



**PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND *STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*
IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

PEER REVIEWER'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthening standards and accountability across the statistical system

- 1. The SSO should establish and chair a Coordination Committee for the NSS responsible for promoting a shared interpretation of the CoP as it applies to all relevant national authorities and in particular of its principle of professional independence. (CoP, Principle 1 and Coordination)***

Current situation

The statistical system of the country is coordinated through the exercise of the functions of the State Statistical Office stipulated in the Law on State Statistics. The State Statistical Office is the primary producer of official statistics in the country and coordinator of the statistical system. This role is performed primarily in the procedure for preparation and adoption of the Programme of Statistical Surveys and annual amendments to the programme, the preparation of the annual report on the implementation of the statistical programme, etc. A certain form of coordination is also carried out by signing cooperation agreements (State Statistical Office, National Bank, Ministry of Finance), as well as through the establishment of ad hoc working groups on certain subjects of common interest. However, there is no formal body that would be systematically dedicated to this important issue.

Improvement action 1.1: Amending the Law on State statistics

SSO will undertake steps to revise the Law on State Statistics to cover the establishment of a Coordination Committee and define its responsibilities.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement action 1.2: Establishment of a Coordination Committee for the NSS

SSO will identify relevant stakeholders to be part of the Coordination Committee and establish the Coordination Committee.

TIMELINE:

2019

2. *Within the context of the Coordination Committee, the SSO should agree arrangements to assess systematically, and record, compliance with the CoP by all relevant national authorities. (CoP, Principle 1 and Coordination)*

Current situation

The coordination tools and mechanisms in place include: consultations about the scope and content of the Programme of Statistical Surveys, communication in the process of preparation of the Annual Report on the implementation of statistical surveys according to the Programme, communication in the process of self-assessment with Eurostat's SMIS+ tool, joint working groups for cooperation in common statistics-related topics, working group for the National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) for Chapter 18-Statistics and coordination of international statistical cooperation, coordination of data transmission to Eurostat (via eDamis) and to other international statistical organisations, coordination of project planning and programming where the SSO and other authorised bodies participate, training courses, etc.

Improvement action 2.1: Reaching agreements for assessing systematically and recording compliance with the CoP

SSO will agree on the procedures for each member of the NSS to report on the implementation of the CoP, which will be facilitated through the Coordination Committee.

TIMELINE:

2020

3. The Ministry of Finance should appoint a head of statistics at a senior level with responsibility and authority in relation to all official statistics for which the Ministry is responsible. (CoP, Principle 1)

Current situation

There is no "statistical head" appointed at a senior level with specific responsibility and authority over all decisions about the scope, methodology and presentation of official statistics produced within the Ministry.

Improvement action:3.1: Appointment of a head of statistics at a senior level in the Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Finance will appoint as a "head of statistics" a qualified and experienced official with authority over all decisions about the scope, methodology and presentation of official statistics produced by the Ministry.

TIMELINE:

2019

4. The SSO, supported by the Statistical Council, should promote a shared brand name or logo for the whole of the NSS so that users can identify statistics as being official statistics produced in accordance with the CoP. (CoP, Principles 6 and 15)

Current situation

Many of the experts who gave evidence to the PR team noted that awareness of official statistics and of the existence of a national statistical system that extends beyond the SSO were very limited. The SSO is taking some imaginative steps to address this including a programme of work with schools. However, it is not just the external awareness that needs to be addressed. Staff in the SSO and particularly in ONAs often have only a broad understanding of the concept of a national statistical system, or national statistical service. With these considerations in mind, the PR team saw merit in the SSO actively promoting a shared brand name or logo for the whole of the national statistical system. This might in time be augmented by a common look and style for statistical releases, standard release practices, a shared advance release calendar, and standard statements on all relevant statistics, such as that they are a product of the national statistical system and produced in compliance with the CoP. In discussion with the SSO, it was suggested that the current MAKSTAT label, currently used on the SSO website, might be developed into a wider logo and identity for official statistics.

Improvement action: 4.1 Shared brand name and logo for the whole of the NSS

A shared brand name and logo of the National Statistical System will be established.

