

# **PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND STATISTICS FINLAND'S IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Peer reviewer's recommendations and improvement actions in response to the recommendations

### Reinforce the voice of the users

1. **THE STATISTICS ACT SHOULD BE AMENDED TO ESTABLISH A STATISTICAL COUNCIL, WITH EXTERNAL USERS' REPRESENTATION (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, PRINCIPLES 9 AND 11).**

#### **Current situation:**

As the Peer Review team notes, a number of expert and other cooperation groups exist between Statistics Finland and various stakeholders. The cooperation is versatile: it takes place at different levels of statistics production starting from the planning stage and ending in user opinions on statistics and their contents. Thus, the cooperation groups deal with the questions put forward as tasks for the Statistical Council. The Information Services Department will consider various ways to improve obtaining user opinions (see reply to recommendation 2).

The proposal of establishing the statistical council anew has already been discussed with both the Ministry of Finance and the Advisory Board of Statistics Finland. It appeared that the reasons to replace the council with domain-specific cooperation and expert groups are still valid. However, it might be possible to enlarge the Advisory Board of Statistics Finland by inviting new expert members who represent various users of statistics.

#### **Improvement action:**

Statistics Finland has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is foreseen

#### **Timeline:**

N.A.

**2. STATISTICS FINLAND AND THE OTHER NATIONAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD PREPARE AND PUBLISH ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMES AND PERFORMANCE REPORTS ACCESSIBLE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AND PRESENT THEM TO THE STATISTICAL COUNCIL (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATORS 1.5 AND 11.2).**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland produces and publishes an annual work programme called annual programme (in Finnish only). It includes information on ESS statistics, national statistics and other products and services.

Statistics Finland and other national authorities also produce and publish annual performance reports. They are statutory. The performance report describes the use of resources and the volume and quality of the output.

Statistics Finland's performance target agreements and annual reports are presented to the Advisory Board of Statistics Finland (see recommendation 1) and they are available to the general public on the website. Performance reports (or annual reports) to the stakeholders are no longer produced since their use was minimal.

**Improvement action 2. Recommendation concerning annual work programmes and performance reports**

Statistics Finland will continue the production and publication of the annual programme and the annual performance report.

The possibilities for other national authorities to produce annual programmes will be studied and, if possible, relevant actions will be undertaken.

**Timeline:**

Spring 2015	Discussions in the Advisory Board of Official Statistics of Finland
October 2015	Report, decisions (other national authorities)
December 2015	Production of Annual programmes (other national authorities, if positive decision)
January 2016	Publication of Annual programmes (other national authorities)
January 2017	Publication of one common Annual programme (if all national authorities produce annual programmes with identical structure)

**3. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD DEVELOP MORE PROACTIVELY ITS RELATIONS WITH USERS AND SHOULD IDENTIFY NEW POTENTIAL CATEGORIES OF USERS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATORS 11.1 AND 11.2).**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland welcomes the recommendation, and will continue its efforts to create and maintain active collaborative relations with different users and other stakeholders. Such cooperation takes place on various levels ranging from meetings of directors to expert groups, meetings with users and open feedback forms. New forms of active networking is encouraged, like the use of social media, active participation in common projects, tying relations to new data user communities and increasing access to open data.

**Improvement action 3. Improving the role of users and new potential user categories**

The update of the strategic plan 2015 will contain definitions of strategic user groups and segments. It will take different types of data usage and contents into account. Likewise, new forms of communication and collaboration with the users will be investigated. These might include, e.g., forming of focus groups for innovating and evaluating services, using temporary arenas with mingling representatives from different user categories, adapting virtual user forums in social media, and intensification of proactive communication and allocated contact persons with the most important user groups/organisations,

**Timeline:**

2015-2017          Actions defined in the strategy update will be undertaken.

**4. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA AS A VEHICLE TO REACH NEW USERS AND GET FEEDBACK (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATOR 15.2).**

**Current situation:**

The recommendation is in accordance with the strategic goals of Statistics Finland.

During recent years, Statistics Finland has entered social media by starting to use Facebook and Twitter, and to publish blog articles on the Internet on topics of current interest. The objective of the activity is to approach new user groups and communicate statistical information in a more diverse way. The new service form has been well received by the users and currently experience is gathered to improve the activity.

