



PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF ROMANIA IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Professional independence

- 1. The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote an amendment to the Law on the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania No. 226/2009, laying down specific provisions on the appointment and the dismissal of the President of the Institute, in line with the European statistics Code of Practice. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1, indicator 1.8.)***

Current situation:

Law no 226/2009 regulates the organization and functioning of official statistics in Romania based on the fundamental principles of official statistics of the United Nations Organisation (ONU) and of the Code of Practice of the European statistics (CoP).

Law 226/2009 is harmonized with Regulation (EC) 223/2009 of the European Parliament and Council on European statistics and at present is under review with the objective of reflecting the amendments to this regulation (through Regulation no 759/2015).

Law 226/2009 does not contain specific provisions on the selection, recruitment, term of mandate, appointment, dismissal or the reasons for termination of office of the President of NIS. The appointment and the dismissal of the President of NIS are determined by the provisions of Law no. 90/2001 on the organization and functioning of the Government of Romania and of the ministries. According to this law, the President of NIS is appointed and dismissed from office by the Prime Minister of Romania. The selection process is not transparent and the appointment is done for an indefinite period of time. The law does not provide any reasons or conditions for the termination of mandate.

One of the major changes expected from the law of statistics contains provisions regarding the recruitment and appointment of the President of NIS, which should be transparent, based only on professional competence criteria, and the reasons for the termination of mandate should not compromise the professional independence of NIS.

Improvement action 1: Proposal for amending the statistical law no. 226/2009 by adding some provisions on the recruitment, appointment and dismissal of the President of NIS

Proposal for amending Law 226/2009 by adding provisions regarding the procedures for the recruitment, appointment and dismissal of the President of NIS, as well as the reasons for the termination of mandate in order to be in accordance with the amendments of Regulation no. 223/2009. After the finalization of the draft law amending Law 226/2009, NIS will start procedures for the adoption of the law. The timeline refers to the date when NIS will submit the proposed amendments to the Government General Secretariat (GGS). After the submission and approval by the GGS, they will be sent to the Parliament. We cannot estimate when the Parliament approval will take place.

Timeline:

12/2015

Coordination of the official statistical system

2. National Institute of Statistics should review the division of labour with the other producers of official statistics to identify the extent to which they have the professional capacity and competence to act as producers of official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1; coordination.)

Current situation:

According to the Law of Statistics 226/2009, the National Statistical System consists of the following: the National Institute of Statistics, its territorial divisions and the subordinated institutions, statistical offices of the central and local administration and of other public institutions and authorities (other than those under the National Bank of Romania) and the National Bank of Romania.

45 authorities and public institutions are considered producers of official statistics and they compose the National Statistical System Committee (COMSTAT).

COMSTAT is an advisory body, composed of representatives of producers of official statistics whose purpose is to facilitate the coordination of the National Statistical System by NIS in order to implement, monitor and evaluate the development strategy, the annual and multiannual programs, for the adoption and unitary use of concepts and classifications, as well as of the best methods and techniques of data collection, processing and dissemination and for improving the consistency and comparability between the statistics produced.

14 out of the 45 institutions have distinct statistical activities included in the Annual National Statistical Program. The others are collaborators or providers of administrative data to NIS. However, the producers of European statistics are 10 and are listed among other producers of European statistics on the site of Eurostat.

Improvement action 2.1: Procedure to define the producers of official statistics

Develop the procedure for the clear definition of the producers of official statistics.

After approving the amendments to Law 226/2009 with provisions that will determine the criteria for defining the producers of official statistics, more clearly and coherently, a procedure for identifying and awarding the quality of "other producers of official statistics" shall be designed and implemented through consultations and bilateral agreements between NIS and possible candidates.

Timeline:

06/2016

Improvement action 2.2: Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Other Producers of Official Statistics

Sign memoranda with other producers of official statistics, which will be approved by the Government.

After the design of the procedure regarding the identification and award of the quality of other producers of official statistics, a series of memoranda will be signed with the latter to legalize the obligations and duties for each. Due to long administrative procedures, the target is to conclude at least two memoranda per year.

Timeline:

Gradually until 06/2019

3. *The National Institute of Statistics should revise the annual national statistical programme in accordance with the review of the division of labour between the various statistical authorities. The programme should show a clearer distinction between the producers/surveys that are part of official statistics and the deliveries of data to the National Institute of Statistics, which should also be more consistent with the many agreements on data deliveries. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7 and 10; coordination.)*

Current situation:

The Annual National Statistical Program represents the basic tool through which NIS and other producers of official statistics are authorized to collect, process, analyse, disseminate and store official statistical data in order to provide the domestic and external users with the necessary information.

