



European Statistical System Peer Reviews

Questionnaire on cooperation/level of integration achieved by the ESS

**Final version
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Cooperation/level of integration achieved by the ESS

Background

As well as assessing the compliance of the NSS with the principles of the CoP, this round of ESS reviews will include a stock take of:

1. the effectiveness and efficiency of the coordination activity in each NSS
2. the contribution that NSSs make to an integrated, collaborative ESS.

The two elements will be based on responses to two new self-assessment questionnaires. This structure has been adopted in order to:

- (i) reinforce the distinction between the Principles of the Code, and the new elements to be reviewed;
- (ii) give more flexibility to the countries, in their task of filling in the questionnaires, and to the reviewers in their task of analysing the answers.

Cooperation/level of integration

With cooperation/level of integration within the ESS it is meant the extent to which Member States act as part of the ESS and take advantage of belonging to a system.

The main goal of this questionnaire is to assess the cooperation/level of integration of the ESS and to evaluate its potential for further integrate the production of European statistics.

There are many drivers for emphasising and strengthening the integration of the ESS:

- (i) To identify good practices and learn from others, to improve the efficiency of the national systems and to assure a better convergence within the ESS;
- (ii) To avoid redundancy, exploit synergies, and increase economy of scale and application of common solutions;
- (iii) To make it possible to participate to the design of international recommendations, to make them relevant and to learn about best practices;
- (iv) To improve the standardisation of production processes and enhance the application of similar tools and solutions;
- (v) To improve the exchange, reuse and timeliness of data and metadata;
- (vi) To enhance a common image of the ESS and improve accessibility and clarity; and
- (vii) To assess the extent the ESS is working as a real integrated system, and to provide appropriate input to the governance mechanisms of the ESS (ESSC, ESGAB and ESAC),

The main elements of integration, in the ESS context, are:

1. Benchmarking/benchlearning of the National Statistical Institute with other National Statistical Institute/Authority within the ESS.
2. Common projects or cooperation agreements.
3. Policy for participating in international meetings.
4. Policy for exchanging staff.
5. Addressing ESS priorities and regulations.

6. Ensuring that the design of new statistical projects or the redesigning of existing statistical projects are informed by solutions implemented in other countries/at ESS level.
7. Use of a statistical business process model.
8. Use of EuroGroups Register (EGR).
9. Policy on data sharing.
10. Use of European standards for data and metadata exchange.
11. A website with updated key European indicators and links to other ESS websites; and the use of English.

Organisation of the questionnaire and how to fill it in

The questions have been organised following the four business domains of a Statistical Office as developed by the Sponsorship on Standardisation.

According to this model the ESS functions can be divided into:

1. Strategy,
2. Design
3. Process chain management and
4. Process chain implementation.

This four-fold framework is used to structure the 11 main elements of the questionnaire and the 23 questions. A rationale behind the choice of each of the 11 main elements is also provided.

The questionnaire concludes with sections in which particular issues can be highlighted. Statistical authorities are requested to reflect upon improvement actions, to describe good practices and innovative activities, and to indicate a time frame towards their implementation, with particular emphasis on issues to be developed at national and European level. These sections are “Strengths and weaknesses” and “Follow-up”.

A NSI is asked to assess its experience in relation to each statement by filling in according to a three level scale:

- No (not implemented): the activity has not been implemented and there is no evidence related to its implementation. An explanation for future plans of implementation or any reason why the implementation of the activity is not applicable could be given in “please specify”.
- Yes, partly (partly implemented): this intermediate scale (“partly”) can be used, i.e., in cases where the activity is implemented in some or relevant areas or is deficiently implemented but the respective evidence is available.

- Yes (fully implemented): the activity is systematically implemented throughout the organization and there is strong and clear evidence that supports and documents its implementation. In this case implementation of the activity at domain/survey level is verifiable systematically in all/most relevant areas for the organization.

As stated above, in both options, partly implemented and fully implemented it is important to clearly describe the activities in place, using examples and key wording. It is recommended to include in the answer references and links to supporting documentation or any type of evidence (e.g. websites, electronic tools). Explanations are limited to 3000 characters (i.e. around one page). Documents itself should only be made available during the interview with the peer reviewers. Peer reviewers might ask during the country visit for clarification and evidence in relation to the replies given in the questionnaire and this should be made available to them.

In cases where the answer to the “Please specify” is the same as the one already provided in a different question there is no need of repeating the answer and the reply “See answer to question” would be enough.

If any question is misleading or need clarification you can contact ESTAT-ESS-PEER-REVIEWS@ec.europa.eu.

Questionnaire on cooperation/level of integration achieved by the ESS

Strategy

1. Benchmarking/benchlearning/coaching of the National Statistical Institute with National Statistical Authorities of other ESS countries. National Statistical Institutes carry out benchmarking, benchlearning or coaching activities with Statistical authorities of other ESS countries. The results of the benchmarking/benchlearning/coaching are assessed and, when applicable, implemented.

Rationale: Benchmarking, benchlearning and coaching serves to identify good practices, to improve the efficiency of the national systems and to assure a better convergence within the ESS.