**Improvement action 4. Extension of the exploitation of social media**

Statistics Finland fully agrees with this recommendation, and will continue activities related to social media. The principles and guidelines of communication are currently under construction, and will include principles related to social media, too.

**Timeline:**

End of 2015	Finalisation of principles and guidelines of communication
2016	Implementation of guidelines

**5. THE EXISTING SAMPLE SURVEY OF USERS SHOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED WITH BY A MORE FOCUSED SURVEY OR INTERVIEWS DIRECTED AT KEY USERS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATOR 11.3).**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland agrees with the recommendation to have more sector focused user feedback.

During the last five years, Statistics Finland has gathered its user feedback systems under the so-called 360 degree umbrella. At the same time, coordination between different systems has been added. Analysis of user feedback has been systematized and made more regular as a part of the general follow-up of activity. Together with the general user surveys, more focused user enquiries are conducted. The user perspective is closely connected with all the high-level cooperation meetings and working groups. Systematic collection of user feedback from customers of commissioned services, participants of training sessions and other cooperation events has been intensified. The aim is to improve the analysis of feedback and its use.

**Improvement action 5. More focused feedback from users**

The development work will continue during 2015 to 2016. The system for user feedback will be revised and focused feedback practices will be further developed. Gathering and, especially analysis, of user information will be intensified in order to gain impulses for product and service development. Cooperation with other data providers and service producers will have an important role in the development of activities.

**Timeline:**

Year 2015: Revision of the system of user feedback  
Year 2016: More focused user feedback information standardised for regular use

## Ensure the sustainability of the National Statistical System

### **6. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD CONDUCT A RISK ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH CHANGES IN KEY ADMINISTRATIVE DATA SOURCES COULD AFFECT THE EFFICIENCY OF ITS STATISTICAL PRODUCTION (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATOR 10.3).**

#### **Current situation:**

Statistics Finland has a network of coordinators (contact persons both in Statistics Finland and registrar) to follow, amongst other things, the intended changes in legislation. The network covers all significant administrative data. The foreseen changes in administrative data are discussed both at a managerial and expert level.

Statistics Finland is centralizing the collection of administrative data. This will further improve cooperation with the producers of the administrative data.

#### **Improvement action 6. Risk assessment of the changes in key administrative data while renewing the contracts**

Statistics Finland will make a list of the most critical administrative data. The risks of those data will be assessed when renewing the contracts. The time limits to inform Statistics Finland about changes in the data will be determined in the contracts. After centralization of the collection of administrative data, Statistics Finland will appoint so-called data coordinators for each data. They will be responsible for drafting the contracts and cooperation in data delivery.

See recommendation 7

#### **Timeline:**

See recommendation 7

**7. THE DATA-SHARING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN STATISTICS FINLAND AND ADMINISTRATIVE DATA OWNERS SHOULD, AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE CHANGES THAT COULD AFFECT OFFICIAL STATISTICS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, PRINCIPLE 2, INDICATORS 8.8, 8.9, AND 10.3).**

**Current situation:**

At the end of 2013, Statistics Finland started a project to renew the contracts with other producers of statistics and suppliers of administrative data. There are about 50 owners of administrative data. New model contracts have been prepared and accepted by the Director General. The contracts will be signed at Director General level.

According to the contracts, the suppliers of administrative data must inform Statistics Finland well in advance about planned changes in the content or mode of the data delivery. In the annexes related to specific data, exact dates for data deliveries are set. The deadlines for possible changes in the following year are also agreed.

**Improvement action 7. Renewing the contracts with the supplies of administrative data**

Statistics Finland will renew the contracts with the suppliers of administrative data starting from the most important data suppliers and oldest agreements.

**Timeline:**

The aim is to renew five agreements per year.

The renewing started at the beginning of 2014.

The most important agreements will be renewed by the end of 2016.

All agreements will be renewed by the end of 2017.



