

PEER REVIEW REPORT

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

GERMANY

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Statistical System (NSS) in Germany is decentralised and follows the federal structure of the country. The main producers of federal and European statistics are the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (NSI) and the 14 Statistical Offices of the Länder (SLOs). Another 17 National Authorities (ONAs) also produce European statistics. The NSI and the SLOs are well integrated and this form of working association is referred to as “the German system of statistical offices”.

Following the German principle of legality, federal statistics are, as a rule, ordered by the legislator and the majority of federal statistical surveys must have a legal basis. In practice, this means (with few exceptions) that a very comprehensive set of legal acts determines all the essential parameters of a survey.

Some innovative practices in implementing the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP) were identified as a good example for decentralised statistical systems: a central statistical database and a common portal for submission of the business data. Data from enterprises are partly obtained directly from the information systems of the businesses with the help of specific (e.g. accounting) software.

The Peer Review team identified five broad issues in implementing the CoP: the professional independence of the NSS; user orientation; quality management; use of administrative data and modernisation of statistical processes; and the coordination role of the NSI.

The process of appointing the heads of the statistical authorities is not in all cases based on clear selection criteria and professional competence. The responsibility of the heads for deciding statistical standards, methods and procedures is determined in the legal framework indirectly. Following the principle of legality, federal statistics are, as a rule, ordered by the legislator and each survey must have a legal basis. This causes a long and slow process to start new surveys or change existing ones, which in turn diminishes the relevance of official statistics.

National statistical work programmes are present, but the consolidated picture is missing. The ONAs compile their own statistical work programmes, which are not consolidated into one national statistical work programme covering the whole NSS. Separate working programmes reflect the nature of the decentralised statistical system. Many practices related to the communication and dissemination of statistical information are well established but the policies and procedures applied by separate statistical authorities are not harmonised. For instance, there is neither a common policy nor a practice in place for the following activities: commenting publicly on statistical issues, including misinterpretation, misuse and criticism; compiling release calendars; and communicating planned revisions and correcting and communicating errors. Also the timeliness of statistical information deserves more strategic attention and systematic measurement.

The NSI has long experience in developing its quality management system but it can be improved by elaborating statistical business-process-oriented quality guidelines, by standardising the format and enhancing the homogeneity of the contents of quality reports and by providing users with relevant metadata about the methodology of statistical processes.

Administrative data is a prominent source of data in the German NSS. However there are some issues which should be considered in order to make the system more effective. The mandate of the statistical authorities for using administrative data depends on specific legal acts relating to individual surveys, which leads to inflexibility. Early involvement of the statistical authorities in the

design of administrative data sources should also be improved. Data sharing within (and across) the statistical authorities is rather limited. The Census Act does not allow the archiving of individual data for further statistical purposes.

In order to develop further information technology (IT) security within the NSS, the arrangement by which the NSI's IT services are outsourced to the federal IT service centre (Bundesstelle für IT) should be reviewed and a programme of regular security auditing should be introduced across the whole NSS. The building of sustainable statistical capacity for the longer term is impaired by the use of short-term contracts for new employees with academic backgrounds. This issue needs careful consideration.

Generally, the Peer Review team considers that the NSI and the SLOs have a high level of compliance with the CoP. As regards some ONAs, there is clearly more room for improvement, but some ONAs (e.g. the Federal Employment Agency) also have a high level of compliance with the CoP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Professional independence of the National Statistical System and improving the framework conditions for producing official statistics

1. The legal provisions for and the practice of appointment of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should comply with the principle of professional independence. A transparent appointment procedure and clear selection criteria emphasising the professional qualifications of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and Other National Authorities producing European statistics should be established in law. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8.)
2. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should amend the relevant legal provisions and clearly underline the responsibility of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the heads of the Other National Authorities producing European statistics for deciding on statistical methods and standards and the content and timing of statistical releases. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.4.)
3. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should simplify the procedure for ordering statistical surveys, delegating entire responsibility for designing statistical surveys to the statistical authorities. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 1.3 and 1.4; Principle 11.)
4. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should regularly compile and publish a consolidated national statistical work programme covering statistical surveys and other statistical activities of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and Other National Authorities producing European statistics. Periodic progress reports should also be published. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.5.)

5. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany, in cooperation with the Statistical Offices of the Länder, should elaborate a common communication and dissemination policy which should, among other things, define the procedure for commenting publicly on statistical issues. It should also be adopted by the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.7.)

Strengthening user orientation

6. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should establish a policy of improving the timeliness of statistical products in order to better address the needs of the user community. This policy should be supported by a detailed internal work schedule. Timeliness should also be systematically measured. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 13.1.)
7. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should publish a comprehensive annual release calendar for statistical products. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.5.)
8. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should implement a uniform and transparent policy and procedures for planned regular and irregular revisions of statistical data. It should also publish a comprehensive release calendar for planned revisions. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.6 and 8.6.)
9. The Federal Motor Transport Authority should change the practice of providing some users with intermediate results of the statistical survey on the registration of motor vehicles. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.7.)
10. A common procedure on correction of errors discovered in published statistics should be agreed among the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics and published on their websites. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.3.)
11. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should check the pricing policy of the research data centres and, if possible, reduce the tariffs in order to facilitate the use of microdata for scientific purposes. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4.)

Enhancement of the quality management system

12. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should adopt quality guidelines which describe in detail the implementation of quality management within the statistical production processes based on the Generic Statistical Business Process Model. These or similar quality guidelines should also be adopted by the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. Application of the guidelines and monitoring results are to be reported annually. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.2.)
13. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should implement guidelines for the assessment and the validation of source data and intermediate results. The guidelines should also be adopted by the Statistical Offices of the Länder and possibly also by the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 8.5 and 12.1.)

14. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should establish formalised communication with owners of administrative data and provide them with tools for systematic assessment of data quality. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 8.9.)
15. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should provide users with quality reports for all statistics. The available reports should be improved by standardising the format and enhancing the homogeneity of the contents. For internal purposes and for expert users, producer-orientated quality reports should be available. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3, 6.4 and 15.5.)
16. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should provide users with all relevant metadata about the methodology of statistical processes, including the use of administrative data and quality indicators. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.4 and 15.6.)
17. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should systematically and comprehensively measure sampling and non-sampling errors. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should prepare guidelines to support the Statistical Offices of the Länder in this task. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 12.2.)
18. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should develop guidelines on how to monitor internal coherence and conduct such monitoring in a systematic way. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 14.1.)
19. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should develop a comprehensive concept for carrying out internal audits or for initiating audits by external experts. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.4.)

Using administrative data, extending respective legal mandates, modernising statistical processes and ensuring statistical capacity

20. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more generic legal provisions providing the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder with a more flexible mandate to use administrative data for statistical purposes in order to reduce the response burden and underpin the quality of statistics. The Federal Statistical Office should take the lead in promoting this. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.2.)
21. Arrangements should be put in place whereby the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics are consulted on the design and make-up of administrative databases. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 8.7.)
22. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt the next Census Act in such a way that the individual data are archived permanently and not just for a limited period of time and should continue to include appropriate rules relating to confidentiality and data security. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 9.5 and 9.6.)

23. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more generic legal provisions providing the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics with a more flexible mandate to share existing microdata within and between these authorities. A legal foundation for linking household surveys data with administrative records should also be established in order to reduce the response burden and utilise the potential for quality improvement. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 9.5.)
24. The arrangement by which the information technology services are outsourced should be reviewed. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should take the main responsibility for information technology services. In the interim, an arrangement should be put in place whereby the Federal Statistical Office of Germany can be more actively involved in the management of the current outsourcing arrangements, particularly in relation to information technology security. Responsibility for or more active involvement in information technology should be facilitated by a key unit within the Federal Statistical Office of Germany with appropriate expertise in information technology security. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 5.5.)
25. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should take the main responsibility for developing a more strategic approach to information technology security across the whole National Statistical System and for planning and implementing a programme of auditing to guarantee that all systems are audited at least once every three years. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 5.5.)
26. In the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder temporary employment contracts should no longer be used other than in exceptional cases; permanent appointments should be the norm. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 3.1.)

Strengthening the coordination role of the National Statistical Institute in the National Statistical System

27. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more concrete legal provisions which strengthen the coordination role of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and facilitate coordination of statistical activities of the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (Coordination.)
28. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should promote the application of standardised statistical business processes and uniform dissemination and communication policies and procedures in the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should monitor centrally the pre-announced release calendars and data transmission to Eurostat, and involve systematically the employees of Other National Authorities producing European statistics in the national statistical training programme. (Coordination.)

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

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>

review of Eurostat has been conducted by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

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

The peer review of Germany was conducted by Priit Potisepp (chair), Peter G. Hackl and David Fenwick, who conducted a peer review visit to Wiesbaden on 1–5 December 2014. The programme of the visit is in Annex A and the list of participants in Annex B.

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

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

General structure of the National Statistical System

The National Statistical System (NSS) in Germany follows the federal structure of the country. The main producers of federal and European statistics are the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (NSI) and the 14 Statistical Offices of the Länder (SLOs).

Seventeen Other National Authorities (ONAs), which are, to a large extent, independent bodies, also produce European statistics. Some ONAs have a relatively high significance in the NSS, for example, the Federal Employment Agency produces labour market statistics (e.g. data on registered employment and unemployment or basic benefit for job seekers); and the Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food produces agricultural statistics, economic accounts for agriculture and fisheries statistics. There are also six Federal ministries on the list of the ONAs (e.g. the Federal Ministry of the Interior produces migration statistics, the Federal Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs produces health and safety and social protection statistics). The ONAs send data directly to Eurostat without including the NSI in the process of data transmission.