Relation with ESS QAF: Outside of the scope of ESS QAF.

1.1	Within the last three years, the National Statistical Institute has carried out benchmarking, benchlearning or coaching activities with other Statistical Authorities within the ESS		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, which other(s) Statistical Authorities within the ESS has been used for benchmarking/benchlearning/coaching, what are the lessons learned, which actions have been implemented?):		

2. Common projects or cooperation agreements. National statistical authorities have common projects or cooperation agreements with National statistical authorities of other countries within the ESS for the development, production or dissemination of European Statistics (e.g. ESS VIP projects, ESSnets, centres of competence or other similar initiatives) and their recommendations are implemented, when applicable. Human and financial resources for these projects and cooperation agreements are reflected in the National Statistical Programme.

Rationale: Avoid redundancy, exploit synergies, and increase economy of scale and application of common solutions.

Relation with ESS QAF Question 2.1 linked to ESS QAF method 14.5.2.

2.1	The NSI participates in common projects with National statistical authorities of other countries within the ESS for the development, production or dissemination of European Statistics (e.g. ESSnets or other similar initiatives)	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
Please specify (e.g. support documentation, type of cooperation agreement, area(s) of cooperation, length of the cooperation agreements):				
2.2	<p>Within the last three years, the NSI has implemented recommendations from common projects for the development, production or dissemination of European Statistics and/or</p> <p>Within the next three years, there are plans to implement recommendations from common projects for the development, production or dissemination of European Statistics</p> <p>(e.g. ESSnets, ESS VIP projects, centres of competence or other similar initiatives)</p>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
Please specify (e.g. support documentation, recommendations implemented, improvements achieved, project to be implemented, timeline ...):				
2.3	The NSI Statistical Programme includes human and financial resources to participate in common projects for the development, production or dissemination of European Statistics	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
Please specify (e.g. support documentation, number of persons/year, total amount/year, year(s))				

3. Policy for participating in international meetings. There is a policy supporting and promoting the participation of the staff in international meetings and fora (conferences, workshops, working groups, task forces, networks, sponsorships, alliances, ESSnets). Staff are encouraged to attend and present papers on statistical methods and tools in international meetings and fora. The meetings are well prepared and there is a policy for disseminating the minutes and implementing the conclusions. The policy is applied by means of concrete actions and behaviours.

Rationale: Make it possible to participate to the design of international recommendations, to make them relevant and to learn about best practices.

Relation with ESS QAF Question 3.1 linked to ESS QAF methods 7.2.5, 7.7.2, 7.7.3, 7.7.4 and 8.6.2.

3.1	The NSI has a policy to support and promote the participation of staff in international meetings and fora		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, how the policy is applied, what are the concrete actions and behaviours to encourage the staff to attend and present papers)		
3.2	There is a policy to prepare the meetings and to disseminate the conclusions		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, how the policy is applied, which are the concrete actions and behaviours to assure the preparation of the meetings and the dissemination of the results)		
3.3	There is a policy to implement the conclusions of the meetings		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, how the policy is applied, what are the concrete actions and behaviours to assure the implementation of the conclusions)		

4. Policy for exchanging staff. A policy to promote the exchange of staff with Statistical Authorities of other countries within the ESS is in place. The policy is applied by means of concrete actions and behaviours.

Rationale: To learn from others, to spread good practices and create networks.

Relation with ESS QAF: Outside of the scope of ESS QAF.

4.1	The NSI has a policy to promote the exchange of staff with Statistical Authorities of other countries within the ESS		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, how the policy is applied, which are the concrete actions and behaviours to promote the exchange of staff)		

Design

5. ESS priorities and regulations. Procedures to take into account ESS priorities are established and applied. ESS Regulations are fully implemented. There are no derogations or the existing derogations are limited in time and scope and duly justified.

Rationale: Key element to show that the ESS is working as a real integrated system.

Relation with ESS QAF: Outside of the scope of ESS QAF.

5.1	Procedures to take into account ESS priorities are established and applied		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, type of procedure(s), tools and measures applied to assure that ESS priorities are taken into account)		
5.2	ESS Regulations are fully implemented without derogations		
	No		Yes
	Please specify (e.g. type of derogation, in which domain(s), for how long)		
5.3	For the ESS Regulations currently under discussion, no derogations are requested		
	No		Yes
	Please specify (e.g. type of derogation, in which domain(s), for how long)		

6. Design a new statistical project or redesign a current statistical project.

When designing a new statistical project or redesigning a current statistical project (selection of data sources, data processing, validation, data transmission, dissemination ...), solutions implemented in other countries/at ESS level are assessed and, if appropriate, taken into account.

Rationale: Improve efficiency by exploiting synergies and increasing economy of scale.

Relation with ESS QAF: Outside of the scope of ESS QAF.

6.1	When designing a new statistical project or redesigning a current statistical project, solutions implemented in other countries/at ESS level are assessed and, if appropriate, taken into account for their implementation		
	No	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, how and when the ESS solutions are assessed and, if, appropriate, implemented)		

Process chain management

7. Use of a statistical business process model. Statistical Authorities adopt and implement a statistical business process model, e.g. GSBPM.