**8. FINNISH AUTHORITIES SHOULD CONSIDER THE FEASIBILITY OF REINFORCING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS. IN PARTICULAR, OFFICIAL STATISTICS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE MAIN ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTERS. REASONABLE ADVANCE NOTICE SHOULD BE GIVEN IN THE CASE OF PROPOSED SYSTEM CHANGES, AND STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD BE CONSULTED BEFORE CHANGES ARE FINALISED (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATORS 2.2, 8.7, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, AND 10.3).**

**Current situation:**

In Finland, the possibility to use administrative data for statistical purposes is taken into account in national legislation. According to the Statistics Act, statistical authorities must use administrative data instead of direct data collection. The owners of the administrative data are obligated to supply data to Statistics Finland. When changing the legislation, there is a procedure in place according to which a statement is asked from the essential interest groups.

**Improvement action 8. Amendments to the Statistics Act according to administrative registers**

Statistics Finland has agreed to perform a feasibility analysis with the Ministry of Finance to identify the amendments to the Statistics Act. In this connection, it is possible to reinforce the purpose of statistical use when founding or changing administrative registers. The amendment of European statistical law also supports this aim.

**Timeline:**

2015: Find out needs for change.

2016-2017: Amendments to the Statistics Act. Timing depends on the schedules of the MoF and the Parliament.

**9. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD PREPARE A MID-TERM INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION WITH FINNISH AUTHORITIES IN ORDER TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF UNPLANNED REDUCTION IN RESOURCES (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATORS 3.1, 3.2, AND 3.3).**

**Current situation:**

As the peer review report states, Statistics Finland produces and publishes a rolling four-year framework plan, which includes emerging financial needs (actions and respective financing). On the other hand, Statistics Finland has a strategy for a period, which is the same as the term of the government. The strategy takes finance and major projects into account and it is signed by the responsible Minister at the Ministry of Finance and the director general of Statistics Finland. These documents are used when negotiating about financing with the Ministry of Finance. The financing is appropriated for one year. The final decision is made by the Parliament and is based on the budget proposal of the government. The financing is usually transferable to two years.

Moreover, Statistics Finland has a survey programme. It contains information about data collections and their timing. Some of the collections are very costly. Some projects are co-financed. Case-specific financing is negotiated with potential interest groups.

**Improvement action 9. Renewing of the financing planning method**

Statistics Finland will negotiate over a new method of finance planning with the Ministry of Finance. Changes to the current system mean altering the procedure in the administrative sector.

**Timeline:**

By the end of May 2015: Negotiations with MoF

Actions afterwards depend on the result of the negotiations

**10. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD PROMOTE STAFF MOBILITY AND PROMOTE IN PARTICULAR THE MOBILITY OF NEWLY RECRUITED STAFF (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATORS 3.1 AND 7.6).**

**Current situation:**

Staff mobility in Statistics Finland has been based on the guidelines of internal labour market and circulating the staff (2009). The mobility has also increased according to the plans. The target of the circulation has focused on professional development and on implementing personal development plans. Internal mobility has been based on generic selection criteria (experience, education, suitability).

Statistics Finland has to adapt to the decreasing budget in forthcoming years. In addition to natural wastage, employees will have to be dismissed. If new positions open up, experts are primarily sought among the dismissed personnel over the next two (2) years (re-employment duty based on legislation). External recruitment is possible only in exceptional situations, when special know-how and work experience that the existing or dismissed personnel do not have is needed. It is clear that we have to centralize the coordination of staff positioning instead of voluntary mobility.

**Improvement action 10. Promoting staff mobility**

Internal mobility is a stated goal of the personnel strategy. However, the budget cuts have made a cooperation procedure necessary, which will lead to reductions of staff. When staff reductions occur, Statistics Finland will offer employment transition measures, e.g., improvement of skills or help look for new work opportunities either in the agency or other central government institutions.

**Timeline:**

The situation and various measures will be considered during 2016.

**11. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD CONTINUE STANDARDISING PROCESSES WHERE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES SOLUTIONS OR NEW TECHNOLOGIES WOULD INCREASE OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATORS 10.2 AND 10.4).**

**Current situation:**

There are several ongoing activities aiming to standardize and further develop ICT, the most active areas being standardization of administrative data collection, mixed mode data collection and data editing. Statistics Finland also actively seeks opportunities to benefit from the efforts of the international statistics community and the Finnish public administration. However, the efforts are limited by budget constraints.