Main legal acts and underlying principles

The statistical activity is largely regulated by the following legal acts: Law on Statistics for Federal Purposes (FSL) of 22 January 1987 that was last amended on 25 July 2013, Federal Data Protection Act, Law on the Use of Administrative Data and Statistical Register Law. According to Article 1 of the FSL, the credibility of federal statistics builds upon the content-related principles of neutrality, objectivity and scientific independence.

Following the German principle of legality, federal statistics are, as a rule, ordered by the legislator. The majority of federal statistical surveys must have a legal basis. Compulsory response to the surveys is considered as interference in the fundamental right of 'informational self-determination' ('informationelle Selbstbestimmung') and requires clearly defined legal authorisation. The legal provisions concerning federal statistics must determine whether and to what extent a survey is to be conducted with or without an obligation on respondents to provide information. In practice, this means (with few exceptions) that a very comprehensive set of legal acts determines all essential survey parameters.

The European legal acts on statistics predominantly specify the output of statistical surveys and usually leave the decision on data collection methodology to the national producers. Consequently, according to the German national legal framework, a national law shall establish comprehensive legal basis for the federal statistics.

The NSI and the SLOs

The NSI is an independent, superior federal authority in the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, which exercises administrative control over the NSI. Other federal ministries carry out specialist supervision regarding statistics that are in their interest. Specialist supervision aims at ensuring the correct conduct of statistical surveys in legal terms.

The NSI has a legal mandate that covers the methodological and technical preparation and further development of federal statistics as well as the production and dissemination of federal statistical results. The NSI mandate also includes giving advice to users, providing the scientific community with anonymised microdata (which is also a role of the SLOs) and supplying results of integrated statistical systems (e.g. National Accounts). Technical preparations are focused particularly on applying modern data processing technologies and setting common standards.

The NSI is actively involved in preparations required for creating a legal basis for a new statistical survey or amending an existing one. It takes into account the interests of different stakeholders (e.g. users, respondents, owners of administrative data) to define the most effective methods and procedures for compiling required statistics and obtaining the necessary data.

There are 2321 employees working for the NSI in Wiesbaden, Bonn and Berlin. In addition, approximately 4700 people are employed by the SLOs. The estimated 2014 expenditure of the NSI is €156.8 million, which amounts to nearly one third of the total expenditure of the NSI and the SLOs.

Coordination of statistical activities within the NSS

The Statistical Advisory Committee and the Conference of Heads of the Statistical Offices act on a strategic level. The former gives advice to the NSI on fundamental matters and represents various user groups (such as associations, trade unions and respondents). The members of the Committee are appointed by the President of the NSI on the proposal of the appropriate associations and institutions. The Conference of Heads of the Statistical Offices comprises the heads of the SLOs. The Board of Heads of Department on Specialised Statistics and the Steering Committee on Optimised Co-operation coordinate the statistical activities at management level. Fifteen specialist committees and 32 meetings of experts and working parties are set up on the operative level.

The NSI's legal coordination role relates to ensuring a uniform and due compilation of federal statistics by the Länder. However, the SLOs are administratively and financially independent of the Federation and formally not subject to directions from the NSI or the federal ministries. In practice, the NSI and the SLOs are well integrated. The core processes of statistics production are performed by the SLOs for about two thirds of federal statistics. The SLOs perform data collection, and process and disseminate the data on at the Land and regional levels. There are only few cases (e.g. foreign trade statistics) in which the NSI collects and processes data at central level.

According to the agreement between the NSI and the SLOs, activities to be coordinated in the German system of statistical offices involve the methodological and technical preparation and further development of official statistics, quality assurance, data analysis and dissemination. The main role in coordinating the methodology involves the heads of statistical subject matter departments of the NSI. A central organisation unit in the NSI is also responsible for coordination activities. Permanent committees such as the Conference of Heads of the Statistical Offices, the Board of Heads of Department on Specialised Statistics and the Meetings of Experts of the Statistical Offices carry out the coordination work between the NSI and the SLOs.

The NSI does not have a clear legal mandate to coordinate common activities with the ONAs. Nevertheless, cooperation and coordination between the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs are based on partnership and practical arrangements taking into account the constitutional framework of the German administration. The NSI cooperates with the ONAs by organising regular meetings and workshops on subject matter issues and new developments.

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

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

According to Article 11a of the FSL and since 1 August 2013, enterprises and the public administration have been obliged to submit statistical data online. Other modes of data submission are accepted only in exceptional cases and with permission from the statistical authorities. The NSI and the SLOs offer electronic data transmission procedures and tools for the majority of statistical surveys. In the opinion of the Peer Review team, the legal enforcement to submit data online can be seen as an innovative practice within the ESS. The German experience demonstrates that combining the legal obligation to provide business data with the compulsory technical mode of data submission leads rapidly to a very high electronic response rate. Internet-based collection of business data is well accepted by the business world; it reduces the response burden on businesses and increases the efficiency of data collection by the NSI and the SLOs. Data providers indicated a great deal of satisfaction with the data collection process and did not identify a high response burden on businesses as an issue. Furthermore, a common portal has been in place since the beginning of 2014 whereby respondents now have direct access to almost all online procedures provided by the NSI and the SLOs through one collection site. Also, the decentralised network of SLOs contributes to good relations with the business world as it facilitates a close working relationship between the data provider and the data gatherer. Effective use of IT has had an important role in facilitating the success of the NSS in the area of data collection. (CoP indicator 10.2)

The data collection tools are especially impressive. Most particularly, data from businesses are partly obtained directly from the information systems of businesses with the help of specific software (e.g. accounting software) and delivered to the NSI/SLOs through the application of eSTATISTIK.core. This web-based application is maintained by the NSI. For a significant number of reporting units, the data requested by the NSI/SLOs are available in electronic format from the individual businesses' software systems; the electronic data are generated and transmitted directly and where possible in an automated way. (CoP indicators 9.3 and 10.2.)

The Peer Reviewers were informed that there are central databases for statistical domains serving the NSI and the SLOs with data and metadata that are used in various phases of the production process, e.g. by metadata driven IT tools to support a standardised e-workflow – a good example for decentralised statistical systems. The central database for meta-information serves the needs of the NSI and the SLOs who can have access to and make quality assurance of the data they need for the construction of statistical outputs and series in accordance with given strategies and specified checks – something that can be particularly challenging for decentralised statistical systems where statistical production relies on more than one organisation. (CoP indicator 10.2.)

Further gains for the NSS are engendered by the use of the standardisation framework that supports the use of XML in German public administration (XÖV). This framework, which was developed and is maintained outside of the NSI by another body within the federal government, is based on a set of coordinated rules to provide an efficient approach to develop, operate and coordinate standards for data transmission. It has a general application outside of statistics and is part of the federal government's efforts to promote cost-effective electronic data exchange. The XÖV comprises standardised definitions and specifications of subject matter data in XML-format

for owners and users of administrative data and facilitates effective communication about administrative data and its use. The XÖV standardisation framework was designed with the intent of promoting the systematic development and deployment of IT standards for the electronic exchange of data in the federal public administration in order to implement cost-effective, fast and high-quality electronic processes. It is currently applied to a number of Administrative Datasets, including some that are used for statistical purposes. (CoP indicators 8.1, 8.7, 9.4 and 10.3.)

Finally, the NSI itself has developed a generic data format for any statistics called XStatistik that is certified as an XÖV standard and is now accepted as a nationwide standard for data in federal statistics. The data collection procedures provided by the NSI and the SLOs for use by surveyed companies and government departments handle the collection and transmission of data automatically with XStatistik. This reduces both the effort required by the companies and the administrative authorities surveyed and transmission errors, thereby reducing the problems encountered by the statistical authorities when evaluating statistical data. (CoP indicators 8.7 and 9.4.)

4.2 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND IMPROVING THE FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR PRODUCING OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The FSL defines the underlying content-related principles of the federal statistics as neutrality (impartiality), objectivity and scientific independence. The NSI's corporate vision, as stated in the Strategy Programme Plan 2014–2018, indicates the importance of scientific independence. Professional independence is defined as one of six strategic action areas of the NSI's strategy. One strategic goal of the NSI is working towards the improvement of the framework conditions set for federal statistics, granting the NSI and all SLOs unrestricted access to microdata that is kept in the SLOs and ensuring impartiality in the process of releasing statistical results. The following issues are covered here: the procedure of appointment of the heads of the statistical authorities; responsibility of the heads for deciding statistical standards, methods and procedures; framework conditions for conducting statistical surveys; and the national statistical work programme and policy of commenting publicly on statistical issues.

4.2.1.1 THE PROCEDURE OF APPOINTMENT OF THE HEAD OF THE NSI, THE HEADS OF THE SLOs AND THE ONAs

The relevant provisions of the FSL concerning the appointment of the President of the NSI are set out in Article 2(2). The President is appointed by the Federal President on the proposal of the federal government. He/she is the head of an independent, superior federal authority in the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. The FSL does not state that the heads of the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs shall be appointed based on professional competence. The Federal Ministry of Interior has the power to propose the nomination of the President of the NSI; no public competition has been organised so far. Nevertheless, in 2011, the post of the Vice-President of the NSI was advertised publicly.

The appointment procedure itself and the necessary qualification profile are not decreed by the FSL. The existing procedure holds in general for the appointment of heads of all federal agencies in Germany.

The President of the NSI is traditionally also the Federal Returning Officer and as such is responsible for the elections of the members of the German Parliament (Bundestag) and of the European Parliament, as well as for the statement of election results.

