



PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND CENTRAL STATISTICAL BUREAU'S OF LATVIA IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

1. *Establish the Statistical Council (proposed in the new Statistics Law) with flexible membership; review and extend the representation on the Council of different user communities, and consider further the possibility of the Council being chaired by an external expert or other person of high public standing rather than by a senior manager of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 6, 11).*

Current situation:

There is no Statistical Council at the moment. The creation of the Statistical Council (with an aim to promote cooperation between statistical producers, data providers and users of official statistics) is envisaged in the new draft Statistics Law.

Improvement action 1: Statistical Council with flexible membership

The Statistics Law which is expected to enter into force in the second half of 2015 will lay down that the Statistical Council is herewith established. The remaining formalities on the membership and rules of procedure will be approved by the Minister of Economics and thus will not be regulated by the Statistics Law. The CSB together with the Ministry of Economics will prepare membership document and as far as possible will review and extend the representation of different user communities in the Council. The same refers to the chair of the Council – the Council could be chaired by an external expert or other person of high public standing.

Timeline:

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| 2015: | Statistical Law enters into force. |
| 2016 II Q: | The CSB together with the Ministry of Economics will prepare membership document of the Statistical Council. |
| 2016 III Q: | First meeting of the Statistical Council. |

2. *Develop the planned role of the Statistical Council so that it is more explicitly to promote the European statistics Code of Practice and to guide active engagement with all users of official statistics - including industry, academia, local organisations and the general public (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 6, 11).*

Current situation:

There is no Statistical Council at the moment. The creation of the Statistical Council is envisaged in the new draft Statistics Law. The Statistical Council will be an advisory body with the aim to promote development of the production system of official statistics and to facilitate cooperation between statistical institutions, respondents and users of official statistics.

Improvement action 2: Rules of procedure of the Statistical Council

The CSB together with the Ministry of Economics will prepare rules of procedure of the Statistical Council. The promotion of the Code of Practice will be particularly acknowledged as one of the tasks of the Statistical Council.

Timeline:

Second half 2015: Statistical Law enters into force.

2016 II Q: The CSB together with the Ministry of Economics will prepare rules of procedure of the Statistical Council.

2016 III Q: First meeting of the Statistical Council.

3. *Work with the relevant authorities to ensure that when the new Statistics Law is passed in 2015, the meaning of the formal ‘supervision’ of the Central Statistical Bureau by the Ministry of Economics is explained publicly in ways that leave no doubt that the approval of plans, questionnaires etc. by Ministers cannot, and will not, be used to exert inappropriate influence over professional decisions (European statistics Code of Practice, 1.1).*

Current situation:

The CSB is under supervision of the Ministry of Economics. So far the CSB has not encountered any institutional or organizational problems while being under supervision of the Ministry. An obligation of the CSB to approve, for example, questionnaire forms in the Cabinet of Ministers is justified by the constitutional system and human rights considerations.

Improvement action 3: Explanation of meaning of “supervision”

The new Statistics Law will be accompanied by an explanatory note. The CSB will explain the meaning of the formal form of subordination - “supervision”, in the context of statistical principle of “professional independence”. As a main coordinator of the official statistical system the CSB on a regular bases will seek for opportunities (by means of its webpage, Twitter, press releases etc.) to explain publicly the nature of supervision as it should be perceived in statistical domain.

Timeline:

Second half 2015: Statistical Law enters into force.

2016 I Q The CSB will explain the meaning of the formal form of subordination - “supervision”, in the context of statistical principle of “professional independence”. The explanatory note will be published on the CSB home page, moreover it will be available on www.likumi.lv which is an official home page of all laws and regulations of Latvia.