Part of the official statistics producers, included in the Annual National Statistical Program, only partially meet the criteria for being considered other producers of official statistics (partial statistics from the entire statistical sector) and do not provide conditions of public access similar to those of NIS. They do not currently have the capacity, competence and organizational framework necessary to be eligible as proper producers of official statistics.

Improvement action 3: Readjustment of the Annual National Statistical Program

The review and restructure of the Annual National Statistical Program according to the new criteria for defining the producers of official statistics and to the adoption of memoranda signed with the other producers of official statistics (NIS as the main producer of official statistics and "other producers of official statistics", respectively, the latter going to be determined according to the content of the improvement action no. 2).

Timeline:

Gradually until 06/2019

4. The National Institute of Statistics should strengthen its efforts as a coordinator and provider of technical assistance to other authorities that are considered as producers of official statistics in order to increase the use of standard methods, increase efficiency and quality, and ensure compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice as well as with the fundamental principles of official statistics as specified in the Law on the organisation and functioning of official statistics in Romania No. 226/2009, Article 5. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7 and 10; coordination.)

Current situation:

According to the Law of Statistics no. 226/2009, NIS serves as coordinator of the National Statistical System. The most important tools for cooperation and coordination are as follows: the National Statistical Council, the National Statistical System Committee (COMSTAT) and the Methodological Endorsement Committee (CAM). The National Statistical Council brings together representatives from academia, educational and research institutes, governmental institutions and local administration and from users, such as employers, unions, mass-media and professional associations. COMSTAT is the coordination Committee of the NSS, especially when it comes to the joint strategies and the preparation, implementation and monitoring of statistical programs. The Methodological Endorsement Committee represents the professional authority responsible with the endorsement of the methodological projects regarding the organization and accomplishment of surveys, of statistical classifications and nomenclatures, of statistical tools and of other statistical works.

Improvement action 4: Strengthen the coordination role of NIS by extending the role to other producers of official statistics

Broaden and intensify the technical assistance given by NIS to other producers of official statistics in order to ensure better consistency of procedures and techniques used in official statistics. Through the memoranda signed with other producers of official statistics, a series of procedures will be defined to strengthen the coordination role of NIS for a more efficient management of statistical tasks, including quality management, and provision of technical assistance.

Timeline:

Gradually until 06/2019

Use of administrative data for statistical purposes

5. *The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote the necessary legislative amendments, strengthening the authority of the National Institute of Statistics and other national authorities to access and use microdata from administrative registers and records, including tax records, held by public authorities, for the purposes of compiling official statistics. These amendments should override the current legislative obstacles to such utilization and include authority to match and link data from different sources based on ID numbers while fully respecting obligations of confidentiality and protection of individual data. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 2, Principle 8, indicators 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9, Principle 9, and Principle 10, indicator 10.3.)*

Current situation:

In order to complete the volume of data required and to reduce the burden on data providers, the National Institute of Statistics and its territorial divisions have the right to **immediately access and use free of charge** data from the records of public institutions and authorities, individual identification data included, **usable for the national statistics, as well as for the European statistics**, in compliance with the provisions of Chapter 10 of Law no. 226/2009.

Several protocols of collaboration and operation have already been signed for the transmission of individual records from administrative sources to NIS, the identifiers required to enable the inter-link of data between different registers and databases included.

NIS has encountered various difficulties in the workflow with the administrative data sources so far:

- The information is not regularly provided; there are repeated delays and NIS has to insist to receive the data;
- Transmission of aggregated data instead of individual records;
- Mismatch between the indicators reported or the existence of double entries in the database;
- The existence of outliers for variables of statistical interest, but not of interest for the institution that manages the administrative source;
- Missing variables;
- Discrepancies in data from one period to another;
- Outdated information;
- Multiple erroneous encodings;
- Own classifications and nomenclatures that require additional complex efforts to be translated into statistical type classifications and nomenclatures;

A wide enough range of administrative sources have been identified that can be useful for statistical analysis purposes, as well as the institutions that manage these sources. The coordinating/subordinated institutions which manage the administrative data sources of interest for NIS have been invited to bilateral talks in order to sign protocols for data transfers. Some of these protocols are already in the design stage.

Ministers and institutions of the public administration, that manage administrative sources, have been notified on the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2015/759 of the European Parliament and the Council of April 29, 2015 amending Regulation (EC) no. 223/2009 on European Statistics.

Improvement action 5: Propose amendments to the national legislation for effective access and use of administrative data managed by other public authorities

NIS will draft amendments to the national legislation to guarantee the access of NIS and other national authorities of National Statistical System, to present and future administrative data sources. Some of the amendments will be included in the new Official Statistics Law proposal, consistent with Improvement Action 1. The timeline refers to the date when NIS will submit the proposed amendments to the Government General Secretariat (GGS). After the submission and approval by the GGS, they will be sent to the Parliament. We cannot estimate when the Parliament approval will take place.

Timeline:

12/2016

6. *The National Institute of Statistics should prepare and promote the necessary legislative amendments, making it mandatory for holders of administrative records and registers which are or may be used for statistical purposes, to inform and consult the Institute on planned changes to registers and on the design and specifications of registers in order to make them more suitable for statistical usage. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 2, Principle 8, indicators 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, and Principle 10, indicator 10.3.)*

Current situation :

The National Institute of Statistics must be consulted with and involved in the initial design, subsequent development and in the discontinuation of administrative data sources and registers produced and managed by other authorities, thus providing further use of these records in order to produce aggregated statistical data necessary at national and European level. At the same time, the National Institute of Statistics is involved in standardization activities concerning administrative records, relevant for the production of national statistics, those developed for the European statistics included.

A wide enough range of administrative sources have been identified which can be useful for statistical analysis purposes, as well as the institutions that manage these sources. The coordinating/subordinated institutions which manage the administrative data sources of interest for NIS have been invited to bilateral talks in order to sign protocols for data transfers. Some of these protocols are already in the design stage.

Ministers and institutions of the public administration, that manage administrative sources, have been notified on the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2015/759 of the European Parliament and the Council of April 29, 2015 amending Regulation (EC) no. 223/2009 on European Statistics. These notifications clearly state the provisions of Art 17a on the "Use, integration and access to the administrative registers".

Improvement action 6: Propose an amendment to the national legislation to allow NIS to be involved in the design of the administrative registers.

NIS will prepare proposals for amending the national legislation to ensure that NIS takes part in the initial design, the subsequent development, the change of content and in the discontinuation of administrative registers produced by other authorities, consistent with Improvement Actions 1 and 5. The timeline refers to the date when NIS will submit the proposed amendments to the Government General Secretariat (GGS). After the submission and approval by the GGS, they will be sent to the Parliament. We cannot estimate when the Parliament approval will take place.

Timeline:

12/2016

Organisation and process management

7. The National Institute of Statistics should continue to modernise data collection by extending online collection to new surveys and by using new technology and tools for household surveys. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)

Current situation:

Data collection in household surveys is currently conducted using the PAPI method (Paper And Pencil Interview).

In the period 2007 - 2008, NIS carried out the PHARE National 2005 project – “The Development of Social Statistics”. One of its components aimed at developing an automated data collection (CAPI – Computer Assisted Personal Interview) for the household surveys of social statistics.

The project was completed in 2008, the system being created and tested in 3 counties.

In the period 2012-2013, the project “Actions to improve the Household Labour Force Survey” was carried out, within the framework of the 2011 Eurostat Grants. One of the components of the project was to make a thorough analysis to assess the organizational implications of switching – in the case of the Household Labour Force Survey – from paper collection (PAPI) to the computer assisted one (more precisely - CAPI) as well as a rough estimate of the human and financial costs involved. The project was completed in 2013, the survey findings being presented in the final Report of the project.

Although both projects were completed successfully, the transition to the new collection was not possible because of the lack of financial resources for the purchase of equipments.

Improvement action 7: Identify and attract funding sources needed to modernize data collection for the surveys intended for the households of the population

Modernize the data collection system for the household surveys.

2016-2017

- study of the documentation regarding the CAPI data collection method
- estimation of the necessary budget in order to implement CAPI data collection for at least two social surveys
- identifying the resources needed
- estimation of the changes involved in terms of interviewers network
- meetings with statistical territorial offices in order to establish the workflow and the new professional profile of the interviewer for CAPI data collection

2018 - June 2019

- Depending on the available financial resources, testing CAPI data collection for at least two social surveys.

Timeline:

06/2019

8. The National Institute of Statistics should review to what extent there is a need to plan and use more standardised methods and tools for data processing, especially for data control, editing and imputation. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)

Current situation:

At present, for the business and household surveys, combined methods of data imputation are used from auxiliary sources and by estimation.