The President of the NSI is not appointed for a fixed term. As a public servant, the President has, in principle, an unlimited term of office until reaching the age of 65. This rule is not uniformly applied in the SLOs and the ONAs.

Appointment of the heads of the SLOs is subject to the specific laws of the Länder. In most Länder, the selection procedure of the heads of the SLOs is not established by law. The Peer Review team took note of the written opinion released by the European Statistics Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) that the appointment of the heads of the some SLOs may not be compliant with the principle of professional independence, notably with the qualification criterion of professional competence. A similar concern was expressed very recently in a well-known public newspaper and in a press release from the German Statistical Society. The Peer Review team was also informed that the job advertisements do not always presuppose knowledge of statistics and that the ministries of the Länder responsible for the SLOs appoint heads without the necessary professional background.

The appointment of the heads of the ONAs is subject to the internal procedures of the respective organisations and varies significantly as the ONAs are under the functional supervision of the different ministries. Some ONAs apply general public service regulations whereas others have implemented more specific internal procedures. The Peer Reviewers are of the opinion that professional qualifications should be the basis for the appointment of the heads of ONAs, too.

The appointment process of the heads of the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs is not yet completely transparent. Considering the existing practices of appointing the President of the NSI, the heads of the SLOs and the ONAs, a more transparent appointment procedure and clearer criteria securing the professional independence of statistical authorities should be established. The FSL and the statistical laws of the Länder should stipulate that the appointment of the top management of the NSI and the SLOs should be based on professional competence only. A respective uniform policy should also be elaborated, agreed and implemented for all ONAs.

In order to achieve compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 1. The legal provisions for and the practice of appointment of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should comply with the principle of professional independence. A transparent appointment procedure and clear selection criteria emphasising the professional qualifications of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and Other National Authorities producing European statistics should be established in law. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8.)**

4.2.1.2 STRENGTHENING THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NSI AND THE ONAs FOR DECIDING ON STATISTICAL METHODS, STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

According to Article 1 of the FSL, statistical activities shall be carried out in compliance with the principles of neutrality, objectivity and scientific independence. The heads of all producers of European statistics are bound by law when carrying out the duties of their offices. According to Article 3(1) of the FSL, preparing and further developing statistical surveys both methodologically and technically fall under the responsibilities of the NSI. However, there is no clear article in the

FSL regarding the responsibility for deciding on the content and timing of statistical releases. The sole responsibility of the heads of the ONAs for deciding on statistical methods, standards, procedures, and the content and timing of the statistical releases is not decreed by law either.

Pursuant to Article 83 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, the Länder are responsible for executing federal laws as it does not provide or permit otherwise. This means that the Länder have some freedom in how they execute federal laws.

In line with that provision, the SLOs are responsible for collecting and processing federal statistics. The NSI shall prepare and further develop statistics for federal purposes in consultation with the SLOs (Article 3(1) of the FSL). Theoretically, the NSI does not have sole responsibility for deciding statistical methods, standards and procedures. In practice, the NSI and the SLOs cooperate closely and the methodological and technical work is well coordinated. Federal statistics are, as a rule, ordered by the legislator following the principle “no statistics without law”. This principle is valid even when the respondents (both legal and natural persons) are not obliged to provide national statistical authorities with data. The detailed parameters of a survey (variables, definitions, sample size and other parameters) are specified by law. During the legislative procedure, the range of data to be collected and the methodology to be used might be potentially influenced by the competent federal ministries in their decision-making process when they balance financial and human resources against statistical considerations.

According to the general administrative set-up and rules, the various federal ministries exercise their specialist supervision over statistics. The Peer Reviewers were informed that in practice, the specialist supervision aims at ensuring the correct conduct of statistical surveys in legal terms. The Peer Review team was also told that the NSI is independent and not bound by instructions regarding methodology, standards and procedures.

It is also important to emphasise that the majority of users and stakeholders met by the Peer Review team stated that challenging the responsibility of the statistical authorities for the statistical methods, standards and timing of statistical releases has not been observed. According to the customer satisfaction survey (2011), the data and information provided by the NSI are mainly (89% of respondents) regarded as objective and neutral.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 2. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should amend the relevant legal provisions and clearly underline the responsibility of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the heads of the Other National Authorities producing European statistics for deciding on statistical methods and standards and the content and timing of statistical releases. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.4.)**

4.2.1.3 IMPROVING FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS SET FOR CONDUCTING STATISTICAL SURVEYS

Federal statistics are, as a rule, ordered by the legislator and each survey must have a legal basis. In practice, this means (with few exceptions) that very comprehensive legal acts often determine all essential parameters of a survey, in particular the type of survey, its periodicity and its reference period; the variables and definitions; and the parameters of a sample. The current legal basis for collecting data leads to inflexibility (e.g. when modifications to statistical variables are required) and also to a very limited opportunity to share and combine data from different sources. On the issue of inflexibility, the NSI referred to the new provision of Article 7 of the FSL which allows for more flexibility/adaptability to the users’ needs since the last round of peer reviews. This

article permits meeting the short-term data requirements of the highest federal authorities by conducting statistical surveys without an obligation on the respondents to provide information. Also, in order to conduct scientific methodological research in the sphere of statistics, federal statistics may be compiled by collecting data from respondents on a voluntary basis. This kind of legal provision for surveys for special purposes contains significant limitations (e.g. the sample size, voluntary response) and cannot be seen as an effective means of enhancing the relevance of official statistics.

It was explained to the Peer Review team that in a best-case scenario, the duration of the legislative process from initiation to the adoption of a specific statistical legal act is two years.

The Statistical Advisory Committee, also representing the users of statistics, has recommended that the ordering of statistics (the legislative process) should be simplified and the design of the statistical surveys should be made more flexible. Survey details could be regulated at the lower legislative level and be more flexible. Existing surveys could be amended without applying a legislative procedure. The legal act should define variables only; it should not set definitions.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 3. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should simplify the procedure for ordering statistical surveys, delegating entire responsibility for designing statistical surveys to the statistical authorities. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 1.3 and 1.4; Principle 11.)**

4.2.1.4 IMPROVING THE PRESENTATION OF AND REPORTING ON NATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK PROGRAMMES

The NSI applies an exhaustive and systematic planning methodology and process. In 2012, the Strategic Priority Plan (SPP) was first set up and has been updated annually since then. This strategy refers to the strategic action areas and strategic goals of the SLOs and the NSI. A draft update is prepared by a steering group comprising the directors of seven SLOs and the Vice-President of the NSI. It is adopted by the Conference of Heads of all Statistical Offices. The SPP represents the NSI's efforts to align the priorities of the SLOs with the priorities of federal statistics. There is a regular reporting procedure on the SPP: the NSI reports to the Board of Heads of Department on Specialised Statistics and to the Conference of Heads of all SLOs on the progress of strategic projects.

The NSI compiles a five-year Strategy and Programme Plan which is updated annually and refers only to the NSI and federal priorities. Both strategic documents overlap in main strategic action areas, but do not refer explicitly to each other. So far, specific progress reports on the SPP and the Strategy and Programme Plan are not publicly available, although some progress is reported in a summarised form in the NSI's Annual Report.

This rolling five-year Strategy and Programme Plan contains a list of statistical works of the NSI and the SLOs. This document also presents the horizontal activities related to the development of cross-cutting standards, methods and processes. The comprehensive overview of the statistical surveys is supported by general information on main uses, main users and costs. However, this programme focuses on the statistical work of the NSI and the SLOs only and does not include surveys and other statistical activities carried out by the ONAs. One ONA informed the Peer Review team that the work and development programme is available internally to all employees.

In conclusion, the statistical work programmes are made but the current practices of how they are compiled, published, monitored and reported are different in the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 4. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should regularly compile and publish a consolidated national statistical work programme covering statistical surveys and other statistical activities of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and Other National Authorities producing European statistics. Periodic progress reports should also be published. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.5.)**

4.2.1.5 UNIFORM POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR COMMENTING PUBLICLY ON STATISTICAL ISSUES

The Peer Review team was informed that the NSI reacts in practice to misinterpretation, criticism and misuse of statistics in a proactive and transparent way. For this the NSI applies the following measures, depending on the situation: contacts the media (telephone, letters, interviews, invitations to expert discussions), prepares a press release or does not react at all. In extreme cases, a complaint is lodged with the German Press Council.

It was mentioned that there have only been few cases when official statistics were criticised in public. One of those related to the 2011 Population Census, in particular to its execution and partly to its results.

The Marketing Concept 2011 of the NSI and the SLOs is the underlying document for regulating policies and procedures related to communication and dissemination issues. It defines *inter alia* the product types, dissemination channels, corporate identity and work on public relations. The Peer Reviewers were told that the NSI is currently preparing a more comprehensive document on dissemination policy and procedures.

The existing Marketing Concept 2011 does not provide uniform guidance for commenting on misinterpretation, misuse and unfounded criticism of statistics.

In order to ensure compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 5. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany, in cooperation with the Statistical Offices of the Länder, should elaborate a common communication and dissemination policy which should, among other things, define the procedure for commenting publicly on statistical issues. It should also be adopted by the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.7.)**

4.2.2 STRENGTHENING USER ORIENTATION

Communication with users helps to improve trust in the institutions and their statistical products. Feedback from users is an important source of information about potential opportunities to improve the quality of statistical products and the efficiency of the NSI. This communication is a two-way stream that benefits both the NSI and the users. The NSI needs to understand the users' needs in order to deliver relevant and high-quality statistical products; user feedback is the most important source of information for this purpose. Users need high-quality statistical products in terms of relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, comparability and coherence, accompanied by all metadata necessary for understanding and assessing the suitability of the said products for the purpose the user has in mind.