4. *Make proposals to the relevant authorities for ways that the special status and professional responsibilities of the President of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, as head of a national statistical service, having both coordination and international responsibilities, shall be formally recognised in the appointment process (European statistics Code of Practice, 1.2-1.4, 1.8).*

Current situation:

The State Civil Service Law lays down a procedure of recruitment of a head of an institution of direct administration (Section 9 (1), (2) 1), (3)). Currently, the selection of heads of public administration authorities is decentralized and organized by the Ministries. As the CSB is a direct administrative authority it should apply this procedure. If there were a vacant position of the head of the CSB then the Ministry of Economics in cooperation with the CSB would prepare a list of requirements for a vacant position. The Ministry have to agree with the State Chancellery the criteria for the post.

In order to ensure professionalism and political neutrality of the State Civil Service, the new amendments of the Civil Service Law (expected to enter into force in 1 September 2015) anticipate that the State Chancellery will select the heads of institutions (officials). The draft Cabinet Regulations establishing centrally organised procedure for the selection aims at establishment of uniform principles for the selection of heads of institutions (officials) executing open, honest and professional selection and professional staff selection methods, as well as involving NGOs in the selection process.

The CSB submitted to the State Chancellery objections and proposals on the draft Cabinet Regulations mentioning that according to the ES Code of Practice principle on professional independence, with respect to the appointment the of the head of statistical authority, the selection should be based solely on the criteria of professional competence, emphasizing his/her coordinating role within the country as well as international responsibilities.

Improvement action 4: Professional responsibilities of the President of the CSB

The CSB will prepare a list of requirements if an open competition for a vacant position of the head of the CSB is going to be announced, emphasizing that the head of statistical authority have responsibility for ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner and indicating that the appointment should be based on professional competence only.

Timeline:

When an open competition for a vacant position of the head of the CSB is going to be announced.

5. *Develop the system of agreements between the owners of administrative data systems and the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia to ensure the auditing and assurance of the basic data quality (European statistics Code of Practice, 8.8, 8.9).*

Current situation:

The CSB has co-operation agreements with 69 administrative data owners on administrative data supply for statistical purposes. These co-operation agreements cover all administrative data owners providing data to the CSB. The agreements define all arrangements (e.g., purpose of data use, requirements for data exchange, responsibilities, deadlines and format for data exchange, confidentiality) between the CSB and administrative data owners to facilitate the use of administrative data for statistical purposes.

Improvement action 5: Basic quality requirements included in co-operation agreements with administrative data owners

During 2016 the CSB will develop a framework for assessment of administrative data quality. Then the CSB together with the owners of administrative data will elaborate co-operation mechanisms aimed at assuring and increasing data quality. Common basic quality requirements for administrative data will be developed and gradually included in all co-operation agreements with administrative data owners.

Timeline:

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| 2016 IV Q: | Internal framework for assessment of administrative data quality is ready. |
| 2017 IV Q: | Quality requirements are included in co-operation agreements with major data providers. |
| 2018 IV Q: | Quality requirements are included in majority co-operation agreements. |
| 2019 IV Q: | Quality requirements are included in all co-operation agreements with all administrative data owners. |

6. Carry out a formal review of whether the European statistics produced in, and published by, Other National Authorities might in some cases be better produced either jointly with the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, or entirely by that office (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 10).

Current situation:

The European statistics are produced by the CSB and other national producers of European statistics (ONAs). The division of responsibilities for production of respective statistics has arisen historically and is based on the competence of the institution. Sets of statistics and their producers are fixed in the annual National Programme of Statistical Information.

Improvement action 6: Formal review of ONAs

During 2016 the CSB in co-operation with ONAs will work out the review methodology. Then the CSB together with ONAs will carry out the formal reviews of the data production process of other national producers of European statistics therefore the production process and its efficiency as well as other relevant aspects will be explored and respective actions taken.

Timeline:

2016 I-IV Q:	Review methodology is worked out.
2017 I-IV Q:	First 4 ONAs are assessed (1 ONA per quarter).
2018 I-IV Q:	Next 4 ONAs are assessed (1 ONA per quarter).
2019 IV Q:	All ONAs are assessed.

7. Find ways to actively use the Quality Framework, not just to document and monitor processes, but to drive improvements in quality and systems (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4).

