. Novotná, E. Šmelková, M. Štalmašková Ľ. Ivančíková, Z. Podmanická, I. Chrappa, J. Horkay, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
16.15 – 17.00	Principle 9, meeting with management and senior staff	SOSR	P. Rozboril, S. Jenovčíková, H. Glaser-Opitzová, Š. Tóth, L. Kolesárová, M. Štalmašková, E. Novotná, E. Šmelková, Ľ. Ivančíková, Z. Podmanická, I. Chrappa, J. Horkay, M. Holubová, M. Dologová

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
Day 2 – Tuesday 16 July 2013			
From-To	Subject	Institution	Name
09.00 – 10.30	Principles 11 – 14, meeting with management and senior staff	SOSR	O. Dzianová, B. Neborásek, V. Čičmanec, L. Kolesárová, M. Štalmašková, J. Condíková, E. Novotná, E. Šmelková, F. Bernadič, A. Illitová, H. Glaser-Opitzová, P. Rozboril, S. Jenovčíková, L. Ivančíková, Z. Podmanická, I. Chrappa, M. Katerinková, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 12.00	Meeting with junior staff	SOSR	Boris Frankovič, Peter Stoklasa, Tomáš Keruľ, Gabriela Haasová, Jaroslav Dolinič, Eva Šmelková, Zuzana Sečánska, Dáša Ráchelová, Juraj Rychtárik, Pavol Škápik
12.00 – 12.45	Special issues (“problematic areas”), meeting with management and senior staff	SOSR	Annex B, Management and senior staff (selection)
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch		
13.30 – 14.30	Special issues (“problematic areas”), meeting with management and senior staff continues	SOSR	Annex B, Management and senior staff (selection)
14.30 – 14.45	Coffee break		
14.45 – 17.00	Statistical domains (in particular Principles 7 – 14), meetings with management and senior staff	SOSR	L. Kolesárová, E. Novotná, E. Šmelková, L. Ivančíková, Z. Podmanická, H. Glaser-Opitzová, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
Day 3 – Wednesday 17 July 2013			
09.00 – 10.30	Meeting with management and senior staff on coordination role	SOSR	M. Holubová, L. Benkovičová, P. Rozboril, S. Jenovčíková, O. Dzianová, L. Sliacka, P. Smutný, J. Papol, F. Bernadič, L. Kolesárová, L. Ivančíková, H. Glaser-Opitzová, M. Dologová
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 12.15	Meeting with management and senior staff on integration	SOSR	M. Dologová, M. Holubová, P. Rozboril, S. Jenovčíková, O. Dzianová, B. Neborásek, Š. Tóth, Glaser-Opitzová, M. Mravcová, L. Kolesárová, M. Štalmašková, F. Bernadič, A. Illitová, L. Ivančíková, L. Sliacka
12.15 – 13.00	Lunch		