The Statistical Advisory Committee and its specialist committees and working groups serve as the most important ties between the NSI and the users of its statistical products. The SLOs are important channels which hold contacts with regional authorities and bodies. User satisfaction surveys, conducted at four-year intervals, provide the NSI with valuable feedback from the users of its statistical products. The NSI website is used to provide users with information not only about statistical results but also about metadata and quality reports, information which helps users to understand and assess published statistical figures.

Successful user relations comprise further services of the NSI to the benefit of the users. The following issues are covered here: relevance and timeliness of statistical data, provision of a comprehensive annual release calendar, correcting and publishing errors and the use of microdata for scientific purposes.

4.2.2.1 RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS

The Statistical Advisory Committee and its specialist committees and working groups are an important means of involving users in the design and production of statistical products and to get user feedback. In discussions with user representatives, the Peer Review team was informed about the good relations with the various official statistical bodies, the high satisfaction with statistical products and the good services offered by the NSI. Some concerns were expressed by representatives of academia about the availability of certain statistical data, for instance EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC).

The NSI has developed a policy which should result in the identification of negative priorities of the work programme: The “One in – one out” policy intends to limit the scope of the statistical programme by dropping the statistical product of the least priority whenever a new statistical product is added. It is not entirely clear for the Peer Reviewers how this policy is practically applied. However, it should be mentioned that this policy may have negative effects on the relevance of the portfolio of statistical products.

Many external stakeholders indicated the lack of resources of the NSI and that the implementation of some statistical work is slow; users sometimes have to wait a long time. A related observation of the Peer Review team refers to the timeliness of statistical products. The NSI does not systematically plan and measure timeliness. For many statistical products, the annual release calendar does not set a release date, indicating that an actual date of release has not been planned. The Peer Review team got the impression that timeliness is not considered a quality indicator, and that the improvement of timeliness is not a strategic target.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 6. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should establish a policy of improving the timeliness of statistical products in order to better address the needs of the user community. This policy should be supported by a detailed internal work schedule. Timeliness should also be systematically measured. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 13.1.)**

4.2.2.2 RELEASE CALENDARS, PRE-RELEASE ACCESS AND RELEASE OF INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

On its website, the NSI provides users with a wide range of statistical results, tables and figures. Various databases allow users to customise statistical results according to their needs. Users are informed about planned publication dates by means of an annual release calendar, which covers the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) portfolio, and

a short-term release calendar that contains the press releases planned for the coming week. A comprehensive annual release calendar is not yet available. An overarching release calendar would be helpful for users in planning their work with statistical results from the NSI.

Revisions of the National Accounts data, foreign trade statistics, the labour cost index and various other statistics are conducted in individual modes and announced in different places. A general revision policy and procedures on planned regular and irregular revisions are not in place. A comprehensive release calendar of revisions would be helpful for users.

The NSI gives extensive pre-release access to press releases. The beneficiaries of pre-release access are published on the NSI website, together with the described pre-release strategy. Beneficiaries are ministries and the Deutsche Bundesbank. Pre-release access is also common at Länder level; the policy on pre-release access varies between SLOs. The Peer Review team got the impression that the practice of pre-release access is in compliance with the CoP; however the policy and practice of pre-release access in the SLOs should be further harmonised and overall adherence to the principle of equal access to statistical releases reinforced.

The Peer Review team was informed that the Federal Motor Transport Authority provides some users outside of the NSS with daily intermediate results of the statistical survey on the registration of motor vehicles whereas the general public only gets final monthly statistics. To comply with the CoP, such privileged treatment needs to be made public. The Peer Review team recommends that the NSI and the Federal Motor Transport Authority investigate the issue in detail.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 7. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should publish a comprehensive annual release calendar for statistical products. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.5.)**
- 8. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should implement a uniform and transparent policy and procedures for planned regular and irregular revisions of statistical data. It should also publish a comprehensive release calendar for planned revisions. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.6 and 8.6.)**
- 9. The Federal Motor Transport Authority should change the practice of providing some users with intermediate results of the statistical survey on the registration of motor vehicles. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.7.)**

4.2.2.3 COMMON PROCEDURE ON CORRECTION AND PUBLICATION OF ERRORS

As in any statistical agency, it may happen that a publication of the NSI, an SLO or an ONA contains an error. The Guideline on How to Deal with Publication Errors made by the NSI ensures uniform treatment, correction, documentation, and communication of publication errors at NSI level.

The SLOs follow similar, individual practices but most of them have no guidelines or written policy for the treatment of publication errors. It is recommended that a common procedure on the correction of errors discovered in published statistics be agreed among the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs and published on the NSI and SLO websites.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 10. A common procedure on correction of errors discovered in published statistics should be agreed among the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics and published on their websites. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.3.)**

4.2.2.4 RESEARCH DATA CENTRES

NSI and SLO research data centres provide the academic community with a wide range of statistical data in the form of anonymised public use files, scientific use files and other means. These research data centres are well accepted by the academic community. A large number of research projects have been conducted on the basis of available data, and many of the projects have resulted in publications in scientific journals.

The research data centres are working on further possibilities for data access, like remote access and remote execution, and on extensions of the available data. For the time being, the research data centres are aiming at sets of microdata which link data from different sources. All these activities are welcomed by the academic community and also by the Peer Review team.

An issue that has been brought to the attention of the Peer Review team is the pricing policy of the research data centres. Fees have been raised significantly and may be an obstacle, in particularly for students.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 11. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should check the pricing policy of the research data centres and, if possible, reduce the tariffs in order to facilitate the use of microdata for scientific purposes. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4.)**

4.2.3 ENHANCEMENT OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The FSL, the mission statement and the vision of the NSI give a clear commitment to ensuring the quality of the statistics produced by the NSI in line with the Quality Declaration of the ESS. Quality is also the most prominent field of action in the Strategic Priority Planning 2014/2015.

The organisational structure for managing quality consists of the NSI quality coordinator and the quality coordinators of the SLOs, the Quality Working Group and the Data Quality Network. The NSI quality coordinator is the head of division B2 "Institute for Research and Development in Federal Statistics". The Quality Working Group consists of the NSI quality coordinator as chair of the Quality Working Group, and the quality coordinators of the SLOs. Besides the Quality Working Group, the Data Quality Network also comprises the Core Team, consisting of various units of the horizontal departments of the NSI, and the Quality Circle, which includes the Core Team plus five heads of division from the NSI subject-matter departments. The NSI has established organisation-wide self-assessments and external assessments based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model. At intervals of three years, assessments are used as a diagnostic tool for the quality management system, the organisation and the work flows; the next assessment will take place in 2015.

The NSI has published the "Quality Standards in German Official Statistics" on its website, which are agreed between the NSI and the SLOs. The Quality Standards describe the methods employed through all stages of the statistical production processes. However, they are mainly used as

introductory instructions; comprehensive quality guidelines with an emphasis on the production process are under development.

Given the decentralised production of statistical products, the assessment and validation of source data within the statistical system and the communication between the NSI and the SLOs about data quality are issues requiring special attention. A new joint tool – the Quality Data Sheet – for quality assurance of the NSI and the SLOs is being developed.

The NSI has a rich selection of quality and metadata reports; these reports have a tradition of nearly 10 years at the NSI. The main weight of the quality reports is on the European quality criteria. A Quality Report Database has been developed, which facilitates the compilation and the update of quality reports. The quality reports generally comply with and can be mapped to the Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS) format.

The following issues are discussed in this section: quality guidelines, assessment and validation of source data and intermediate results, quality reports and metadata, quality aspects and reviews of statistical output.

4.2.3.1 QUALITY GUIDELINES

The “Quality Standards in German Official Statistics” were adopted in 2006 to demonstrate to users that the NSI is aware of and striving for compliance with the CoP. Staff support in improving the quality of the statistical processes and products is a secondary aim of the document. As stated by NSI management, Quality Standards are now mainly used as introductory instructions for new staff.

According to the ESS Quality Assurance Framework, quality guidelines should be available on how to practically implement quality management within the statistical production process. Such guidelines are an important tool for assuring the consistently high quality of statistical products. The guidelines facilitate the work of the line departments, including the training of new staff. Developing and having such guidelines also has the potential to improve the efficiency of statistical processes.

The NSI and the SLOs are in the course of transforming statistical production processes and adapting production to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM). As a consequence, the quality guidelines also need to be adapted. New quality guidelines should describe in detail the implementation of quality management within future statistical production processes. These guidelines should also describe quality monitoring at each stage of the statistical production process and take the situation of the SLOs and the ONAs into account. Application of the guidelines and monitoring results are to be reported annually.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 12. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should adopt quality guidelines which describe in detail the implementation of quality management within the statistical production processes based on the Generic Statistical Business Process Model. These or similar quality guidelines should also be adopted by the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. Application of the guidelines and monitoring results are to be reported annually. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.2.)**

4.2.3.2 ASSESSMENT OF SOURCE DATA AND INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Due to shared competences in the NSS, the assessment and validation of source data are of particular relevance. This also applies to intermediate results compiled by the SLOs before transmission to the NSI for further statistical production. Various measures are taken to ensure the high quality of the data collected by the SLOs, such as data-editing guidelines, data-editing tools, agreed validation checks and staff training. Additionally, some SLOs use Land-specific programmes for plausibility checks. In the course of adapting statistical production to the GSBPM, the data collection phase is also under consideration. Edit-check tools are being redesigned; the set of available imputation methods is being adapted, including the calculation of the imputation indicator in line with the ESS Quality and Performance Indicators. Quality Data Sheets are being developed to systematically document the edit checks and imputations.