**Improvement action 11. Standardisation and further development of ICT**

The standardization of production technologies continues. The GSBPM will be utilized in the development of new systems to standardize the tools and services needed by each phase of statistics production. Tools and services developed by other NSIs will be adopted if they are fit for purpose and compatible with Statistics Finland's IT infrastructure. The focus is on further integration of larger domain-specific systems and on harmonizing the technologies and processes in smaller domains. The standardization of data collection technologies is also a critical goal.

Management of Statistics Finland's ICT architecture will be systematized by adopting features of the Enterprise Architecture model into the management system, including e.g. improved life cycle management for IT systems. This will enable more efficient and holistic architecture development.

The provision of generic ICT services for the Finnish public administration is being centralized into a government ICT service centre. After a transitional period, Statistics Finland's IT staff focuses only on the tools and technologies of statistics production. This is expected to improve productivity in the long run.

See also improvement action 12.

**Timeline:**

June 2015:	Adoption of the enterprise architecture model. Adoption of GSBPM in the development of new IT systems.
June 2015:	Common working directory structure for statistical production implemented
October 2015:	End of the transitional period for transferring generic ICT services to the government ICT service centre
December 2015:	Major administrative data sets received using centralized system (ongoing project).
December 2015:	Implementation of selective editing in several statistical processes (ongoing project)
April 2016:	Standardized tools for archiving statistical data in use (planned project)
July 2016:	Renewed system for compiling municipal statistics in use (ongoing project).
December 2016:	Mixed mode data collection in the Labour Force Survey (ongoing project).
January 2017:	Compilation of the Balance of Payments integrated to the National Accounts production system (ongoing project).

**12. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD PROMOTE A PROJECT AIMING AT IDENTIFYING THE STATISTICAL POTENTIAL OF NEW DATA SOURCES (BIG DATA), AT PROMOTING THE CHANGE IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO ALLOW ACCESS, AND AT UPGRADING PRODUCTION SYSTEMS TO ALLOW ITS USE (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, PRINCIPLES 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, AND 13).**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland is mapping existing new potential data sources. Statistics Finland has formed a working group to do this analysis. The use of new type of data has been tested in single projects, e.g. use of mobile data and collection of price data on the Internet. Statistics Finland has agreed with the Ministry of Finance to make necessary amendments to the Statistics Act.

**Improvement action 12. Identifying the statistical potential of new data sources**

Statistics Finland agreed with the Ministry of Finance to define the necessary amendments to the Statistics Act. The timetable and access to the new data sources also depends on the opinion of the data protection authority and the owners of the possible new data sources.

The usability of the models produced in single projects will be tested in 2016. Statistics Finland is aiming to have single new data sources in use in 2016 to 2020. The utilization of private sector data can only be based on agreements until the Statistics Act is amended.

**Timeline:**

By the end of 2015:	Define necessary amendments to the Statistics Act
Autumn 2016:	Chart the usability of the models produced in single projects
2020:	New data sources in use

**13. TO INCREASE RESPONSE RATES, STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD IMPROVE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION REGARDING THE PURPOSES AND VALUE OF SURVEYS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATOR 8.4, PRINCIPLE 9)**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland is drawing up the guidelines for objectives and actions in data supply for 2015 to 2019. Simultaneously, the principles and guidelines for corporate communication are under construction. Both of these include communication to the data providers about the importance of data provision, as major topics.

Communication concerning the collected data is supposed to be easy to use, supportive and informative enough. The main aim is to motivate the respondents in order to get high-quality data and increase the response rate. The feedback data to the respondent should be meaningful.

The Internet pages for data collection have been renewed in 2014. The information letters have been renewed and modernized. Statistics Finland aims to raise the response rate by emphasizing the importance of statistics to society and making responding easier by offering user-friendly services.

The overall importance of statistics and statistical information in society are also to be highlighted in communication activities. The hope is that this will increase general statistical awareness, and strengthen the positive attitude towards data provision. The communication activities and messages will be tailored according to the focus group.