The methods and tools used for data editing are developed by NIS (in house) and adjusted according to the type of survey (customized), being included in the methodological descriptions of each survey.

Improvement action 8.1: Methodological guide for data editing

Develop and adopt a methodological guide for data editing, adapted for the household and business surveys

Timeline:

06/2016

Improvement action 8.2: Data editing IT applications

Design and implement IT applications for data editing for a household survey and for a business survey, selected as pilot. Depending on the results, the possibility of developing these applications as standardized solutions will be considered.

Timeline:

12/2017

9. The National Institute of Statistics should plan a gradual implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model in order to improve process management, standardization, documentation and efficiency. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7, 8 and 10.)

Current situation:

GSBPM is undoubtedly a useful tool for the structuring, managing and standardization of the statistical production processes.

NIS has implemented through various procedures the statistical production processes, which shall be analyzed and revised to meet the requirements of the GSBPM model.

Improvement action 9.1: Training for the implementation of the GSBPM model

Identify a relevant partner and organize a training program specialized in the implementation of the GSBPM standard.

Timeline:

12/2016

Improvement action 9.2: Feasibility study on the implementation of the GSBPM model in the activity of NIS

Request for technical assistance from Eurostat and develop a feasibility study on the implementation of the GSBPM standard in NIS.

Timeline:

12/2018

Improvement action 9.3: Plan for a gradual implementation of the GSBPM model

Define and apply the gradual implementation plan of the GSBPM model for the redesign of the statistical production processes, where necessary, based on the results of the feasibility study.

Timeline:

Gradually until 06/2019

10. The National Institute of Statistics should in parallel conduct a review of how the organisational setup and competences may have to be adapted in order to support the implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model and improve the workflow within the organisation. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)

Current situation:

The organizational structure of NIS is partially adapted to the GSBPM model. The statistical production units, through the staff and their skills, mostly cover the entire set of responsibilities of the statistical processes. This type of organization does not facilitate the standardization and rationalization of processes, especially of those for data processing and analysis and does not receive adequate support services.

Improvement action 10: Review of the organizational structure of NIS

Review, adapt and develop the organizational structure of NIS for supporting the implementation of the GSBPM model, focusing on the skills for the design/redesign and the management of processes, services of methodological and IT support for the standardization of processes and management of internal development projects, based on the results of the feasibility study.

Timeline:

Gradually until 06/2019

Quality management

11. The National Institute of Statistics should immediately initiate actions to enhance the competences of the quality unit, possibly with support from relevant partner countries. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 4.)

Current situation:

At this moment, there is a quality management department within the Directorate of Methodologies, Classifications and Statistical Registers in the NIS. In accordance with the requirements and tasks assigned to this department, the need for both improving the staff skills and increasing its number was detected.

Improvement action 11.1: Strengthen the administrative capacity of the Quality Department

Allocate with priority some financial and human resources in order to increase the administrative capacity of the Quality Department.

Timeline:

12/2016

Improvement action 11.2: Improve the skills of the Quality Department

Identify a relevant partner and organize a program of specialized training in quality management for the Quality Department.

Timeline:

06/2017

12. The National Institute of Statistics should design a plan for developing and implementing quality management with clear priorities and a timetable for the key tasks related to the possible adoption of a quality framework, quality documentation, quality reviews and reporting. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4.)

Current situation:

In the recent years, NIS has put increasing emphasis on ensuring the quality of statistical processes and results. In this context, there is a quality management department and there are also many initiatives and plans for improving quality management. Several documents and specific scientific surveys were developed within the NIS, such as:

- Quality guidelines are available to the staff at headquarters and county and regional statistical offices;
- User satisfaction surveys 3-4 years and a permanent user satisfaction survey running on the NSI website;
- Quality commitment on the website;
- User / producer oriented quality reports;
- Respondent burden surveys;
- Quality improvement of the statistical processes on data collection, data processing - Standard guide Romania (2008);
- Quality improvement of the statistical processes on data collection, data processing and data imputation - Standard guide Romania (2010);

However, there still seems to be a lack of coherent approach to quality management. The possibility of adopting a quality management framework, like the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence has been discussed, but no concrete plan is in force at the time speaking. Another clear conclusion that emerged during the debates within the Peer review exercise was the general necessity of increasing the competences within the institution in matters of quality management and quality assessment, both for the quality department staff and for the rest of the staff.