Current situation:

The CSB Quality Management System (QMS) was implemented in 2013. The QMS is seen as an institutional repository of knowledge. It is used for documentation and monitoring of business processes of production of official statistics. As well it is aimed for standardizing and optimizing these processes and for increasing quality of processes and products by identifying and implementing necessary improvements. The first entire QMS audit (internal implementation audit) was carried out at the end 2013/beginning of 2014.

Improvement action 7.1: Internal QMS audits

Within the framework of the QMS, the CSB will carry out internal QMS audits on the regular basis (annually) according to the internal quality audit plan. The entire QMS is going to be audited during the period of three years. The time and scope of the audit is set in annual audit plan. In audits and analysis of audit results, a greater emphasis will be put on issues and activities that are crucial for process and product compliance with an internal and external requirements (e.g., regularly monitoring quality and assessing different trade-offs) and best practices. This will lead to the standardization and optimization of processes, improvement of the systems and will encourage improvements in quality and efficiency.

Timeline:

2015 IV Q:	Annual audit (1/3) performed.
2016 IV Q:	Annual audit (2/3) performed.
2017 IV Q:	Annual audit (3/3) performed.
2018 I Q:	Entire QMS audit report.

Improvement action 7.2: Management meetings

The CSB will establish a systematic approach for the review of the QMS performance by organizing management (top and middle managers involved in statistics production and dissemination) meetings on a regular basis according to the Quality Steering Group's annual plan. The CSB management meetings will be held to verify compliance of the CSB performance with quality requirements, e.g. monitoring achievement of the quality objectives stated out in the CSB Quality Policy. Meetings will be aimed to evaluate and decide where improvements can be made, and to monitor implementation progress of the improvement actions as well. Necessary improvements will be implemented through daily work activities guided by a quality manager.

Timeline:

Since 2013 the frequency of the meetings is set as following:

QMS management review – annually and

Quality Steering Group's meetings – twice a year.

2015 II Q and IV Q: Quality Steering Group's meetings.

2015 III Q: QMS management review.

Similar pattern from 2016 onwards.

COORDINATION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

- 8. Develop further the concept of an integrated National Statistical System in which statisticians in Other National Authorities work closely with the Central Statistical Bureau, to a shared Code of Practice and a shared agenda of future developments and closer integration (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1).**

Current situation:

The CSB maintains successful cooperation with all Other National Authorities (ONA's) that produce official statistics including European statistics. This cooperation is performed periodically on actual topic and problem basis (e.g. consultations, meetings on the National Programme of Statistical Information, data exchange, and methodological issues). The new Statistics Law will strengthen the CSB co-ordination role.

Improvement action 8.1: Annual meetings with senior statisticians of ONAs

Starting 2016 (if the new Statistics Law will come into force in 2015), the CSB will organize annual meetings with senior statisticians of all Other National Authorities on a regular basis on specific actual topics (e.g. on development and implementation of 3-years National Programme of Statistical Information, requirements of the Code of Practice, data exchange, statistical confidentiality, production and dissemination of official statistical information and future developments).

Timeline:

Yearly from 2016.

2016 II Q: First meeting (on Official statistics system established by the new Statistics law) with senior statisticians of all ONAs organized.

Improvement action 8.2: Meetings with specialists of ONAs

Starting with the year 2015 the draft National Programme of Statistical Information 2016 will be prepared for the period of 3 years. The CSB will use this opportunity to develop closer co-operation with other producers of official statistics on joint planning of statistical work in the national statistical system. Gradually meetings with specialists of all ONAs will be organised to cover different subjects regulated by the new Statistics Law.

Timeline:

2015 III Q: Meeting with all ONAs on mid-term planning of official statistics.

2016 I-IV Q: Quarterly meetings with all ONAs

9. Establish a more active process of checking compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice compliance in Other National Authorities (European statistics Code of Practice, 4.2 and Principle 1).

Current situation:

Since 2006 the CSB organises thematic meetings with other national producers of European and national statistics on such topics as the ES Code of Practice, quality in official statistics and Peer review. The CSB provides consultations to other national authorities (ONAs) concerning practical implementation of the Code of Practice requirements, completion of a self-assessment questionnaire etc. The new draft Statistics Law is expected to entry into force in the second half of 2015. It will strengthen the CSB coordination role.

Improvement action 9.1: National guidelines on implementation of requirements of the Code of Practice

The CSB plans to issue Guidelines on implementation of requirements of the Code of Practice for other national producers of European and national statistics. These guidelines are to be published on the CSB website and introduced to ONAs through common meetings.

Timeline:

2015 IV Q: Guidelines developed and published.

2016 II Q: Meeting with all ONAs to introduce guidelines.

Improvement action 9.2: System of reporting on compliance with the Code of Practice

The CSB plans to develop the system of reporting on compliance with the Code of Practice for ONA's. The reporting will be organized on the annual basis. The self-assessment questionnaire and the information on reporting conditions will be published on the CSB website and introduced to ONAs through common meetings.

Timeline:

2016 I Q: The system of reporting developed.

2016 II Q: Meeting with all ONAs to introduce system of reporting.

Yearly reporting from 2017.

2017 I Q: First results on ONAs compliance with the Code of Practice.

10. Identify clearly and publicly all news releases and publications of the National Statistical System NSS (and particularly those that relate to European statistics) as products of an integrated statistical system working together to a shared Code of Practice (European statistics Code of Practice 1.6).

Current situation:

Since 01.01.2015. it is prohibited for governmental institutions to use their logo. Instead of their logo the coat of arms should be used.

Official statistics (news releases, data, and publications) are disseminated by the institution responsible for its respective statistics. The statistical publications are disseminated according to the visual identity guidelines of the institution responsible for its respective statistics. The situation is partly addressed in the draft Statistics Law which is in adoption process. The draft Statistics Law sets the principles on how official statistics should be disseminated (release calendar and data accessibility). At the moment the draft law is subject to negotiations in Saeima's (Parliament) Committee over new articles concerning:

- the common visual identity for official statistics, i.e. logo or label "Official statistics";
- the creation of the official statistics portal.

Improvement action 10: Official statistics portal

Official statistics will be disseminated according to the Code of Practice principles in a common portal, and will have the same visual identity.

Timeline:

2018 IQ (2 years after draft Statistics Law enters into force, provided that the new Statistics Law will come into force under the present wording).

11. Extend the currently published calendars of news releases, publications and database updates to include, at least, the European statistics outputs of the Other National Authorities (European statistics Code of Practice 1.6 and Principle 15).

Current situation:

Official statistics (news releases, data, and publications) are disseminated by the institution responsible for their respective statistics.

The release calendar of the CSB is prepared for a calendar year and is publically available.

CSB has 3 calendars for:

- news releases (<http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/notikumi/atlasit-gadu-un-temu>);
- updates in databases (<http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/dati/advance-release-calendar-34481.html>);
- publications (<http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/dati/e-publications-38704.html>).

The requirements for producers of statistics concerning calendars of releases are not set in national legislation.

The draft Statistics Law sets the principles on how official statistics should be disseminated (release calendar and data accessibility). At the moment the draft law is subject to negotiations in the Saeima's (Parliament) Committee over a new article concerning establishing the common visual identity of official statistics (i.e. the logo or label "Official statistics") and the creation of the official statistics portal.

Improvement action 11: Release calendars of ONAs available in Official statistics portal

Official statistics will be disseminated in a common portal. Release calendars will be integral part of the new statistics portal.

Timeline:

2018 IQ (2 years after draft Statistics Law enters into force, provided that the new Statistics Law will come into force under the present wording).

12. Develop further training and job rotation opportunities for staff in the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (especially junior staff and also statistical staff in Other National Authorities where this would be beneficial) to gain wider experience (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 3 and 7.6).