After the peer reviews visit the Peer Review team was provided with the result of a project on the plausibility checks, the handbook of plausibility checks („Handbuch für die Plausibilisierung“). It contains comprehensive guidelines for validation of source data and intermediate results.

Communication with the owners of administrative data takes place during the legislative process which leads to the regulation on the statistical use of administrative data in question as well as in rather informal discussions, for example on quality aspects. The NSI may provide the owner of administrative data with the results of statistical analyses aiming at the exchange of information and feedback. A more systematic basis for communication between the statistical system and the owner of administrative data might be helpful for improving the quality of administrative data and the statistical products, for example the owners of administrative data might be supplied with tools for assessing the quality of their data.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 13. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should implement guidelines for the assessment and the validation of source data and intermediate results. The guidelines should also be adopted by the Statistical Offices of the Länder and possibly also by the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 8.5 and 12.1.)**
- 14. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should establish formalised communication with owners of administrative data and provide them with tools for systematic assessment of data quality. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 8.9.)**

4.2.3.3 QUALITY REPORTS AND METADATA

The management of the NSI and of the SLOs are well aware of the fact that the production of high-quality products is essential for the good reputation of and public trust in official statistics. Each department is responsible for monitoring the quality and assurance of its own statistical processes; support is given by cross-sectional divisions and sections, in particular by the Mathematical-statistical Methods and IT Support for the Business Process divisions. On the NSI website, conceptual and methodological information is available for most statistical products, which may help users to understand and assess the quality of the statistics; the same is true for Common New Statistical Information System (GENESIS) databases. The standard format for such information is that of the quality report which contains information on the quality of the statistical results as well as on the concepts, definitions, and statistical methods used.

The structure of the quality reports was agreed between the NSI and the SLOs as early as 2004. The report consists of two introductory chapters outlining the general aspects and purpose of the statistical product, a chapter on the underlying statistical methods, three chapters on EU quality criteria, and finally three chapters on technical issues such as the relation to other statistical products, dissemination, and involved concepts, classifications, etc. The structure of the quality report is similar to that of the ESMS format; it contains in particular all quality dimensions. Metadata presented in the GENESIS databases follow a similar structure.

The degree of detail given in the reports for the various statistical products varies largely. In general, the content of the quality reports corresponds to user-oriented information. Producer-orientated quality reports have not yet been developed. The adaptation of the statistical production processes to the GSBPM will require more and deeper documentation of the processes behind the various statistical products. A new feature that is already being implemented is the establishment of a Quality Report Database, which facilitates the compilation and the update of quality reports. New also is that the ESS Quality and Performance Indicators are calculated and reported.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

15. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should provide users with quality reports for all statistics. The available reports should be improved by standardising the format and enhancing the homogeneity of the contents. For internal purposes and for expert users, producer-orientated quality reports should be available. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3, 6.4 and 15.5.)

16. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should provide users with all relevant metadata about the methodology of statistical processes, including the use of administrative data and quality indicators. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.4 and 15.6.)

4.2.3.4 QUALITY ASPECTS OF STATISTICAL OUTPUT

Measurement and documentation of quality indicators are of high relevance for users of statistical products, as well as for assessing the quality of statistics produced by the NSI. Among the indicators of accuracy, sampling errors and non-sampling errors are of special interest due to the direct effects they may have on the interpretation and use of the statistical product. At the NSI, systematic concepts have been developed for individual sets of statistics that allow for both the identification of sources of error and the calculation of quality indicators as listed among the ESS Quality and Performance Indicators. Examples are indicators for sampling errors, for the over-coverage rate and for non-response. The measurement of sampling and non-sampling errors requires close cooperation with the SLOs, which may have specifics that have to be taken into account. The Quality Data Sheets used by the NSI and the SLOs will improve the systematic measurement and documentation of errors. The Quality Data Sheet is seen by the NSI as an element of an overarching, systematic measurement and safeguarding process for data quality and also supports European requirements, such as quality reports. Guidelines to measure sampling and non-sampling errors need to be agreed between the NSI and the SLOs, and the quality reports should be adapted accordingly.

For the user, aspects of coherence are not easily visible. Such aspects are the consistency between preliminary and final data (i.e. continuity), between micro- or intermediate and aggregated data, between monthly and annual data, between basic statistics and results from secondary analyses as in the National Accounts, and also with non-deterministic consistency such

as results related to the same concept obtained from different data sources or consistency between economic growth and employment, also called plausibility. At the NSI, guidelines on coherence have been developed for specific sets of statistics, for example in the context of the reform of business statistics. So far, the NSI has no general guidelines for monitoring of the internal coherence of statistics. The dissemination unit reports back to the subject-matter units, if it recognises a lack of coherence in different statistics. However, many aspects of coherence are not easily detectable for somebody who is not expert in the related subject matter. Procedures and guidelines to monitor coherence should be developed and carried out in a systematic way.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 17. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should systematically and comprehensively measure sampling and non-sampling errors. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should prepare guidelines to support the Statistical Offices of the Länder in this task. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 12.2.)**
- 18. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should develop guidelines on how to monitor internal coherence and conduct such monitoring in a systematic way. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 14.1.)**

4.2.3.5 REVIEWS OF STATISTICAL OUTPUT

The NSI has various tools for reviewing statistical output. DESAP (Development of a Self-Assessment Programme) based self-assessments of individual sets of statistics are mandatory in certain circumstances, such as major changes of specialised IT applications. International audits are carried out and compliance visits, etc., are undertaken by Eurostat. A Process Management System examines the NSI's sets of statistics systematically, for example since 2011 statistics from the (i) Prices, (ii) Services, Transport, and Tourism, and (iii) Agriculture and Forestry and Fisheries divisions have been scrutinised in detail. The SLOs have also been subjected to audits in individual cases. The NSI has no comprehensive concept for carrying out internal audits or for initiating audits by external experts. To suggest a concept for conducting internal and external quality reviews lies within the remit of the Working Group for the Quality of Statistical Processes and Products.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 19. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should develop a comprehensive concept for carrying out internal audits or for initiating audits by external experts. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.4.)**

4.2.4 USING ADMINISTRATIVE DATA, EXTENDING RESPECTIVE LEGAL MANDATES, MODERNISING STATISTICAL PROCESSES AND ENSURING STATISTICAL CAPACITY

In Germany, administrative data is a prominent source of data, particularly for business statistics but also more widely. The use of administrative data generates significant efficiency savings both to the data provider (by reducing the burden on business) and to the compiler of the associated statistics. But a number of issues can arise with the use of administrative data, particularly in relation to coverage, concepts and definitions and also to the application of coding frames that do not comply with European standards.

4.2.4.1 USING ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Currently the mandate of the statistical authorities for collecting information is given by specific legal acts relating to individual surveys and to the use of administrative databases for statistical purposes. This applies to surveys and administrative data for European statistics as well as to data required by the federal government and the Länder. Currently there is no general legal act allowing overall access to administrative data for statistical purposes.

The Peer Review team was told that a more general legal norm which would broaden access to administrative data would be difficult to reconcile with the fundamental right to 'informational self-determination' ('informationelle Selbstbestimmung'). The decision of the Federal Constitutional Court on the Population and Housing Census (1983) is derived mainly from this particular fundamental right and determines the main principles of the FSL.

It should be stated that the use of administrative data for statistical purposes is improving in the NSS. The NSI and the SLOs are currently using ca. 140 different administrative sources for statistical purposes. In the course of the legislative procedure, the administrative institutions concerned are consulted and the usability of the data is checked. The most recent and prominent example of the use of the registers' data relates to the Population and Housing Census (2011). The ONAs produce European statistics using predominantly administrative data sources.

The Peer Review team also noted that there is an exercise currently being undertaken across the Federation to fully standardise administrative data. This has the potential to indirectly make better use of administrative data possible and better integrate different administrative databases. But the extent to which this facilitates the better use of administrative data for statistical purposes depends on the degree of influence that the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs have at the early stage in administrative data design. The Peer Reviewers noted that usually there is no early involvement of the statistical authorities in the design of the administrative data sources. However, some ONAs are also producers of administrative data and as such directly involved in the design of administrative data (e.g. the Federal Employment Agency).

The Statistical Advisory Committee proposes that a general regulation permitting the NSI and the SLOs general access to administrative data, that are relevant for their statistical duties, should be drafted and adopted. The national law in this regard should be more in line with the European Statistical Law.

In conclusion, the mandate to use administrative data for development, production and dissemination of European statistics is still limited. The NSI always has to acquire a specific mandate.

In order to strengthen compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 20. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more generic legal provisions providing the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder with a more flexible mandate to use administrative data for statistical purposes in order to reduce the response burden and underpin the quality of statistics. The Federal Statistical Office should take the lead in promoting this. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.2.)**
- 21. Arrangements should be put in place whereby the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics are consulted on the design and make-up of administrative databases. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 8.7.)**

4.2.4.2 USING EXISTING DATA FOR OTHER AND FURTHER STATISTICAL PURPOSES

During its investigations, the Peer Review team encountered a particular issue relating to the use of Population and Housing Census data. The NSI actively manages archived microdata, based on legislation and on the use of an Archiving Management system (AMS) introduced earlier in 2014. The matching of specified sources is allowed if it generates information which would otherwise require an additional statistical survey. But a specific issue arises in connection with the census law. The Census Act of 2011 made it possible in theory to link specific data at micro level for census purposes. For the future however, the Census Act requires that personal variables are deleted and that the use of the address register is brought to a halt after 2015. As a consequence, the statistical authorities have limited authority to promote measures that enable the linking and reuse of census data in order to reduce the response burden and to utilise the potential for quality improvement.

The Peer Review team was also informed that linking household surveys data with administrative data is not permitted by law.

Whilst the Peer Review team was impressed by the extent to which administrative data is used for statistical purposes, it also noted that data sharing between the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs is limited. It is mainly restricted to the SLOs sharing data with the NSI, where the former have the task of transmitting data relating to the Länder to the NSI, which then compiles the corresponding statistics at a federal level. Again, this reflects the FSL, supplemented by specific laws relating to specific statistical outputs – access to administrative data is granted under specific legal conditions and arrangements relating to the production of specific federal statistics. The FSL also covers business registers (e.g. the current law does not allow Deutsche Bundesbank access to the statistical business register held by the NSI) and centralised data storage systems held by the NSI and the SLOs. Again the ONAs are not part of the data-sharing arrangements. Although technical tools exist to allow access to data where the law allows, there is no generalised statistical law relating to data sharing within (and across) statistical authorities.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 22. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt the next Census Act in such a way that the individual data are archived permanently and not just for a limited period of time and should continue to include appropriate rules relating to confidentiality and data security. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 9.5 and 9.6.)**
- 23. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more generic legal provisions providing the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics with a more flexible mandate to share existing microdata within and between these authorities. A legal foundation for linking household surveys data with administrative records should also be established in order to reduce the response burden and to utilise the potential for quality improvement. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 9.5)**

4.2.4.3 OUTSOURCING OF IT SERVICES

Data archiving, sharing and integration require that effective data security arrangements be in place to ensure statistical confidentiality. The Peer Review team was generally impressed with the arrangements in place to ensure statistical confidentiality and also with the culture of the NSS where data security and confidentiality were given a high priority. However, the Peer Review team is concerned with the arrangements regarding central service centres for IT. A Federal Government decision has led to a stepwise consolidation of IT Operations Services (IT Computer Centre Services) in the federal public administration, as well as to the common development of basic and cross-cutting IT services. The pooling of IT infrastructure and IT staff is aimed at "ensuring a high and adequate quality of technical services, the reduction of deployment time for new IT (especially hardware) and should allow the authorities to focus on their core competences". The strategy is applied to the NSI as well as to other parts of the federal administration.

Responsibility for IT services regarding statistical data, including security, has been allocated to a service centre in Wiesbaden; there is a sister centre in Cologne for Administrative Data. The service centre –Bundesstelle für IT (BIT) – provides the NSI with IT services (servers, networks, workstations and software). There is no reason to suppose that the BIT is not fully committed to its contractual obligations, including ensuring the security and integrity of statistical databases (the NSI occasionally tests the strict protocols applied to the microdata accessible to external users by requesting tabulations containing confidential information). Neither is there any doubt that the BIT has the necessary expertise. Yet, the arrangement has put the NSI in a difficult position. Under the FSL, the NSI has an obligation to maintain statistical confidentiality and, indeed, has been instrumental in developing an IT security strategy for the NSI and the SLOs which includes, for instance, guidelines on the organisation of workflows and programmes of data processing, taking into account statistical confidentiality requirements. The operational responsibilities of the NSI also extend to IT security more generally. But the transfer of operational arrangements to the BIT potentially compromises the robustness of the security arrangements. It leaves the NSI with responsibility for the security of its data but not having sufficient transparency and necessary information about the overall management of IT resources by the BIT apart from the opportunity to monitor the fulfilment of BIT's legal and contractual obligations. The question arises with the latter of how the NSI at arm's length can effectively be fully satisfied that the data security requirements and statistical confidentiality are fully complied with.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 24. The arrangement by which the information technology services are outsourced should be reviewed. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should take the main responsibility for information technology services. In the interim, an arrangement should be put in place whereby the Federal Statistical Office of Germany can be more actively involved in the management of the current outsourcing arrangements, particularly in relation to information technology security. Responsibility for or more active involvement in information technology should be facilitated by a key unit within the Federal Statistical Office of Germany with appropriate expertise in information technology security. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 5.5.)**

4.2.4.4 SYSTEMATIC DATA SECURITY AUDITS; UNIFORM IT SECURITY MEASURES THROUGHOUT THE SLOs AND THE ONAs

The Peer Reviewers also noted that although some security checks are undertaken, currently no systematic security audits are carried out on the data security system and that there are no uniform IT security measures in place throughout the NSS.

In this connection, it can be noted that the recently passed federal law and corresponding implementation plan – the National Plan for Infrastructure Protection – lays down new requirements relating to the auditing of information systems, including statistical databases. Organisations, including the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs, have to comply with these new rules by the end of 2015, from which point checks will be conducted by auditors from the IT Planning Council of Germany. Accreditation will be mandatory from 2017. The NSI has been very active in the field of data security through, for example, the Joint Working Group on Data Security and Disclosure Rules, the joint development of associated tools, the introduction of a security categorisation of data (high security, normal security) and by conducting a pilot exercise on a specifically chosen data set to measure compliance against the internal handbook on data security. There is also an IT security office in the NSI, a data protection officer and a security coordinator. But the Peer Reviewers saw no strategic plans for the regular auditing of data security: most particularly, a programme which guarantees that every database held as part of the NSS would be audited on a regular basis to a pre-determined timetable and that the programme would incorporate more frequent reviews of areas of concern. All this should be undertaken by a special unit within the NSI with responsibility for security issues across the NSS and for coordinating and managing the contractual relationship with the BIT.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 25. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should take the main responsibility for developing a more strategic approach to information technology security across the whole National Statistical System and for planning and implementing a programme of auditing to guarantee that all systems are audited at least once every three years. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 5.5.)**

4.2.4.5 INFLUENCE OF SHORT-TERM CONTRACTS ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF STATISTICAL CAPACITY

The Peer Reviewers were impressed with the procedures in place in the NSI for the development of staff to ensure that the skills needed to achieve business objectives were in place. The annual review process of members of staff helps to identify training needs. These have been incorporated into personal development plans for individuals and into the NSI training strategy. In addition, effective pre-training and post-training evaluation procedures are in place, which help to monitor the quality of training and its value against business needs. But the building of sustainable statistical capacity for the longer term is impaired by the use of short-term contracts for new employees with academic backgrounds – a situation forced upon the NSI, the SLOs and the ONAs by federal law. This situation is particularly worrying given the worsening age profile of permanent staff, where a significant proportion of highly experienced staff will be retiring. Statistical capacity will be diminished in the longer term unless there is a forward-thinking strategy of maintaining, and where necessary enhancing, the skills base and proper succession planning – including the retention of young professionals. It can also be noted that the use of short-term contracts significantly reduces the return on investment that the NSI has made in providing training and from the knowledge individuals have gained from their work experience. The NSI has invested in

the individuals and the individuals have invested in the organisation: the NSI loses some of this investment to the advantage of the new employers of those individuals who are not offered permanent employment. The position is made worse by the fact that an element of randomness is introduced whereby those that happen to be working in an area where permanent staff leave for whatever reason are more likely to get a permanent appointment. Finally, the Peer Reviewers found that the junior professional staff were well-motivated, despite their short-term contracts.

In order to enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 26. In the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder temporary employment contracts should no longer be used other than in exceptional cases; permanent appointments should be the norm. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 3.1.)**

4.2.5 STRENGTHENING THE COORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE IN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

4.2.5.1 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF COORDINATION

Reference to the coordination role of the NSI within the German system of statistical offices (NSI and the SLOs) is set out in Article 3 of the FSL. The law refers to cooperation; the NSI and the SLOs also emphasise that coordination in the NSS is based on a partnership (“loose coordination”) which has been a successful model.

Pursuant to Article 83 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, the Länder execute federal laws in their own right; the NSI cannot issue orders when coordinating the production of European statistics. Nevertheless, the activities of the NSI and the SLOs are closely interlinked and in practice, there is a high degree of coordination and work sharing.

The Peer Review team was provided with a document on role perception and cooperation between the NSI and the SLOs (2011). It defines areas of statistical production to be coordinated which involve methodological and technical preparation and further development of official statistics, quality assurance, analysis and dissemination. The Peer Review team was also informed that the heads of NSI subject-matter departments have the main coordination role in methodological questions. There is also a central organisation unit in the NSI responsible for coordination activities. Many permanent committees such as the Conference of Heads of the Statistical Offices, the Board of Heads of Department on Specialised Statistics and the Meetings of Experts of the Statistical Offices carry out the coordination work between the NSI and the SLOs.

In conclusion, the legal phrasing of the coordination role of the NSI is rather declarative and limits the coordination role to the statistical activities of the NSI and the SLOs. It does not set out a clear mandate to coordinate common themes and activities between the NSI and the ONAs.

In order to improve the overall coordination across the NSS, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 27. The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should elaborate and adopt more concrete legal provisions which strengthen the coordination role of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and facilitate coordination of statistical activities of the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. (Coordination.)**

4.2.5.2 STANDARDISING PRODUCTION PROCESSES, HARMONISING DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICIES, MONITORING DATA TRANSMISSION

In order to standardise the statistical production processes, the NSI and the SLOs have introduced systematic efforts. The GSBPM (a more detailed German version has also been elaborated) is taken as the basis for the standardisation and further development of statistical processes and tools. The ONAs have processes of their own that are not subject to the standardisation efforts undertaken by the NSI and the SLOs. There are no methodological or technical working groups for creating respective guidelines for the ONAs.

Whilst the NSI and the SLOs are developing a common dissemination and communication policy and procedures, the ONAs' practices vary considerably in this regard. The ONAs should adopt more uniform principles, procedures and processes of dissemination and communication; for example, there is no coordination of pre-announced release calendars by the ONAs.

The NSI transmits the data produced by the NSI and the SLOs to Eurostat. Yet, this does not apply for the ONAs, which are much less interlinked with the activities of the NSI and the SLOs. There is no central system of monitoring the work flow of data transmission relating to European statistics. The ONAs also use different data transmission tools.

The NSI and the SLOs together conduct a comprehensive training programme (approximately 60 seminars in 2014) and the representatives of the ONAs are sometimes informed and invited. The NSI started an e-learning application in 2014. Coordination and cooperation in the field of training could be further intensified. The training plans of all producers of European statistics could be compared and made available for the whole NSS.

With regard to the issues highlighted above, the NSI has no or only very limited formal authority to undertake respective coordination efforts.

In order to improve overall coordination across the NSS, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 28. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should promote the application of standardised statistical business processes and uniform dissemination and communication policies and procedures in the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should monitor centrally the pre-announced release calendars and data transmission to Eurostat, and involve systematically the employees of Other National Authorities producing European statistics in the national statistical training programme. (Coordination.)**

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

Recommendation 1: The legal provisions for and the practice of appointment of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should comply with the principle of professional independence. A transparent appointment procedure and clear selection criteria emphasising the professional qualifications of the President of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and Other National Authorities producing European statistics should be established in law. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8.)

The procedures of appointing the President of the Federal Statistical Office, the Heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and statistical heads of Other National Authorities are based on the relevant provisions in terms of law relating to public officials, of collective bargaining law and of labour law at the federal and Land levels. In this context, the provisions of Article 5a of the revised version of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 are met and implemented within the scope of subsidiarity.

Recommendation 3: The German legislative, administrative and statistical authorities should simplify the procedure for ordering statistical surveys, delegating entire responsibility for designing statistical surveys to the statistical authorities. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 1.3 and 1.4; Principle 11.)

The implementation of EU legal provisions regarding European statistics in national law is based on the constitutional principles of legislation. The principle that statistics are generally ordered by way of federal laws or ordinances is laid down in the Federal Statistics Law and has proved useful for a long time already. With a view to the constitutional right to informational self-determination, this principle provides transparency as to what personal data are collected or are processed from administrative data stocks. In this context, in addition, the work-sharing between the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder within the system of official statistics is arranged, a sound basis for planning is created and it is ensured that statistical data are collected in a uniform way in the whole of Germany.

Recommendation 11: The Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder should check the pricing policy of the research data centres and, if possible, reduce the tariffs in order to facilitate the use of microdata for scientific purposes. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4.)

The charges for using data offered by the research data centres of the statistical offices of the Federation and the Länder were evaluated in 2014. On 1 January 2015, a new price model became effective. The price of data sets based on several sets of statistics has been reduced. Price reductions have been introduced for doctoral candidates and students. Another evaluation will take place in two years.

Recommendation 24: The arrangement by which the information technology services are outsourced should be reviewed. The Federal Statistical Office of Germany should take the main responsibility for information technology services. In the interim, an arrangement should be put in place whereby the Federal Statistical Office of Germany can be more actively involved in the management of the current outsourcing arrangements, particularly in relation to information technology security. Responsibility for or more active involvement in information technology should be facilitated by a key unit within the Federal Statistical Office of Germany with appropriate expertise in information technology security. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 5.5.)

The transfer of IT services from the computer centre to the Federal Office for Information Technology (BIT) is regulated in detail and by contract. The Federal Statistical Office maintains full sovereignty of the statistical data. The efficient pooling of complex IT infrastructure components and of IT operation at one central government agency contributes to the Federal Statistical Office remaining able to meet the quality standards of eGovernment requirements despite limited resources. The current contractual arrangements provide a solid frame for cooperation. As regards IT security, the technical and organisational measures required to meet the standards are refined and regularly checked in cooperation with the BIT.

Recommendation 26: In the Federal Statistical Office of Germany and the Statistical Offices of the Länder temporary employment contracts should no longer be used other than in exceptional cases; permanent appointments should be the norm. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 3.1.)

As long as the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder effectively fulfil their task of collecting data for European statistics, the question of what human resources management measures are used to find the right mix between permanent positions (which are concretely assigned to the offices by the budget legislator in terms of number and weight) and fixed-term positions is a national matter, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. Another relevant aspect here is that, through fixed-term positions, qualified staff can be exchanged between the statistical offices and scientific institutions. Generally, permanent positions becoming vacant will be filled permanently again. In such cases, people are preferred who had a fixed-term position at a statistical office before.

ANNEX A: PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT

Peer Review team

Mr Priit Potisepp
Mr Peter G. Hackl
Mr David Fenwick

National coordinator team

Ms Annette Pfeiffer
Mr Thorsten Tümmeler
Ms Dorothea Klumpen
Mr Mirko Herzner
Ms Irina Meinke

Eurostat observer: Ms Martina Hahn, Head of unit G1: Business statistics – coordination and registers

AGENDA

Peer review visit to Wiesbaden (1 December 2014 – 5 December 2014)

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
Day 1 – Monday, 1st December 2014			
9.00 – 10.45	Peer Reviewers' discussion to finalise the preparation of the visit; in particular to share views on the information received		PR Team
10.45 – 11.00	Coffee break		
11.00 – 13.00	Preparatory meeting with the NSI coordination team	Federal Statistical Office (NSI)	National coordinator and NSI coordinator team, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Klumpen, Mr Herzner
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch		
14.00 – 14.30	Welcome and introduction of the programme, organisational matters	NSI	Mr Egeler, Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres
14.30 – 15.30	General information session with a description on how the NSS is organised (bodies, distribution of responsibilities, relations between authorities)	NSI	Mr Egeler, Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Klumpen, Mr Herzner, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres
15.30 – 15.45	Coffee break		
15.45 – 17.45	The statistical law, related legislation and statistical work programmes (CoP Principles 1, 2, 5 and 6)	NSI	Mr Egeler or Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Klumpen, Mr Herbertz Ms Engelter, Mr Wöll, Ms

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
			Stärk, Ms Glitza, Mr Prof. Dr Ehling, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres, Ms Kempf, Mr Wirtz
17.45 – 18.45	Stock-taking meeting (incl. outstanding clarifications or additional issues) and reviewing of remaining schedule		PR Team
Day 2 – Tuesday, 2nd December 2014			
8.30 – 09.45	Coordination role of the NSI	NSI	Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Klumpen, Ms Engelter, Mr Meisenheimer, Mr Stein (BMI)
09.45 – 10.00	Coffee break		
10.00 – 12.00	Programming, planning and resources (CoP Principles 3, 9 and 10)	NSI	Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Klumpen, Mr Gehle, Ms Engelter, Mr Meisenheimer, Ms Glitza, Mr Schmidt, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres, Ms Kempf, Mr Wirtz
12.00 – 12.45	Lunch		
12.45 – 15.00	Commitment to quality (organisational structure, tools, monitoring) (CoP Principles 4 and 11 to 15)	NSI	Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Meinke, Mr Lüüs, Ms Stärk, Ms Glitza, Mr Prof. Dr Ehling, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres, Ms Kempf, Mr Wirtz
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break		
15.15 – 17.15	Dissemination and confidentiality (CoP Principles 5, 6 and 15)	NSI	Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Meinke, Mr Lüüs, Mr Halfpaap, Ms Engelter, Ms Stärk, Mr Glitza, Mr Prof. Dr Ehling, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres, Ms Kempf, Mr Wirtz
17.15 – 18.15	Stock-taking meeting (incl. outstanding clarifications or additional issues) and reviewing of remaining schedule	NSI	PR Team
Day 3 – Wednesday, 3rd December 2014			
9.00 – 11.00	Methodology, data collection, data processing and administrative data (CoP Principles 2, 7 and 8)	NSI	Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Tümmeler, Mr Herzner, Mr Lüüs, Ms Köhler, Ms Glitza, Mr Prof. Dr Ehling, Mr Schmidt, Mr Bleses, Ms Beuerlein, Ms Schaff, Ms Böhm, Ms Frank-Bosch, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres, Ms Kempf, Mr Wirtz
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee break		
11.15 – 12.15	Cooperation/level of integration of the ESS	NSI	Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Klumpen; Representatives of the Directors Groups: Ms Glitza, Mr Schmidt, Mr Prof. Dr Ehling