**Improvement action 13. Increasing the usage of the web in order to increase response rates, and intensifying the communication about the importance of data providing in the society.**

Statistics Finland has appointed a working group whose task is to guarantee harmonized implementation of new information letters. Statistics Finland will research the possibility to use the web as an alternative in collection of personal data.

See also recommendation 22: extension of the use of the logo of the National Statistical System to all data collections.

**Timeline:**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 2015:          | The working group ensures harmonized implementation of information letters. The new policy outlines for communication a taken into action |
| December 2016: | Web as a data collection alternative in LFS. Continuous communication about the role of statistical information                           |
| 2019:          | The web as a data collection alternative in all surveys when collecting personal data   |

**Further improve quality management and confidentiality and extend them to the whole statistical system**

**14. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD REINFORCE USERS' PERSPECTIVE IN ITS QUALITY AUDITS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATORS 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, AND 6.4).**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland welcomes the recommendation.

The basic questionnaire in internal auditing contains a specific chapter "Interaction with the users of statistics". There are six questions with some sub-questions that deal with different types of user needs and how they are fulfilled. Thus, the interpretation and the importance of those views depend on the auditor's reporting. Statistics Finland will underline the importance of the user perspective in the next training sessions of auditors.

**Improvement action 14. The contents and subsequent analysis of Quality audits to be amended to take the user perspectives into account**

There is a proposal to develop the contents of the above-mentioned chapter and its reporting.

**Timeline:**

2015:	Preparation of a new questionnaire with an enhanced chapter on users' perspectives
Autumn 2015:	Guidelines for analysing and reporting of users' perspectives
2016 -:	New contents in production

**15. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD UPGRADE ACCESSIBILITY, COMPLETENESS AND READABILITY OF ITS QUALITY REPORTS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATORS 15.1, 15.5, AND 15.6).**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland decided to improve the quality descriptions so that their contents will fully meet the new quality reporting standard three years ago but the realization was halted until the final ESS decision was reached. In addition, there is an initiative to start constructing a full-scale metadata warehouse, which will also contain all aspects needed for quality reporting, i.e. using the SIMS standard.

**Improvement action 15. Increased quality reporting model to be realised, templates to be created, and the accessibility of reports to be improved**

A project that defines the content will be launched in March 2015 and its proposal should be ready for decision making by the end of August 2015. While the quality description template should not be very difficult to realize, the metadata project is a large-scale exercise and its realization will depend on available resources.

Extension of quality descriptions and other reports in English depends on whether there is real use and need for them and the translation resources will allow for this.

Simultaneously, the structure and functionality of the home pages are to be improved. This is expected to lead to better access and searchability of quality reports.

**Timeline:**

March to August 2015:	Project on defining the contents of an extended quality reporting template
2016:	Technical preparation of a new template
Late 2016 to 2017:	Training and launching of quality descriptions
Spring 2016:	Extension of the current quality reports in English – checking of most important statistics
2016:	New quality reports available in English
2015 to 2016	Restructuring and development in the web services in order to improve accessibility and searchability of quality reports
June 2016:	Metadata project (if any)
End 2016:	Definition of metadata contents
2017:	Programming the metadata warehouse
	Filling in the metadata warehouse



## 16. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD INCLUDE QUALITY CRITERIA IN THE MEASUREMENT OF ITS PERFORMANCE (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATOR 15.7).

### Current situation:

Quality indicators are reported both in the half-yearly follow up as well the yearly performance reporting. The latter includes some written explanations as well, if necessary. The same quality indicators are found in the performance target agreement.

Currently, the following quality indicators are included in the planning and follow-up documents:

- Reliability of data produced by Statistics Finland (Business image survey)
- School grade in the user satisfaction survey \*)
- Share of releases published on time of all releases, %
- Share of releases published late of all releases, %
- Share of releases free of errors of all releases, %
- Release lag of annual statistics, weeks
- Release lag of quarterly statistics, weeks
- Release lag of monthly statistics, weeks

\*) School grade scale is from 4 to 10. The grades are given in integers. See the explanation below.

Internationale scale	Finnish scale
A (Excellent)	10-9
B (Very good, with few errors)	8,99-8
C (Good, with some errors)	7,99-7
D (Satisfactory, with many errors)	6,99-6
E (Sufficient. This is the minimum passing grade)	5,99-5

Note: 4 means not passed.