Current situation:

A training system is fully implemented at the CSB and it is an integral part of the human resources policy. Every year the CSB approves an annual training plan. The main focus of training is to improve IT skills, analytical skills and English. Nevertheless the supply side for specific training needs is limited in Latvia.

Job rotation is not implemented at the CSB.

Improvement action 12.1: Inter-institutional training courses

The CSB will develop and implement 2-5 inter-institutional training courses per year aiming at sharing knowledge on common statistical topics among different national authorities (i.e. on topics like dissemination, the ES Code of Practice etc.).

Timeline:

2016 IV Q: During 2016 the training courses for 2017 will be developed.

Yearly from 2017, around 2 inter-institutional training courses will be organized, re-examining the usefulness for the repeated courses.

Improvement action 12.2: Pilot project of junior staff rotation

The CSB will carry out a pilot project of junior staff rotation within the CSB in order for them to acquire more in-depth experience in different statistical domains. In the first phase of the pilot project the CSB will explore legal requirements for the possibility to carry out rotation. In the second phase, based on legal feasibility, the CSB will develop the most appropriate form of rotation and clarify such details of rotation as duration, necessary competences and knowledge, availability of mentors etc. In the third phase, the CSB will actually organize rotation and evaluate all technical details as defined in the second phase. In the final phase, the CSB will evaluate outcome of rotations, that is, feedback from junior staff and senior staff, and decide on future perspectives.

Timeline:

2016 III Q: The starting date of the pilot project.

2017 IV Q: The end date of the pilot project.

2018 I Q: Decision on continuation (or termination) junior staff rotation.

13. With a view both to stimulating further use and communicating the practical value of the statistical product, identify and publish further evidence demonstrating the beneficial use made of Latvian official statistics by the wider community of users, including local organisations and the public (European statistics Code of Practice 11.1).

Current situation:

The CSB have documented main users for each CSB statistical output in the Project documentation system (<http://ads.csb.gov.lv/PublicApsekojums/Saraksts.rails?clean=>; available in Latvian)). As well the employees of the CSB actively take part in various events presenting and explaining practical value of statistics.

The CSB actively uses social network Twitter in order to demonstrate the beneficial use of statistics.

Chapter V of the draft Statistics Law sets the principles of providing access to the confidential data for the research purposes as well obligates the researcher to inform NSI or ONA on publication of results. At the moment the draft law is subject to negotiations in the Saeima's (Parliament) Committee over new article concerning official statistics portal.

Improvement action 13.1: User conference

In 2015 the CSB will organize the Eurostat Data User Conference "Statistics for Knowledge based Society". The Conference will promote statistics as important element in decision making. Ministries, bank experts, academia and business sector users will present their experience with using statistical data.

Timeline:

2016 I Q: Annual data user conference (in case of success of the 2015 Eurostat Data User Conference).

Improvement action 13.2: Datasets for research purposes and research results available on the Official Statistics Portal

With the new Statistics Law coming into force, NSI and ONAs will have the duty to publish in the Official Statistics Portal the available datasets for research purposes as well as references to the research results. It means, the portal is to be created and ONAs to be taught (see also improvement action nr. 12.1: inter-institutional training courses) to prepare and publish datasets for researchers.

Timeline:

2018 I Q (2 years after draft Statistics Law enters into force, provided that it will have the present wording): NSI and ONAs will publish available datasets for research purposes as well as references to the research results in Official Statistics Portal.

14. In line with objectives stated in the Quality Policy of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, find new ways to engage more actively with, and meet the needs of, a wider range of users of official statistics including the general public (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 6 and 11).

Current situation:

The CSB Twitter account is proactive and monitors the tweets for keywords “statistics” and “data” (in Latvian) to provide statistics to anyone who has publicly expressed the need for any data. This is a good promotional activity that provides many examples of discussions where arguments can be based on statistical facts.

Data visualisation – infographics, interactive tools and video is content popular among general public.

Improvement action 14.1: User conference

In April 2015 the CSB will organize the Eurostat Data User Conference “Statistics for Knowledge based Society”. The Conference will be used a forum for official statistics where producers and data users will meet and discuss future cooperation.