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
Day 3 – Wednesday 17 July 2013			
13.30 – 15.00	Meeting with other national statistics producers	State Material Reserves, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, Institute of Informatics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Interior	Jakub Kristín, Miroslava Takács Snopková, Juraj Kobela, Jana Juriová, Stanislav Goga, Nadežda Kompasová P. Rozboril, S. Jenovčíková, L. Sliacka
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break		
15.15 – 16.00	Meeting with other national statistics producers continues		
16.00 – 17.00	Meeting with main data providers /respondents. Note: Meeting with register owners is more important than before, affects in particular Principles 4 and 5 of the CoP. The need and how to meet representatives of (other) respondents (CoP Principle 9) should be considered.	EUSTREAM, a.s., Skanska SK, a.s., Slovenský plynárenský priemysel, a. s. (Slovak Gas Industry), ZOS Trnava, a.s.	Alena Novosadová, Tatiana Marusová, Rozália Dubovská, Ľubica Marhavá P. Rozboril, S. Jenovčíková
17.00 – 18.00	Peer Reviewers' team discussion		
Day 4 – Thursday 18 July 2013			
09.00 – 10.30	Meeting with main users – Ministries and other public/private institutions (including Central Bank)	National Bank of the Slovak Republic, Institute for Financial Policy, Institute of Informatics and Statistics, Ministry of Finance	Gregor Bajtay alt. (Ján Seman, Ivan Vidička), Gabriel Michlica, Ján Haluška, Daniela Czikoová alt. (Miriam Majorová, Pavol Benda) O. Dzianová
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 11.45	Meeting with main users - Media	Press Agency of the Slovak Republic, TV Markíza, Daily newspaper Pravda, Daily newspaper Plus 1 deň	Richard Kvasňovský alt. Miroslav Hargaš, Marek Gudiak, Lenka Buchláková, Štefan Mesároš O. Dzianová, M. Jánošík
11.45 – 12.30	Meeting with main users – Scientific community	Institute of Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Science, School of Economics and Management in Public Administration in Bratislava, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, University of Economics in Bratislava	Zuzana Kusá, Ladislav Kabát, Alenka Dubcová, Representative of EUB O. Dzianová
12.30 – 13.15	Lunch		
13.15 – 13.45	Peer Reviewers' team discussion		

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
Day 4 – Thursday 18 July 2013			
13.45 – 14.45	Meeting with management and senior staff: clarification and remaining or additional issues, sum up, improvement actions	SOSR	H. Glaser-Opitzová, P. Rozboril, S. Jenovčíková, Š. Tóth, O. Dzianová, B. Neborásek, L. Kolesárová, M. Štalmašková, E. Novotná, E. Šmelková, Ľ. Ivančíková, Z. Podmanická, I. Chrappa, L. Sliacka, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
14.45 – 15.00	Coffee Break		
15.00 – 16.00	Meeting with top management: Conclusions, recommendations and follow-up (improvement actions)	SOSR	Ľ. Benkovičová, J. Horkay, L. Sliacka, H. Glaser-Opitzová, P. Rozboril, Š. Tóth, O. Dzianová, F. Bernadič, L. Kolesárová, Ľ. Ivančíková, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
16.00 – 16.30	Pilot peer review – experience, recommendations, suggestions, lessons learned	SOSR	Ľ. Benkovičová, J. Horkay, L. Sliacka, H. Glaser-Opitzová, P. Rozboril, Š. Tóth, O. Dzianová, F. Bernadič, L. Kolesárová, Ľ. Ivančíková, M. Holubová, M. Dologová
Day 5 – Friday 19 July 2013			
	This day was reserved for continuation of discussions on experience, suggestions, lessons learned		

ANNEX B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Peer Review Team
1	Richard Laux, Chair
2	Marie Bohatá, Member
3	Marina Gandolfo, Member
	NSI management and senior staff
4	Ľudmila Benkovičová, President of the SOSR
5	Juraj Horkay, Vice-President of the SOSR
6	Lýdia Sliacka, Head, Civil Service Office
7	Magda Holubová, Director, Department of EU Affaires and International Coordination
8	Mária Dologová, Department of Strategy and Integrated Management Systems (plus QM)
9	Helena Glaser-Opitzová, DG, General Methodology and Registers Section
10	Peter Rozboril, DG, Database Coordination Section
11	Sylvia Jenovčíková, Director, Database Preparation Section
12	Štefan Tóth, DG, Informatics Section
13	Oľga Dzianová, DG, Statistical Products and Services Provision Section
14	Branislav Neborásek, Director, Comprehensive Publications and Presentation Technologies Department
15	Vladimír Čičmanec, Director, Information Provision and Marketing Department
16	František Bernadič, DG, National Accounts Section
17	Alena Illitová, Director, Sector Accounts Division
18	Libuša Kolesárová, DG, Business Statistics Section
19	Marianna Štalmašková, Director, Methodology and Synthesis of Business Statistics Department
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53	Representative of EUB, University of Economics in Bratislava
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