Source: [Opetushallitus](#) (Finnish National Board of Education)

### Improvement action 16. Improving quality reporting in performance report

Statistics Finland will review the quality criteria in the planning and follow-up process taking into account relevance, accuracy, interpretability, timeliness, coherence, and accessibility (see ESS Guidelines for the implementation of the ESS quality and performance indicators (QPI)). The possible new indicators should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). New criteria must be in line with other requirements for planning and follow-up documents. Moreover, the indicators and their level must be accepted by the Ministry of Finance.

### Timeline:

Spring 2016:	Review of the quality criteria
Autumn 2016:	New criteria into performance target agreement (if any)
Summer 2017:	New criteria in the biannual follow-up
Winter 2017:	New criteria in the annual follow-up

**17. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD DEVELOP TRAINING ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY REPORTING FOR OTHER PRODUCERS OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM, AND IN PARTICULAR THEIR NEW STAFF (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, PRINCIPLE 4).**

**Current situation:**

The recommendation is in accordance with the Main Policy lines of the Development of National Statistical Service 2013–2016: “Competence in the Statistical Service is improved and shared by increasing collaboration in the quality development of the Statistical Service (e.g. quality control model, quality reporting and quality indicators) and by common training and other sharing of competence.” The extent and schedule of the implementation will depend on the available resources.

The advanced part of Statistics Finland’s Statistical Training Programme has already included open courses, which have been offered to the staff of other producers of Official Statistics. Supply of training could be extended to also cover quality courses, which belong to the basic or advanced phases of the Statistical Training Programme. Feasibility of this extension will depend on the availability of resources. Advanced quality and/or other training could also be organised by the Advisory Board of Official Statistics of Finland.

**Improvement action 17. Extension of training on quality**

During the first half of 2015, Statistics Finland will verify the demand for a more extensive quality training. The survey will be targeted to other producers of Official Statistics. In the potential extended form, quality training would include staff (especially newly recruited persons) of these producers. The survey will be conducted as part of the working programme of the Advisory Board of Official Statistics. The survey will include questions on the content, length and periodicity of the courses, the target group of training and the organiser of training activity.

If the results of the survey show a clear demand to extend the quality training to the staff of other producers of official statistics, Statistics Finland will explore the availability of resources in the second half of 2015. The aim of the activity is to offer quality training to an extended target group starting from the first courses in the basic and the advanced Training Programme during 2016. If the training is decided to be organised by the Advisory Board of Official Statistics, the first course will be arranged during 2016 provided that additional resources will be available.

**Timeline:**

First half of 2015:	Survey on training needs
Second half of 2015:	Decision on the organisation of training
2016:	Organisation of training depending on the timetable of basic and advanced training course.

**18. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD PROMOTE THE PRACTICE OF SYSTEMATIC QUALITY AUDITS BY OTHER STATISTICAL AUTHORITIES, AND FOSTER THE PARTICIPATION OF EXTERNAL REVIEWERS IN THE AUDITING PROCESS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, PRINCIPLE 4).**

**Current situation:**

The recommendation is in accordance with the Main Policy lines of the Development of the National Statistical Service 2013-2016: “Competence in the Statistical Service is improved and shared by increasing collaboration in the quality development of the Statistical Service (e.g. quality control model, quality reporting and quality indicators) and by common training and other sharing of competence.” The extent and schedule of implementation will depend on available resources.

In 2010 and 2012 members of the Advisory Board of Official Statistics conducted thematic self-assessments. The organisation and results of the evaluations were monitored by the Board. In 2014, these self-evaluations were replaced by the use of the light self-evaluation questionnaire of the CoP Peer Review 2013-2015. Conclusions of the self-evaluation and recommendations for each of the participating organisations have been discussed in the Advisory Board meetings over the latter part of 2014. Follow-up of the improvement actions will follow the schedule of the annual ESGAB feedback preparation.

The quality audit procedure launched by Statistics Finland in 2007 has been introduced to the Advisory Board of Official Statistics. Some training for the members of the Board has also been organised. Customs and the Finnish Forest Research Institute have already implemented the quality audit procedure participating in each other’s evaluations.