Timeline:

2016 I Q: Annual data user conference (in case of success of the 2015 Eurostat Data User Conference).

Improvement action 14.2: Application for mobile devices

CBS will investigate the possibility to develop an application for mobile devices. The application shall enable general users to access news releases, select data and get a short overview of economic and social trends more easily.

Timeline:

Development of mobile applications (versions) is closely related to other project – official statistics portal and common platform of homepages for public institutions. Timeframe for official statistics portal is 2018 IQ. It is planned that these projects will be related. As well, CSB has volunteered to participate in project on common homepage platform for public institutions. The project is managed by Ministry of Environmental protection and Regional development. The project foresees mobile versions (responsive design) for the webpages as well other tools for common data dissemination.

2018 IV Q: An application for mobile devices developed.

Improvement action 14.3: Web public consultations

In order to engage users more actively in expressing their needs during an annual planning process of official statistics, the draft National Programme of Statistical Information will be published on the websites of the CSB and the Ministry of Economics for two weeks for public consultation.

Timeline:

2016 III Q: The draft National Programme of Statistical Information 2017 will be published on websites.

15. Seek to involve a wider range of users of official statistics, and other external experts, in internal Central Statistical Bureau committees and working groups to stimulate a focus on user requirements, including those from outside government (European statistics Code of Practice, 7.7 and 11.1).

Current situation:

Main users are consulted yearly in a preparation process of the National Programme of Statistical Information (NPSI). The consultations of the NPSI content are done at three levels: official statistics producers, State Secretaries, the Cabinet.

The CSB collaborates with scientific community in several statistical fields (e.g., Rīga Stradiņš University on methodology on health statistics; University of Latvia on demography statistics; Latvia University of Agriculture on agricultural census; Latvian Association of Statisticians on different methodological issues; Baltic-Nordic-Ukrainian Network on Survey Statistics) in order to improve methodology and raise effectiveness.

Improvement action 15: External participants

The CSB will seek for opportunities to involve experts and delegates from private sector, local municipalities, academic world and non-governmental organisations in the CSB working groups more often. Whenever the new internal working group will be organized, the CSB will examine potential contribution of external participants and invite them, if applicable.

Timeline:

2015 IV Q: The principle of inviting external participants more often to the CSB working groups has been already spread within the institution.

During 2015: The internal procedures for creation of working groups will be accordingly revised.

Starting in 2016: Potential involvement of external expertise will be assessed during creation of every single working group.

16. Work with all parts of the National Statistical System to develop the dissemination of official statistics in news releases, statistical publications and online to give more support to less expert users and guide the interpretation of trends and patterns in the statistics so as to reduce the scope for misinterpretation and support constructive use (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

Current situation:

Official statistics is disseminated in news releases, statistical publications and online. The news releases published by the CSB and other ONA contain description on trends and patterns in the data which helps user to understand the data. The metadata published on the CSB webpage provides explanation of definitions and concepts used in the data. In the 2014 there were two cases of data misinterpretation which were successfully corrected by communicating directly with the data user.

According to the draft Statistics Law all producers of official statistics shall publish on its website official statistical metadata in accordance with standardised statistical metadata systems.

Improvement action 16.1: Information on trends and patterns

To provide information to less expert users on trends and patterns the following actions are foreseen:

1. Information on trends and patterns will be included in the publication "Latvia - statistics in brief."
2. A short overview of the latest trends and patterns will be provided on the homepage section Main indicators.
3. Trends will be reflected into the titles of press releases, as far as possible.

Timeline:

2015: The improvement actions have been launched already.

Improvement action 16.2: Official statistics metadata

Provided that the new Statistics Law will come into force under the present wording, all producers of official statistics shall publish on its website official statistical metadata in accordance with standardised statistical metadata systems. Such a structured approach will allow users to find the metadata easier as well will contribute to correct interpretation of statistical data.

Timeline:

2018 IQ (2 years after the draft Statistics Law enters into force).