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
12.15 – 13.00	Lunch		
13.00 – 14.30	Meeting with main users – ministries and other public/private institutions (including the Central Bank as a user)	NSI	Mr Egeler, Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Klumpen, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres (representatives of the SLOs), Ministries: Mr Stein (BMI), Mr Dr Hanke (BMF), Ms Dr von Gäßler (BMBF), Mr Dr Appel (BMEL) Mr Warnken (BMAS), Mr Müller (BMW), Mr Schäfer (BMFSFJ), Ms Schmidt (BMUB), Mr Kirchner (Deutsche Bundesbank)
14.30 – 14.45	Coffee break		
14.45 – 16.15	Meeting with main data providers	NSI	Mr Egeler, Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Tümmeler, Mr Herzner, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres Main data providers: Mr Herkner (BDEW), Mr Steib (VDMA)
16.15 – 17.15	Meeting with junior staff	NSI	Employees of the NSI, working for 2–5 years in the NSI
17.15 – 18.15	Stock-taking meeting (incl. outstanding clarifications or additional issues) and review of remaining schedule	NSI	PR Team
Day 4 – Thursday, 4th December 2014			
9.00 – 10.45	Meeting with other national authorities: SLOs	NSI	Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Meinke, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres, Ms Frisch, Ms Kempf, Mr Wirtz, Mr Kaendl
10.45 – 11.00	Coffee break		
11.00 – 12.00	Continuation: Meeting with other national authorities: SLOs	NSI	See above
12.00 – 12.45	Lunch		
12.45 – 14.00	Meeting with other national authorities: Federal Motor Transport Authority (KBA) and Federal Employment Agency (BA)	NSI	Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Klumpen, Mr Siebert (KBA), Mr Hahn (BA), Ms Hüser (BA)
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with main users – Media		Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Tümmeler, Ms Meinke, Mr Pötzsch, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres (representatives of the SLOs), Media: Mr Schlieker (Rhein-Main-Presse)
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break		

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
15.15 – 16.15	Meeting with main users – scientific community	NSI	Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Tümmler, Ms Meinke, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres (representatives of the SLOs), Ms Dr Schaffner (RWI), Prof. Dr Münnich (Uni Trier), Prof. Dr Gangl (Uni Frankfurt)
16.15 – 17.15	Stock-taking meeting (incl. outstanding clarifications or additional issues)	NSI	PR Team
Day 5 – Friday, 5th December 2014			
9.00 – 10.30	Peer Review team discussion	NSI	PR Team
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 12.45	Clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas	NSI	Mr Egeler, Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Schmidt, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmler, Mr Herzner, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres, Ms Kempf, Mr Wirtz
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch		
13.30 – 15.30	Meeting with senior management: conclusions and recommendations	NSI	Mr Egeler, Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Ms Pfeiffer, Mr Tümmler, Mr Chlumsky, Ms Glitza, Ms Beuerlein, Mr Schmidt, Mr Dittrich, Ms Schaff, Ms Böhm, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres, Ms Kempf, Mr Wirtz
15.30 – 16.00	Official farewell		Mr Egeler, Mr Sarreither, Ms von Oppeln, Mr Störtzbach, Mr Fischer, Mr Berres
16.00 – 16.30	Preparation of the report: task sharing	NSI	PR Team

ANNEX B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Peer Review team
1	Mr Priit Potisepp, Chair
2	Mr Peter G. Hackl, Peer Reviewer
3	Mr David Fenwick, Peer Reviewer
	Eurostat observer
4	Ms Martina Hahn, Observer, Head of unit G1: Business statistics – coordination and registers, Eurostat
	NSI management
5	Mr Roderich Egeler, President
6	Mr Dieter Sarreither, Vice-President
7	Ms Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski, Head of Department “Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication”
8	Mr Peter Schmidt, Head of Department “Business Register, Earnings, Industry, Services”
9	Mr Bernd Störtzbach, Head of Division “Planning, International Co-ordination and Co-operation”
	National coordinator team
10	Ms Annette Pfeiffer, Head of Section “Supranational and International Co-ordination”
11	Mr Thorsten Tümmeler, Head of Section “Data Quality, Cross-Departmental Methods Development, Contacts with Researchers”
12	Ms Dorothea Klumpen, Assistant Head of Section “Supranational and International Co-ordination”
13	Mr Mirko Herzner, Assistant Head of Section “Data Quality, Cross-Departmental Methods Development, Contacts with Researchers”
14	Ms Irina Meinke, Member of academic staff Section “Data Quality, Cross-Departmental Methods Development, Contacts with Researchers”
	Other NSI staff members
15	Mr Jürgen Chlumsky, Head of Department “Administration, Administrative Cost Measurement”
16	Ms Beate Glitza, Head of Department “Information Technology, Mathematical-Statistical Methods”

17	Ms Irmtraud Beuerlein, Head of Department "National Accounts, Prices"
18	Mr Peter Bleses, Representative of the Head of Department "Population, Finance and Taxes"
19	Ms Angela Schaff, Head of Department "Agriculture, Environment, Foreign Trade"
20	Ms Karin Böhm, Representative of the Head of Department "Health, Social Statistics, Education, Households"
21	Mr Stefan Dittrich, Head of Division "Census"
22	Mr Prof. Dr Manfred Ehling, Head of Division "Mathematical-Statistical Methods, Research Data Centre"
23	Ms Marion Engelter, Head of Division "Co-ordination, Legal Matters Concerning Statistics"
24	Mr Christian Gehle, Head of Section "Controlling, Process Management"
25	Mr Uwe Halfpaap, Head of Section "Internal Audit"
26	Mr Heinz-Christof Herberitz, Head of Division "Human Resources, Administrative Legal Matters"
27	Ms Sabine Köhler, Head of Section "Education and Training"
28	Mr Hans-Peter Lüüs, Head of Division "Organisation, Budget, Internal Service"
29	Mr Mathias Meisenheimer, Head of Section "National Co-ordination"
30	Mr Klaus Pöttsch, Head of Section "Press- and Public Relations, Customer Management"
31	Ms Doris Stärk, Head of Division "Press and Public Relations, Publications, Online Services"
32	Mr Thomas Wöll, Assistant Head of Section "National Co-ordination"
33	Ms Susanne Alber, Assistant Head of Section "Financial Corporations, Rest of the World, Financial Accounts"
34	Mr Sven Bäumer, Assistant Head of Section "Register of Addresses, Population Register"
35	Mr Maurice Brandt, Assistant Head of Section "Research Data Centre"
36	Ms Ilda Duarte Fernandes, Member of academic staff Section "Methods, Legal Matters, Publications, International Co-operation"
37	Mr Philipp Fernis, Assistant Head of Section "In-house Counsel, Proceedings for Disciplinary and Regulatory Offences"
38	Ms Hannah Günther, Member of academic staff Section "Supranational and International Co-ordination"
39	Mr Daniel Kühnhenrich, Assistant Head of Section "Fundamental Questions and Methodology of Administrative Cost Measurement"

40	Mr Ingo Planz, Assistant Head of Section “Cross-Cutting IT Processes Relating to Metadata and Data Quality”
41	Mr Carsten Schreiner, Member of academic staff Section “Register of Holdings, Agricultural Land Use, Reporting on Agricultural Emissions, Agri-Environmental Indicators, Forestry”
42	Mr Carsten Schumann, Assistant Head of Section “Agricultural, Construction and Real Property Prices”
43	Ms Urszula Sikorski, Member of academic staff Section “Methodology of European Household Surveys”
44	Mr Dr René Söllner, Assistant Head of Section “Further Development of Business Statistics”
45	Mr Daniel Zimmermann, Member of academic staff Section “Data Collection and Processing of the Microcensus and the Labour Force Survey”
	Representatives of the SLOs
46	Mr Jörg Berres, President of the Rhineland Palatinate Statistical Office
47	Mr Hans-Josef Fischer, President of the North Rhine-Westphalia Information Technology Centre
48	Ms Marion Frisch, President, Bavarian State Office for Statistics and Data Processing
49	Mr Harald Wirtz, Quality Manager, Rhineland Palatinate Statistical Office
50	Mr Michael Kaindl, Quality Manager, Bavarian State Office for Statistics and Data Processing
51	Ms Birgit Kempf, Quality Manager, North Rhine-Westphalia Information Technology Centre
	Representatives of the ONAs
52	Mr Rainer Hahn, Deputy Head of Department “Statistics”, Federal Employment Agency
53	Ms Annette Hüser, Deputy Head of Data Centre, Federal Employment Agency
54	Mr Ulrich Siebert, Head of Department “Statistics”, Federal Motor Transport Authority
	Representatives of main users
55	Mr Dr Volker Appel, Head of Section “Economic analysis, Economic Monitoring, Statistics”, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
56	Mr Dr Bernd Hanke, Head of Section “Public finances”, Federal Ministry of Finance
57	Mr Robert Kirchner, Deputy Head of Department “Statistics”, Deutsche Bundesbank
58	Mr Klaus Müller, Head of Section “Demography, Statistics”, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy
59	Mr Hanno Schäfer, Head of Section “Knowledge management, departmental research,

	statistics”, Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
60	Ms Carola Schmidt, Head of Section “Information Management, Statistics, Library”, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
61	Mr Hans-Josef Stein, Head of Section “Statistics”, Federal Ministry of the Interior
62	Ms Dr Eveline Edle von Gäßler, Head of Section “Statistics, International Comparative Analysis”, Federal Ministry of Education and Research
63	Mr Jürgen Warnken, Head of Section “Labour market statistics”, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
	Representatives of the media
64	Mr Karl Schlieker, Rhein-Main-Presse
	Representatives of main data providers/respondents
65	Mr Thomas Herkner, German Association of Energy and Water Industries (BDEW) Department “Economics”
66	Mr Hermann Steib German Engineering Association (VDMA) Department “Economics and Statistics”
	Representatives of the scientific community
67	Mr Prof. Dr Markus Gangl, Department of Sociology, Goethe University Frankfurt (Uni Frankfurt)
68	Mr Prof. Dr Ralf Münnich, Department of Economic and Social Statistics, Trier University (Uni Trier)
69	Ms Dr Sandra Schaffner, Division Chief “FDZ Ruhr”, Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung e.V. (RWI)
	Interpreters
70	Ms Kerstin Dietzel, interpreter, Federal Statistical Office
71	Mr Norbert Raimer, interpreter, Federal Office of Criminal Investigation