Improvement action 12.1 Quality Management SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis will be used as a tool to evaluate the current situation and identify the gaps and priority areas for future developments of the statistical quality management system. It will include consultations with National Statistical Council and COMSTAT to address issues that concern the entire National Statistical System, mainly related to capacity building and creation of tools for CoP observance.

Timeline:

09/2016

Improvement action 12.2 Developing a quality management plan

Developing a quality management integrated plan that has clear priorities and distinct deadlines for its each component and sub-component, based on the results of the SWOT analysis.

Timeline:

12/2017

13. The National Institute of Statistics should review its training programme with a focus on quality issues. This should be targeted at the needs of all staff, including staff of the territorial offices. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 3 and 4.)

Current situation:

Starting in 2003 and until now, 20 courses on quality have been held at the NIS headquarters, attended by 332 participants from the NIS central office.

Also, 11 persons attended ESTP courses on quality, organised by Eurostat.

Since only 3 courses on quality have been held during the last 3 years, in which 43 persons of the NIS central office attended, the professional training plan approved for 2015 provides for the organisation, with the support of the CNPS, of 4 courses in statistical data quality in the 4th quarter of 2015, to be attended by 28 persons from the NIS – central office and 78 persons from the territorial units.

Improvement action 13.1: Reviewing the annual training plan by including more quality management courses

The inclusion in the annual professional training plan for 2016 of some courses in the field of quality for the leading staff of the territorial statistical units.

Timeline:

03/2016

Improvement action 13.2: Establishing a group of trainers in the field of quality

The establishment of a group of trainers in the field of quality, at least one trainer for each region, for training the territorial statistical units' staff.

Timeline:

03/2017

Improvement action 13.3: Training of the territorial statistical units' staff in the field of quality

The organisation of training courses in the field of quality for minimum 25% of the territorial statistical units' staff by the end of 2017, according to the available financial resources.

Timeline:

12/2017

Improvement action 13.4: Training of the central office staff in the field of quality

The inclusion in the annual professional training plan of minimum 3 quality programmes for the NIS staff – central office

Timeline:

03/2016

14. The National Institute of Statistics should immediately start to implement quality reviews and quality audits, utilising the experience of other countries, in the first phase through pilot projects. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4, indicator 4.4.)

Current situation:

Concerning the **quality reviews**, the following documents are available:

- Quality guidelines;
- User / producer oriented quality reports and methodological norms regarding the compilation of the user oriented quality reports;
- User satisfaction questionnaires;
- Respondent burden questionnaires.

In the past years NIS has come upon difficulties regarding the financial and human resources necessary for the implementation of the **quality reviews and quality audits**.

Improvement action 14: Developing a pilot project and requesting technical assistance for the implementation of the quality reviews and quality audits

Developing a pilot project for the implementation of the **quality reviews and quality audits** that forms, at the same time, an input for the project proposed in improvement action 12. The result of the project is a methodology of conducting quality reviews and quality audits and an immediate consequence of this project will be the gradual increase of the number of statistical surveys which will be the subject of **quality reviews**.

Timeline:

06/2017

15. The National Institute of Statistics should develop performance indicators on response burden both for businesses and households. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 9, indicator 9.2.)

Current situation:

Some indicators referring to the response burden degree, disseminated through quality reports, are calculated for the statistical surveys addressed to the households of the population.

Starting in 2010, NIS has launched a web portal for online data collection for the legal units. This system has many facilities, such as: questionnaires pre-filled with information from the statistical business register, the respondent will be informed about the necessity to complete a form, receiving notifications to remind the respondent the deadlines for filling in the questionnaire, newsletter transmission, etc., meant precisely to reduce the response burden. Starting from this system, the possibility of implementing such procedures for the statistical surveys carried out through the web portal began to be studied.

Likewise, in recent years NIS has developed, and continues to do so presently, a series of methods for utilising data from administrative sources.

Improvement action 15: System of performance indicators on the response burden

Improving the system of performance indicators for measuring and managing the burden degree both for the surveys addressed to enterprises and for those addressed to the population households, which has to lead to identifying methods and instruments for reducing the response burden.

Timeline:

12/2016.

User engagement

16. The National Institute of Statistics should make proposals to strengthen the operational effectiveness of the National Statistical Council, including securing sufficient resources and appropriate appointments to meet its objectives of representing the interests of data providers, producers and users of official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 11, indicators 11.1 and 11.2.)

Current situation:

The National Statistical Council (CSN) is the highest forum for promoting and manifesting the official statistical activity at national level ensuring, through its structure, the engagement in the statistical process of the authorised representatives of the main categories of providers, producers and users of official statistical data and information. CSN has the role of ensuring the objective, transparent and scientific character of the methodologies, nomenclatures and classifications in conducting statistical surveys. It also plays a role in developing and approving statistical programmes taking into account users' needs.

In the recent years CSN has become less active in its key role also because of some difficulties in naming members within certain organisations. Also, due to austerity measures, the allowance of the members has been diminished and because of the amendments brought to the Law 226/2009 (from 2010) the allowance was eliminated. This led to low attendance in work meetings. The CSN Secretariat, ensured by the NIS, Public Policies Unit, made considerable efforts to maintain the Council operational, managing to ensure the minimum presence of 51%.

Improvement action 16: Proposal to amend the statistical Law No. 226/2009 on increasing efficiency of the National Statistical Council

Proposal to amend the Law No. 226/2009 with provisions which will allow strengthening the capacity and functionality of the National Statistical Council whose role will be extended to monitor the compliance with the main principles of the European statistics Code of Practice, in particular the professional independence of the National Statistical Institute, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, commitment to quality, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity, accessibility and clarity in carrying out statistical activities. The timeline refers to the date when NIS will submit the proposed amendments to the Government General Secretariat (GGS). After the submission and approval by the GGS, they will be sent to the Parliament. We cannot estimate when the Parliament approval will take place.

Timeline:

12/2015

17. The National Institute of Statistics should increase activities to raise statistical awareness and ensure more widespread use of official statistics within public administration and among decision makers at local, regional and national level, building on the training programmes for users of statistics and working with partners such as the Romanian Statistical Society and academic institutions. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 11.)

Current situation:

Currently, the National Institute of Statistics carries out activities that aim at increasing the statistical culture among data users: the section “Statistical culture” on the NIS website. Other activities dedicated to the increase and understand the statistical culture are the maintenance and daily updating of the NIS Facebook page, opening several Facebook pages for the statistical county offices, elaborating statistical flyers, organising presentations within speciality fairs (Indagra, SME-forum) as well as within some academic events (Career Days at ASE Bucharest, scientific seminars afferent to the project POS DRU “Performance and Excellence in doctoral and post-doctoral research in economic sciences in Romania”).

Thematic round tables are realised in partnership with research institutes, where representatives from ministries, from higher education institutions as well as from NIS are invited.

The National Institute of Statistics organised statistical courses for a series of public authorities (ANAF, ANRMAP) and intends to organise in the future such courses addressed to the public administration, having the necessary logistics and trainers for the organisation of these courses. Likewise, the NIS Leadership also decided on the elaboration of some statistical courses addressed to journalists.

Improvement action 17: Organising professional training courses in the field of statistics for the staff in the public administration in Romania

The elaboration of a plan regarding the organisation of professional training courses in the field of statistics according to the received requests, the organization of professional training courses for the staff in the public administration in Romania.

We will develop a portfolio of courses on statistics for statistical data users.

These courses will be determined after consultation and proposals received from the specialized departments of the NIS, and then be discussed and analyzed in COMSTAT (which consists of representatives of producers of official statistics) and CSN (which is composed of representatives from Romanian Academy, of specialized higher education institutions, research institutes, ministries, mass media) meetings.

Portfolio of approved courses will be disseminated to improve awareness of the statistical data users.

Depending on the requests received, quarterly training sessions in statistics will be organized.

Timeline:

12/2016

18. The National Institute of Statistics should develop the capacity to provide customised analysis of data, if necessary on a charging basis, and publish details of such analysis carried out. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15, indicator 15.3.)

Current situation:

Art. 34 of the Law of official statistics No. 226/2009, republished, contains specific provisions on the conditions and general rules for disseminating the data produced by the NIS outside the Annual National Statistical Programme, at users' requests through processing of already published data. Likewise, at users' requests, NIS and the territorial statistical offices are authorised to conduct new statistical surveys, analyses, publications and special statistical papers, other than those included in the Annual National Statistical Programme, on contract basis. The prices charged must cover the involved expenses and the sums received remain in NIS and in the territorial statistical offices' custody, sums from which expenses can be made according to legal provisions.

Although these activities are present in the portfolio of a compartment within the NIS, the capacity of this compartment is limited in terms of human resources. In order to carry out this kind of surveys and analyses at users' requests, the creation of an adequate infrastructure and the improvement of specific competences are imposed.

Improvement action 18: Developing the capacity to elaborate studies and analyses at request

Developing a plan of measures that should lead to increase the capacity of the NIS and of the territorial statistical units to provide to users, at their request, statistical studies and analyses and to publish the relevant information of these studies and analyses.

Timeline:

06/2016

Dissemination

19. The release calendar covering official statistics produced by the National Institute of Statistics should include the precise time and date of all statistical releases, be flexible and searchable by theme, and be regularly updated during the year. The procedure for updating the calendar should also be published. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 13, indicators 13.2 and 13.4.)

Current situation:

On its website, NIS annually publishes the calendar of press releases, a calendar that is drawn up on the basis of the deadlines in the Annual National Statistical Programme and contains the title of the press release, the reference period, the date of issuance. The monthly calendar has been established and is available on the NIS website since December of the previous year.

If there is a change in the date of issuance, this is announced 24 hours before the date in the calendar, specifying the new date of issuance.

The press releases of NIS are directly sent by the Press Office of NIS to the accredited media and the Ministries and are published online at 10:00 a.m. in their specially dedicated section. On the website there is also the archive of these press releases, which are grouped by statistical themes.

Improvement action 19.1: Improving the calendar of press releases

Revising the way in which the calendar of press releases will be available on the website starting with 2016, including new searching/sorting functionalities by socio-economic theme and release period, including the planned and actual release date and time. The calendar will be regularly updated during the year.

Timeline :

01/2016

Improvement action 19.2: Publishing the procedure for the production/revision of press release calendars

Drawing up and adopting the procedure for the production/revision of press release calendars, which will be published on the NIS website.

Timeline:

01/2016

20. The National Institute of Statistics should work towards extending the release calendar to cover all official statistics produced by Other National Authorities. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.5, and Principle 13, indicator 13.2.)

Current situation:

The press release calendar on the NIS website only covers the statistics published by NIS. The official statistics produced by Other National Authorities (ONA) are published on their own websites. Most producers of official statistics do not publish a release calendar.

Improvement action 20: Extend the release calendar to cover all official statistics produced by Other National Authorities

The obligation to provide the dates of issuance of press releases is to be included in the memoranda signed with other producers of statistics (see improvement action 2.2). Talks with other producers of official statistics in order for them to produce their own dissemination calendar and the drawing up by NIS of a calendar that will include all statistics produced within the National Statistical System.

Timeline:

Gradually until 06/2019

21. The National Institute of Statistics should make a clear distinction between the processes for correction of errors in statistics that have already been published, and planned revisions due to other reasons, preferably in two separate policies that are published on the website. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicators 6.3 and 6.6, and Principle 8, indicator 8.6.)

Current situation:

NIS has internal procedures for correcting the potential errors both as regards the published statistics and as regards the planned revisions of statistics.

This year, NIS has adopted the data revision policy and has published it on the website of the institute. Within this policy, a clear distinction is made between the different types of revisions, namely planned and unplanned revisions.

Improvement action 21: Develop an error treatment policy

Developing an error treatment policy based on the good practices used in the European Statistical System. The policy will be published on the NIS website.

Timeline:

06/2016

22. Pre-release of statistics to Ministries by the National Institute of Statistics and Other National Authorities should be abolished, or be restricted to relevant Ministries for individual releases based on need. The list of those with pre-release access should be published on the website for each release. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.7.)

Current situation:

At present, there are public authorities that receive the press releases before 10:00 a.m. On the website of NIS there is no list of these authorities. Access to statistical data is simultaneous for all categories of users.

Embargoed NIS press releases are sent, one hour before their official publication, to the press and the relevant central public administration institutions in order for them to prepare analyses and materials on these statistical data, as well as for their information.

We note that the re-distribution of the data contained in the NIS press releases before the embargo time, as long as these data are not accessible to all users, is forbidden.

Starting august 2015 the public authorities have been notified of the change and that all press releases will be available to all statistical data users from 9:00 a.m. local time.

Improvement action 22: Abolish pre-releases

Changing the hour of issuance of press releases, by NIS, to 9:00 a.m., from 1 October 2015 onwards, and notifying all press release beneficiaries of the change in the hour of issuance of press releases by NIS. By changing the hour of issuance of press releases all statistical users will receive the press releases at the same time. Also at 9:00 a.m. the press release will be published on NIS website.

Timeline:

10/2015

23. Pre-release of statistics to media by the National Institute of Statistics and Other National Authorities should be abolished, or be within controlled conditions of access. The list of those with pre-release access should be published on the website for each release. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicator 6.7.)

Current situation:

At present, there are journalists who receive the press releases before 10:00 a.m. On the website of NIS there is no list of these journalists.

Starting august 2015 the journalists have been notified of the change and that all press releases will be available to all statistical data users from 9:00 a.m. local time.

Improvement action 23: Abolish pre-releases

Changing the hour of issuance of press releases, by NIS, to 9:00 a.m., from 1 October 2015 onwards, and notifying all press release beneficiaries of the change in the hour of issuance of press releases by NIS. By changing the hour of issuance of press releases all statistical users will receive the press releases at the same time. Also at 9:00 a.m. the press release will be published on NIS website.

Timeline:

10/2015

24. The National Institute of Statistics and all Other National Authorities should release within Romania all statistics supplied directly to Eurostat, and these statistics should be subject to routine statistical release procedures. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6, indicators 6.5 and 6.7.)

Current situation:

The Annual National Statistical Programme covers the statistical activities performed by NIS and other producers of official statistics. For some of these, a series of official statistics which are sent to Eurostat by other producers of official statistics and which are not released in Romania are included. The peer reviewers consider that these statistics should also be published in Romania at the same time as they are sent to Eurostat and that they should be subject to routine statistical release procedures.

Improvement action 24: Dissemination of statistics supplied directly to Eurostat

All statistics supplied directly to Eurostat will be released within Romania and subject to routine statistical release procedures. The obligation to disseminate all official statistics provided to Eurostat, in Romania is to be included in the memoranda signed with other producers of official statistics (see also improvement action 2.2). After redefining other producers of official statistics, meetings will be organised with them in order to establish the procedures for the dissemination of all official statistics through press releases, on the NIS website as well as on the websites of the producers of official statistics (see also improvement action 20).

Timeline:

Gradually until 06/2019

25. The National Institute of Statistics should review the “Strategy for streamlining the statistical information dissemination system”, and develop an overarching dissemination policy, incorporating issues related to handling of provisional and final data, pre-release access arrangements, microdata access, customised analysis and guidance on good practice in presentation of statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15, indicator 15.2.)

Current situation:

NIS has drawn up a document called “Strategy for streamlining the statistical information dissemination system”.

The primary objectives of the current dissemination strategy are to improve and expand the dissemination of statistical publications and information, to improve the image of Romanian official statistics and the National Institute of Statistics, and to intensify the modern activities related to statistical marketing and statistical product promotion.

Another important item of the dissemination strategy is the implementation of client-oriented product dissemination.

Improvement action 25: Revision of the Strategy for streamlining the statistical information dissemination system by including the recommendations of peer reviewers

The Strategy for streamlining the statistical information dissemination system will be improved as regards the dissemination of provisional and final data, with the participation of the producers of statistical data.

The adequate updates in terms of the access of researchers to micro-data will be made.

Customised analysis and guidance on good practice in presentation of statistics will also be included in the Strategy.

Timeline:

03/2016

26. The National Institute of Statistics should, in consultation with users, develop a programme to promote and facilitate safe access to microdata, raise awareness of potential benefits, improve the current arrangements for access to microdata and establish safe centre(s) for such access. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15, indicator 15.4.)

Current situation:

Basic information on the legal framework, national and European rules related to access to micro-data and available micro-data sets is included in a separate section on the NIS website. NIS does not have a “Safe center” for micro-data access.

Due to the confidential nature of micro-data, direct access to anonymised data is only provided for scientific research projects in accordance with the European and national legislation concerned, by means of an access contract.

In principle, access is limited to universities, research institutes, national institutes of statistics, central banks of the EU and of euro zone countries, as well as to the European Central Bank. No direct access to micro-data can be given to individuals.

Access to micro-data is only allowed for the research projects conducted on behalf of an organisation that is accredited to perform scientific research projects, and solely for its staff members, who sign a contract with NIS. The requests to amend the contracts are made by the contractor before the contract expires.

The time period between the moment when an access request is received and the final delivery of micro-data to the contractor (on CD-ROM) is, on average, 8 weeks. During this period, the following activities are performed: the analysis of the data request, the drawing up of the contract, the preparation of the micro-data and the related metadata.

Improvement action 26: Action plan for promoting and facilitating access to microdata

An action plan to promote the awareness and the benefits to access statistical microdata and to create the necessary infrastructure facilitating access to micro-data via a “Safe Centre” within NIS, for scientific research purposes, while complying with the provisions of European regulations and the national legislation in force will be developed.

Timeline:

12/2017