Rationale: Improve the standardisation of production processes and enhance the application of similar tools and solutions.

Relation with ESS QAF: Linked to ESS QAF methods 4.1.3, 7.1.1, 7.2.2, 10.4.1 and 10.4.2.

7.1	The NSI has implemented a statistical business process model		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation: which model, to what extent)		

Process chain implementation

Data collection:

8. Use of EuroGroups Register (EGR). The EuroGroup (EGR) register is used as a source to improve the quality of the national business register, the sampling business frame and the Foreign investments survey.

Rationale: The EGR is an ESS tool which increases consistency and quality of the business statistics.

Relation with ESS QAF: Linked to ESS QAF methods 7.3.1 and 7.3.2..

8.1	The EuroGroup (EGR) register is used as a source to improve the quality of the national business register, the sampling business frame and the Foreign investments survey		
	No	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation)		

9. Policy on data sharing. There is a policy to share data with Statistical Authorities of other countries within the ESS. This policy is strengthened in areas of mutual interest such as flow and mirror statistics (migration, external trade ...). The policy is applied by means of concrete actions and behaviours.

Rationale: Avoid redundancy, exploit synergies, increase economy of scale and improve data quality.

Relation with ESS QAF: Linked to ESS QAF methods 14.5.1, 14.5.2, 14.5.4 and 14.5.5.

9.1	The NSI has a policy to share data with Statistical Authorities of other countries within the ESS		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, how the policy is applied, which are the concrete actions and behaviours to exchange the data, in which areas is the data exchanged, with which frequency)		

Data processing and analysis:

10. Use of European standards for data and metadata exchange. Data and metadata are structured and exchanged in accordance with European technical and statistical standards. These include the use of technical standards such as SDMX or data/metadata structure definitions (including standard code lists) and the use of shared services and IT applications such as the Single Entry Point (Edamis), the SDMX-Reference Infrastructure (SDMX-RI) or the ESS Metadata Handler.

Rationale: improve the exchange, reuse and timeliness of data and metadata; improve the international consistency of data/metadata exchange; reduce source of errors.

Relation with ESS QAF: Linked to ESS QAF methods corresponding to indicators 10.4 and 15.5. of the CoP

10.1	The Single Entry Point for transmitting data and metadata is used		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, domain/statistics where the Single Entry Point is not used):		
10.2	The SDMX RI for data and metadata exchange is used		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, domain/statistics where SDMX RI is not used):		
10.3	The SDMX standards (data/metadata structure definitions) for data and metadata exchange, including the ESMS and ESQRS, are used.		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, domain/statistics where SDMX standards, including ESMS and ESQRS, are not used):		
10.4	The ESS Metadata Handler (National Reference Metadata Editor) is used for metadata production, exchange and dissemination		
	No	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, where the ESS Metadata Handler (National Reference Metadata Editor) is not used)		

Dissemination; storage:

11. Website with updated key European indicators, links to other ESS websites and use of English. The website of the Statistical Authorities presents updated key European indicators and allows for easy access to websites of Statistical Authorities of other countries and to the ESS and Eurostat websites. The main contents of the web site are available in English. Updated metadata, at least of the key statistical processes, are disseminated in English.

In particular the website:

- Has a section which is set up and maintained, preferably linked from the home page, with a common set of institutional information about the ESS and a common set of European tables, in their own languages (Recommendations 1 of the Sponsorship on Communication)
- Has a link to the ESS website (Recommendation 3 of the Sponsorship on Communication).

Rationale: enhance a common image of the ESS and improve accessibility and clarity.

Relation with ESS QAF: Linked to ESS QAF method 15.1.1.

11.1	The website present updated key European indicators		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, key indicators disseminated, where they are placed, frequency and method of updating):		
11.2	The website has a section with updated institutional information about the ESS as well as links to the ESS website and to websites of other ESS authorities		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, where the section is placed, frequency and method of updating, links available, where they are placed)		
11.3	The main contents of the website are available in English and kept updated		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. documents which are available in English, where they are available, frequency and method of updating)		
11.4	Updated metadata of the key statistical processes are disseminated in English		
	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, partly	Yes
	Please specify (e.g. support documentation, which statistical processes are disseminated in English, where they are available, frequency and method of updating)		

Strengths and weaknesses.

12	Please state below the main area of <i>strength</i> of your organisation with regard to its cooperation/level of integration in the ESS
13	Please state below the main area of <i>weakness</i> of your organisation with regard to its cooperation/level of integration in the ESS

Follow up.

14	On the basis of the above mentioned actions/sentences please list below actions that you would like to take which are suited to improve your organisation with regard to its cooperation/level of integration in the ESS. Actions and time frame:
15	Please identify below possible actions at European level suited to improve your organisation with regard to its cooperation/level of integration in the ESS. Actions and time frame:
16	Please identify below possible actions at European level suited to improve the cooperation/level of integration of the ESS as a whole. Actions and time frame: