

PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE *HUNGARIAN CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE*'S IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Governance

- 1. The relevant Hungarian authorities should support the early introduction of updated statistical legislation taking account of all relevant European regulations and guidance to better support the independent and efficient production of European statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 1-6 and Coordination.)**
- 2. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office should develop its current proposals for future legislation to strengthen the independence and transparency of the arrangements for the appointment, and termination of appointment, of the President of the Office; and to recognise explicitly the President's role in the international statistical sphere and in the coordination of national statistical functions. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1 and Coordination.)**
- 3. The relevant Hungarian authorities should, in considering proposals for new legislation, support the establishment of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office as an independent regulatory body, both to give it greater managerial authority and autonomy and to underscore the independence of the National Statistical System. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1.)**
- 4. The relevant Hungarian authorities should, in considering proposals for new legislation, support stronger provisions relating to access by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office to administrative data for statistical purposes, including the obligation on the owners of administrative sources to obtain the approval of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office in respect of the design, development, quality management and discontinuation of those sources. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicators 8.7-8.9 and 10.3.)**

Current situation:

Act on Statistics was adopted in 1993 and although it has been amended several times it is in need of updating in order to provide a modern legal base to produce statistics in Hungary.

HCSO is a professionally independent government office, which operates under the supervision of the Minister of the Prime Minister's Office. Supervision by the Minister does not extend to professional issues and does not affect the professional independence of HCSO.

The Act on Statistics currently does not include detailed rules on the appointment of the President of HCSO.

There are rules on the coordination role of the HCSO within the official statistical system; however these need to be more detailed and explicit.

Even though HCSO is entitled by law to have access to administrative data including individual administrative data, there are several sectoral legal acts, which exclude the possibility to receive unit level administrative data.

Improvement actions 1-4 Preparation of the new Act on Statistics

Preparation of the new Act on Statistics including the criteria for appointment and termination of appointment of the President and submission of its draft to the Government.

The proposal for the new Act on Statistics will include detailed rules on the legal status of HCSO and the National Statistical System, the coordination role of HCSO and the rules for assessment of the members of the National Statistical System, access to administrative data, propose the amendment of the necessary sectoral legal Acts that exclude this possibility of access.

Timeline:

Q1 2016

5. *In the context of the proposed revision of the national statistical legislation and the implementation of the amended Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European Statistics, the relevant Hungarian authorities should review whether the budget and staff resources available to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office are adequate to fulfil all its statutory functions under national and European laws and to comply with all the standards of the European statistics Code of Practice. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicators 3.1 and 3.2.)*

Current situation:

HCSO is able to fulfil its tasks and comply with deadlines and other obligations set forth in legislation. Resources are currently not sufficient to carry out large scale modernisation and other developments, which are not stipulated in legislation. HCSO uses the available resources effectively and according to the relevant rules. Planning, monitoring and accounting of resources are performed in a transparent manner. The detailed rules for these tasks and their documentation are set out in legislation and the internal regulations of HCSO. In connection with this, independent expert audits have found the financial and resource management and practice of HCSO compliant with legislation in all aspects. The plans for the development of the main resources of HCSO are included in strategic documents.

Improvement action 5 Cost-benefit analysis of the new Act on Statistics and of the additional tasks related to the implementation of the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009

As part of the proposal for the Government on the new Act on Statistics, HCSO will prepare an impact analysis of the draft of the new Act on Statistics which estimates the resource needs including those of additional tasks related to the implementation of the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009.

Timeline:

Q1 2016

6. The relevant Hungarian authorities in cooperation with the Hungarian Central Statistical Office should prepare and publish an inventory identifying all administrative data systems of the Hungarian public administration. Based on the inventory, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office should, as a contribution to efficiency and cost effectiveness, assess the potential of each as a source of official statistics and publish its conclusions. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 8 and 10.)

Current situation:

National and EU regulation with relevance for statistical domains are collected in the Metainformation System, but their connections to administrative data sets that HCSO uses for statistical purposes are not fully available. Administrative data owners are not obliged to cooperate with the national statistical institute for this purpose. In 2011 an internal stock-taking exercise was carried out to assess the statistical potential of administrative data sources and obstacles to the implementation of their use. Act No. CCXX of 2013 regulating the cooperation of owners of administrative registers, so called interoperability act, defines the objective to compile a register of registers that will include all administrative data collections with the constitutive legislations.

Improvement action 6.1. Participation in the Interoperability Project of the Government

HCSO will actively seek cooperation in the interoperability project aiming to identify all administrative registers of the Hungarian public administration and making an inventory thereof.

Timeline:

Q4 2016

Improvement action 6.2. Assessment of administrative registers

Based on an elaborated methodology, HCSO will carry out the assessment of administrative registers.

Timeline

Q2 2017

Improvement action 6.3. Report on the statistical potential of the identified administrative registers

Based on the assessments HCSO will prepare a report on the statistical potential of the identified administrative registers in Hungary and will publish its conclusions.

Timeline

Q3 2017

Coordination

7. The relevant Hungarian authorities should, in considering proposals for new legislation, include a clear definition of the National Statistical System of Hungary, indicating that statistical functions of national authorities are to be regarded as part of the National Statistical System if they meet certain criteria. These should either be included in the legislation directly or be determined by decree under the authority of the President of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 1,2,3,7 and Coordination.)

Current situation:

Current Act on Statistics does not define the nature of official statistics formally, instead it lists the bodies of the National Statistical System in Hungary. When a change occurs, the list in the act is updated. The act considers official statistics as the activities listed in the National Statistical Data Collection Programme, which is updated every year by a government decree. This approach to official statistics and the members of the system is currently based on administrative decisions instead of specific criteria on quality and other relevant subject matter aspects.

Improvement action 7. Defining official statistics and the criteria for the National Statistical System

The proposal for the new Act on Statistics will define official statistics and re-regulate the membership in the National Statistical System. The definition will strongly emphasise that only such statistical activities can be considered official, that are regularly audited by HCSO.

Timeline:

Q1 2016

8. *The Hungarian Central Statistical Office should prepare a report based on an inventory of statistical activities considered to fall within the National Statistical System and review whether the current division of organisational responsibilities is optimal. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicator 3.4, Principle 10 and Coordination.)*

Current situation:

Statistical activities are currently considered as the contents of the annual National Statistical Data Collection Programme. This contains surveys carried out by HCSO and other members, transmission of administrative statistical data and transfers of other administrative datasets from different public administration sources. The implementation of the data collections and data transmissions in the Programme is evaluated, however this is not a comprehensive review of the statistical activities of the statistical service.

Improvement action 8.1. Elaborating a procedure for assessing the statistical activities in Hungary

HCSO will elaborate the rules for an assessment procedure of statistical activities and include it in the proposal of the new Act on Statistics based on which all statistical activities will be systematically assessed by HCSO.

Timeline:

Q1 2016

Improvement action 8.2. Assessment of statistical activities within the National Statistical System

All the members of the national Statistical system will be assessed. Based on the assessment activity, HCSO will examine whether the division of responsibilities between HCSO and the other producers of statistics is optimal.

Timeline:

Q2 2018

9. The relevant Hungarian authorities should, in considering proposals for new legislation, support the establishment of a committee of senior statistical officials from all relevant authorities to help coordinate the National Statistical System. The committee should be chaired by the President, and supported by a unit or individual within the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicator 3.4, Principle 10 and Coordination.)

Current situation:

The highest forum of coordinating activities is currently the National Statistical Council, it incorporates respondents, users and scientific community as well besides the data collecting authorities, therefore its main task is not solely related to the coordination of the national statistical system

Improvement action 9.1. Creation of a Coordinating Council for Official Statistics

Based on the proposal for the new Act on Statistics HCSO will establish a Coordinating Council for Official Statistics, with a mandate to discuss and monitor the strategic, methodology, quality and dissemination issues within the national statistical service.

Timeline:

Q2 2016

Improvement action 9.2. Restructuring of the National Statistical Council

The composition and tasks of the National Statistical Council will also be reconsidered to emphasise the high level respondent-, user- related and scientific coordination role of the body.

Timeline:

Q2 2016

10. The relevant Hungarian authorities should, in considering proposals for new legislation, support the preparation and adoption of a National Statistics Code of Practice, to provide a practical and enforceable interpretation - in the context of the Hungarian public administration - of international standards of good statistical practice, particularly the European statistics Code of Practice. (European statistics Code of Practice and Coordination.)

Current situation:

Without a proper authority set out by law, the tools of HCSO to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the principles and practice of international principles of official statistics by other national statistical authorities is limited. Under the current legislation, HCSO has a general mandate for coordination among the bodies of the National Statistical System, but there is only an indirect, light reference to enforce the application of specific CoP principles or any other internationally accepted standards in their own work.

Improvement action 10. Elaboration of the National Code of Practice

Based on the European Statistics Code of Practice, HCSO will elaborate a National Code of Practice in cooperation with the members of the National Statistical System and the National Statistical Council and include a reference to it in the proposal on the new Act on Statistics.

Timeline:

Q3 2016

11. The relevant Hungarian authorities should, in considering proposals for new legislation, support the establishment of a mechanism empowering the Hungarian Central Statistical Office to independently assess compliance with the National Statistics Code of Practice and to make the results public. (European statistics Code of Practice and Coordination.)

Current situation:

HCSO's current tools for receiving extensive information from other bodies on the aspects of their statistical activities is rather limited and tied to the compilation of the National Statistical Data Collection Programme. Stronger coordination and compliance assessment are required by the amended Regulation (EC) No 223/2009, which requires stronger legal instruments at national level.

Improvement action 11.1. Elaboration of an assessment for the members of the National Statistical System

The proposal for the new Act on statistics will provide the legal basis for the assessment of compliance with the National Code of Practice. The assessment procedure will be the cornerstone of eligibility for those remaining or becoming members in the National Statistical System, based on the principles of the National Statistics Code of Practice and the amended Regulation (EC) 223/2009 on European statistics. According to the new legislation, an assessment procedure for the present members and future candidates of the National Statistical System will be elaborated.

Timeline:

Q3 2016

Improvement action 11.2. Assessment of the members of the National Statistical System

Eligibility of all current members and future new candidates will be assessed by the elaborated procedure and the results will be made public.

The mandate for this activity will be regulated in the new statistical law planned to be prepared by Q1 2016 and the detailed procedure is expected to be elaborated by Q3 2016. The procedure will cover all members of the National Statistical System (currently 16). If resources allow it is envisaged to assess 3 members in autumn/winter 2016, 8 members in the year 2017 and 5 members in the first half of 2018.

Timeline:

Q2 2018

Quality Management and user orientation

12. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office should establish a broader quality management system, fully reflecting the concepts of the Total Quality Management. A senior expert responsible for quality should fulfil the role of Quality Coordinator and report directly to the President. A cross-organisational Quality Committee should be established to support and guide the Quality Coordinator. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicator 4.1.)

Current situation:

HCSO has an established quality management system, aligned with the ESS recommendations and stresses the importance of high quality of statistical processes and products to serve the needs and maintain the trust of users. Currently, the HCSO approach has a strong focus on methodological issues and process control. As the current system does not cover the broader quality management system it needs to be further improved. Central responsibility for quality issues currently belongs to the competence of the Methodology Department of HCSO. The Methodology Department is in regular contact with other relevant departments and stakeholders concerned with quality issues in different forms (President, IT Department, Dissemination Department and Presidential Department). Further changes to the organisational structure are currently under way,

Improvement action 12.1. Feasibility study on the design and implementation of Total Quality Management

HCSO will develop a feasibility study that will provide guidance on the most suitable organisational solution for Total Quality Management and the implementation of the TQM concepts. The solution will address the position of the Quality Coordinator and Quality Committee, responsibilities, working modalities, resources, etc

Timeline:

Q4 2015

Improvement action 12.2. Implementation of the Total Quality Management

Based on the feasibility study, the most suitable organisational solution will be set up and the HCSO will establish the main requirements for Total Quality Management. The next step is the implementation of the concepts of TQM.

Timeline:

Q4 2016

13. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office should further develop the Quality Guidelines so that they provide more comprehensive guidance for staff throughout the organisation, including the training of new staff, with respect to the implementation of quality management. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.2.)

Current situation:

Quality Guidelines on the statistical processes of HCSO have been in place since 2007. The first version was updated in 2009. Major revision on the second version was launched in 2013. The revised HCSO Quality Guidelines are well structured, dealing comprehensively with processes according to the GSBPM. However, the checklists are sometimes rather general in nature and may not offer as much guidance to staff as might be needed. Additional guidance is given to staff in the form of trainings, as the contents of the document is continuously on the agenda of HCSO School's Quality course as element of the basic recommendations. Besides, process quality monitoring is also on the curriculum of HCSO School courses. As a consequence of the revision of the guidelines, training and monitoring also need to be revised.

Improvement action 13.1. Develop the concept for the revised Quality Guidelines

HCSO will develop the concept for the revised Quality Guidelines which will include guiding examples as well.

Timeline:

Q4 2015

Improvement action 13.2. Revision of the Quality Guidelines

HCSO will review its Quality Guidelines according to the concept for revision and publish the updated Quality Guidelines.

Timeline:

Q3 2016

Improvement action 13.3. Revision of the training of the Quality Guidelines

HCSO will revise the training concept of the Quality Guidelines, implementing the new, practice-oriented training method and integrating it into relevant HCSO School courses.

Timeline:

Q1 2017

Improvement action 13.4. Development of the system plan of an integrated, meta-driven quality control system

HCSO will develop the system plan of an integrated, meta-driven quality control system suitable for process quality monitoring (i.e. monitoring of process quality guidelines, workflow management with built-in check points and responsible units, central quality indicator storage, etc.)

Timeline:

Q1 2018

14. *The Hungarian Central Statistical Office should further develop the content and homogeneity of the quality related meta-information it produces and publishes on its website, in line with standardised metadata systems. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicators 4.3, 6.4 and 15.5.)*

Current situation:

On the HCSO website, quality reports are available for most statistical products in the form of meta-information. The contents of meta-information follows a standard structure, however the level of quality of the contents varies. HCSO transmits quality reports on various statistical products to Eurostat. A new SIMS-based quality and metadata reporting system needs to be introduced and harmonised with existing systems or regulations. The standard level of the quality of QRs and the monitoring of the reports also need to be ensured.

Improvement action 14.1. Development and implementation of a new SIMS-based structure for metadata and quality reporting

HCSO will develop and implement a new SIMS-based structure for metadata and quality reporting (user- and producer-oriented quality reports).

Timeline:

Q1 2016

Improvement action 14.2. Making available new, updated user-oriented quality reports on the HCSO website.

The HCSO will make available new, updated user-oriented quality reports on the HCSO website.

Timeline:

Q1 2017

15. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office should implement more uniform and transparent policy and procedures for planned regular and irregular revisions of statistical data, including a release calendar for all planned revisions. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicators 6.6 and 8.6.)

Current situation:

HCSO has developed a revision policy that is publicly available on the HCSO website. Information on revisions of subject-matter domains are also available in the form of metainformation on the HCSO website. The currently available guidance on common revision practices will be further developed to introduce fully standardised and transparent revision processes for all domains of statistics in HCSO.

Improvement action 15.1. Further standardise revision methodologies and practices of the HCSO.

HCSO will further standardise its revision methodologies and practices. The expected outcome of this extensive standardisation is an exhaustive revision policy; further harmonisation of the revision practices for different subject-matter domains and a more standardised presentation of information on revision for subject-matter domains on the HCSO website.

Timeline:

Q4 2018

Improvement action 15.2. Publication of a common revision calendar on the HCSO website.

HCSO will publish a revision calendar on the HCSO website.

Timeline:

Q1 2018

16. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office should seek to develop further its dialogue with the broad base of users of its outputs. Moreover, it should aim to research and publicise the beneficial use made of its products and services with a view to stimulating further use and communicating the practical value of its products. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicators 11.1, 11.3.)

Current situation:

The dialogue with various user groups has had its framework for a long time, with long-standing traditions in case of some major groups. However, user segmentation is not based on detailed results of the most recent years, and the general public is somewhat underrepresented. Information on the quantity of use of our products is abundant, but information on the quality of use is missing.

Improvement action 16.1. Better use of communication channels with the broader public

HCSO intends to improve the use of communication channels with the broader public, mainly through our website and the social media and face-to-face communication, seeking new ways to share views with non-professional users and to make the beneficial use of statistics known to the public. In relation to this, HCSO will establish a new communication strategy and explore practices and theories for user segmentation and apply methods to use such information.

Timeline:

Q4 2016

Improvement action 16.2. Extending research on the benefit of use of our products

HCSO will extend research on the benefit of use of its products, including direct user surveys and other methods.

Timeline:

Q4 2017

17. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office should plan to upgrade its website by improving its structure, navigation, and design and to provide better access to detailed statistical data in an interactive way. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15.)

Current situation:

The main dissemination channel of HCSO is its website. Although the contents of the website is rich, finding the desired information on the website is not always easy due to a rather complicated structure.

Improvement action 17. Improving the structure and navigation of the website

HCSO will establish a mid-term web strategy, aiming at a flexible adaptation to changes in user needs and in technologies, including a new search engine built in the website, placing targeted information for various user groups in dedicated sub sites, extending the coverage of interactive statistics and creating or adapting other interactive tools, and redesigning the homepage of HCSO for an improved user experience.

Timeline:

Q4 2016