**Improvement action 18. Promotion of the practice of systematic quality audits**

By 2014, Statistics Finland has organised three training courses on internal auditing for the organisations of the Statistical Service. Two of the organisations (Customs, the Finnish Forest Research Institute) have carried out the audits. However, in accordance with the recommendation, the issue will be discussed further in the Advisory Board during the first half of 2015. A possible demand for a new training course will be explored. Participation of external reviewers in the auditing process could be fostered by creation of an expert pool from the members of Finnish Official Statistics. Feasibility of this option will be discussed in the Advisory Board during the first half of 2015. Depending on the result of the discussions, possible actions could be taken in 2016.

**Timeline:**

First half of 2015:	Explore the demand for new actions in the Advisory Board
Second half of 2015:	Design the activities by Statistics Finland
2016:	Start preferred activities (depending also on resources).

**19. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD ENSURE THAT, WHEN PROCESSING OR COMBINING PERSONAL DATA, SURROGATE CODES RATHER THAN ACTUAL PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS ARE USED TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE EXTENT (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATOR 5.5).**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland agrees with the peers on the high importance of data security and confidentiality. The proposal is actually by and large the current modus operandi.

Statistics Finland has reduced the use of personal identification numbers (PIN) in ordinary statistics production. The databases contain the true PINs only when it is necessary in order to combine the data sets with other sources. Even though we can often use surrogate codes instead of the PINs in statistics production, research data sets require even stronger case-specific codes, which cannot be matched with the original data. The options to use such surrogate codes are currently being studied.

Statistics Finland maintains the keys for all the codes for eventual additional operations with the data sets. Thus, giving up the maintenance of PINs is not an option.

**Improvement action**

Statistics Finland has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is foreseen.

**Timeline:**

N.A.

**20. AN EDITORIAL FUNCTION (A DEDICATED EDITOR WITH THE REQUIRED SKILLS, OR AN EDITORIAL BOARD) SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO EXAMINE RELEASES CRITICALLY AND TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW-THROUGH TO AUTHORS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, PRINCIPLE 15).**

**Current situation:**

Statistics Finland's strategic aim is to publish various products of uniform quality and clarity. The main points described in the peer review report and the recommendation are thus welcome, and the first actions have actually been undertaken: in 2014 to 2015, the communication professionals are studying all statistical releases and giving feedback to the colleagues, who write those texts. The feedback is being organized in the form of seminars for statistical domains.

In addition, the internal statistical training programme (see the recommendation 17 and the peer review report of Finland, pages 18 and 22: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4372828/2015-FI-Report/688a9a11-741e-4311-b2f8-a0943104c933>) includes special sessions dedicated for publishing, editing and visualizing statistical information (a total of 3 training days).

**Improvement action 20. Improvement of Quality assurance and editorial function of statistical releases**

The results of the above mentioned ongoing systematic internal review and training process will be further analysed, and a long term plan for maintaining and further improving the skills of the employees. This plan will include, e.g., the following aspects

- (a) ensure that skills in publishing are maintained at a high level and that skills are transferred to new employees
- (b) ensure the required technical and editorial support
- (c) organize follow-up.

In addition to feedback, there will be training on main lines of publications, linguistic matters, statistical graphics and other technical tools to improve the quality of releases and ensure uniform practices in publishing.

**Timeline:**

- 2014 to 2015: Investigation and feedback round of all statistical releases (incl. educational and training elements)
- Early 2016: Long-term plan to be prepared
- 2016 onwards: Realisation of the long-term plan

**21. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD FURTHER IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY OF ITS WEBSITE, USING RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN ADAPTED TO VARIOUS SIZES OF SCREENS, DEVELOPING A MOBILE VERSION, AND PROVIDING A MORE USER-FRIENDLY ACCESS TO THE TABLES (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, INDICATOR 15.2).**

**Current situation:**

The recommendation follows the objectives and strategic plans of Statistics Finland. Currently, the visual layout is being renewed and at the same time the user interface will undergo technical improvements especially on responsiveness. The new visual layout will be introduced early 2015.

**Improvement action 21. Actions for improving the accessibility of web site and tables**

The ongoing renewal of the visual layout and user interface is described above. Mobile accessibility will be developed further in 2015 to 2017, the extent depends on resources. The work to re-structure the website and adopt modern solutions will start in 2015 with a preliminary investigation.

In addition, a project has been launched that aims at improving the usability of tables and databases by searching for new interface technologies. For example, the following services will be included:

- Predefined tables
- User-defined tables
- Other means to improve the usability with open interfaces and new application programming interfaces (API)
- Improving search-engine functions

**Timeline:**

2015:	Preliminary investigation
2015 to 2016:	First API-solutions
2016 to 2017:	Structural changes on the website

**22. THE QUALITY MARKS TO IDENTIFY OFFICIAL STATISTICS SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO DATA COLLECTION OPERATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE BY INSERTING THE LOGO ON QUESTIONNAIRES AND INFORMATION DOCUMENTS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, PRINCIPLE 4, INDICATORS 11.1 AND 15.7).**

**Current situation:**

The use of the logo of Official Statistics of Finland is currently limited only to the websites of statistics, which belong to the system of official statistics. The logo is not employed as a quality mark in other communication or, e.g. in data collection materials. Currently, the logo of official statistics is not widely known.

**Improvement action 22. Extension of the quality marks to data collection operations**

Adding of the logo of official statistics to the data collection forms and other material concerns all producers of official statistics. Thus, the extension of the use of the logo of official statistics should be discussed with other producers of official statistics, especially with the statistical authorities. The aim of these discussions would be to find the most suitable and workable practices and principles, and to agree upon an implementation scheme and timetable.

The logo of Statistics Finland or other producers of official statistics would still be found in questionnaires, cover letters and other documents, and the logo of official statistics would be added beside them as an additional element. The logo would naturally be embedded only to those questionnaires and materials that are only for statistical purposes.

In order to increase the awareness of the logo in society and to get the desired benefits of the improvement action, e.g. in motivating the respondents to increase response rates, we have to use diverse means of communication besides adding the logo. This means long-term work and investments for producers of statistics.

The Advisory Board of Official Statistics of Finland monitors the implementation.

See also recommendation 13: The principles and guidelines for corporate communication.

**Timeline:**

Spring 2015:	Discussions are held with the Advisory Board of Official Statistics about inserting the logo to data collection materials. A decision will be made about how and to what extent the use of the logo will be increased and how to increase the awareness of the logo.
Autumn 2015 to spring 2016:	The logo is added to Statistics Finland's statistics according to the schedule of each data collection.
By the end of 2016:	The logo is added to suitable questionnaires and other data collection material of other producers of official statistics according to their schedules.

**23. STATISTICS FINLAND SHOULD SET UP A WELL-BRANDED WEB PORTAL TO ALL OFFICIAL STATISTICS, INCLUDING A SINGLE CALENDAR COVERING ALL OF FINLAND'S OFFICIAL STATISTICS (EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, PRINCIPLES 11 AND 15).**

**Current situation:**

The recommendation is reasonable but ambitious since it means crucial changes to the current situation. The portal of the Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) now covers all the organisations of OSF including a majority of the statistics they produce, as well as descriptions of those statistics. Often, access to the actual statistical release is provided by a link to the appropriate organisation's home page of the statistics. Due to the number of independent organisations involved, the realization of the recommendation would require both administrative decisions and technical arrangements.

**Improvement action 23. Investigation of possibilities to enlarge the portal of the Official Statistics of Finland**

The recommendation to create a well-established brand out of the OSF portal will be discussed by the Advisory Board of the OSF because further development of the OSF portal is included in the action plan of the OSF for 2015 to 2017.

Based on the recommendation at least following topics will be considered in the work:

- general opinion on the goal of the OSF portal
- outline of main technical solutions (interface, gateways etc.) required for potential renewal, their timetable and resources
- technical and conceptual solutions required to produce a uniform publishing calendar from different environments
- technological changes required for extracting data and metadata from different environments

Based on the investigation, the realisation possibilities will be evaluated.

**Timeline:**

2015 to 2017: Discussion in the Advisory Board of the OSF and its member organisations

2017 onwards: Launch of the project (if any)