TIMELINE:

2017 - implemented

Improvement action 4.2: Secured copyright to the new logo

The Legal Affairs Unit of the SSO will undertake necessary legal proceedings and secure copyright to the new logo.

TIMELINE:

2017 - implemented

Improvement action 4.3: Promotion of the shared brand name and logo for the whole national statistical system

The SSO will inform all other national authorities and users on using the shared brand name and logo through SSO web site, promotional events and official communication.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement action 4.4: Usage of the shared brand name and logo

4.4. The Coordination Committee will be empowered to monitor the use of the shared brand by all national authorities and act accordingly to further empower, promote and encourage the use.

TIMELINE:

2019

5. The SSO should take further steps to ensure that the meaning and importance of the requirements in the CoP, particularly Principle 1 on professional independence, are fully understood at the top levels of government. (CoP, Principle 1 and others)

Current situation

The independence of the State Statistical Office is guaranteed by the Law on State Statistics (Official Gazette No. 74/97, 21/07, 51/11, 104/13, 42/14, 192/2015 and 27/16). The Law (http://www.stat.gov.mk/ZakonZaStatistika_en.aspx) is the main legal basis for the operation of the SSO and the national statistical system. In accordance with the Law, the SSO is an independent, professional administrative organisation with legal personality and powers established by this and other laws. Also, the basic Law on Organisation and Operation of State Administrative Bodies (Official Gazette No. 58/00, 44/02,82/08,167/10 and 51/11) stipulates that the SSO is an independent, professional administrative organisation.

Improvement actions 5.1: Identifying best practices in communicating the meaning and importance of requirements in the CoP with the top levels of government

SSO will identify best practices regarding the communicating of the principles and requirements of the CoP with the top levels of government to ensure that the meaning and importance of the requirements are fully understood at the highest levels of public administration.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement actions 5.2: Implementing the best practices for full understanding of the meaning and importance of CoP at the top levels of government

SSO will implement best practices regarding the communication with the top levels of government to ensure that the meaning and importance of the requirements in the CoP are fully understood

TIMELINE:

2019

6. The relevant authorities should give high priority to supporting the SSO in planning and delivering the next population and housing census to be conducted as a statistical operation in full compliance with the CoP and European statistical standards. (CoP, Principles 1, 11 and 12)

Current situation

The preparation, organisation and implementation of the forthcoming Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2021 is a statistical activity of outstanding national interest and priority. The requirements are specifically directed towards the SSO as the leading national institution responsible for the Census. Comprehensive and detailed analysis, information, appropriate conditions, as well as adequate support and participation of all relevant institutions in the country, starting from the Government, are necessary for conducting the Census.

Therefore, according to its general meaning, the Census has always been regulated by a special Law on Census, which is adopted by the Assembly. In this respect, of particular importance in the phase of preparation of the Law for the forthcoming Census 2021 is that maximum support be provided to statistical professionalism and independence, and the role of the SSO in the Census should not only be noted in the Law, it should be accepted, supported and understood by all stakeholders in the system.

Preparatory activities in the State Statistical Office have been initiated and are ongoing.

With respect to the activities within its competence, the SSO has the capacity, experience and knowledge and is fully prepared to meet the challenge of conducting the largest and most complex statistical operation in accordance with international recommendations and standards, when the necessary conditions for its implementation have been met.

Improvement action 6.1: Informing the Government about the forthcoming Census of Population, Households and Dwellings

Improvement action 6.1: Informing the Government about the forthcoming Census of Population, Households and Dwellings

SSO will prepare information for the Government concerning the method that will be used for the forthcoming Census of Population, Households and Dwellings which is the combined method that will need extensive use of administrative data. The Government will also be informed that the methodology for the Census will be completely compliant with the EU/UNECE Census recommendations.

TIMELINE:

Q/IV 2017

7. The SSO should prioritise the ongoing transition from reliance on survey data to the exploitation of administrative data sources wherever possible, including in the design of the next population and housing census. (CoP, indicators 8.7-8.9 and 10.3)

Current situation

The strategic goal of the SSO as a national coordinator of the statistical system in the country is the increased use of administrative data sets for statistical purposes, especially for the forthcoming Census of Population, Households and Dwellings. In accordance with Articles 24 and 25 of the Law on State Statistics ("Official Gazette" No. 54/1997, 21/2007, 51/2011, 104/2013, 42/2014, 192/2015 and 27/16), the place and the role of the SSO as a user of data from holders of administrative data sets is clearly defined.

To ensure implementation of this legal obligation, bilateral agreements / memoranda have been signed between the SSO and holders of administrative data on the use of data for statistical purposes, with the following institutions: Central register, National Bank, Agency for Electronic Communications, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Science, Institute of Public Health, Office for Civil Registration, Public Revenue Office, Employment Agency, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, Health Insurance Fund, Customs Administration.

These memoranda cover topics related to: the format of submission of data from administrative sources, content of the required data, method of data delivery, etc.

Within the Twinning Project under national IPA 2012 (with Italian ISTAT as main twinning partner and the Slovenian NSI as junior partner), relevant expertise and technical support has been provided by an expert on the assessment and analysis of opportunities for application and quality assessment of available administrative data sources for census purposes.

Assessment of the quality of administrative sources from the following institutions was carried out: Ministry of Interior, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, Health Insurance Fund, Employment Agency and the Ministry of Education and Science.

Improvement actions 7.1: Identification of new administrative data sources

SSO will further identify potential administrative data sources that can feasibly replace survey data.

TIMELINE:

2019

Improvement actions 7.2: Updated /newly signed agreements on usage of administrative data sources for the SSO

In the updated/newly signed agreements SSO will include articles that stipulate joint efforts to identify and resolve the possible weaknesses in the scope and data quality. At least three agreements will be updated/newly signed.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement actions 7.3: Increased usage of administrative data sources accompanied by quality reporting

SSO will increase the number of statistical surveys based on administrative data sources accompanied by enhanced quality reporting. At least two surveys will be fully or partly based on administrative data.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement actions 7.4: Replacement of surveys by administrative data sources

SSO will abolish field data collection with a pace depending on other improvement actions for recommendation 7.

TIMELINE:

2020

8. The SSO should develop procedures and agreements to enable it better to assess the quality of the administrative data from which official statistics are produced. (CoP, indicators 4.2 and 8.7-8.9)

Current situation

The strategic goal of the SSO is to reduce the burden on the reporting units. One way to reduce the workload is increased use of administrative data sources. According to Article 25 of the Law on State Statistics, holders of administrative data sets have an obligation to provide the SSO with data included in their data sets. According to Article 24-b, the holders of administrative data are obliged to make their data available to the SSO. To ensure the implementation of this legal obligation, bilateral agreements have been signed between the SSO and holders of administrative data on the utilisation of the data for statistical purposes. Memoranda have been signed with the following institutions: Central Registry, National Bank, Agency for Electronic Communications, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Finance, the Institute for Public Health and the Office for Civil Registration, the Public Revenue Office, Employment Agency, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, Customs Administration and Community of Local Self-Government Units.

These memoranda cover topics related to: format of data delivery from administrative data sources to the SSO, content of data and periodicity for data delivery.

Inter-institutional collaboration and analysis of administrative data in terms of assessing the statistical concepts and definitions have been crucial in the procedure for obtaining data from administrative sources. Received databases include predefined variables, which are adjusted to the statistical concepts and definitions and are defined in inter-institutional cooperation. The variables included in administrative databases are delivered to the SSO on a regular basis and are subject to additional statistical processing.

Improvement action 8.1: Identifying good practice in assessing the quality of administrative data sources

The SSO will establish a working group to explore the good practices in the ESS for assessing the quality of administrative data. As an outcome, a report will be prepared.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement action 8.2: Preparation of procedures for assessing the quality of administrative data

The SSO will develop a procedure and a questionnaire for assessing the quality of administrative data.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement action 8.3: Implementation of the procedure

The SSO will apply this procedure to assess the quality of at least three administrative data sources.

TIMELINE:

2018

9. *The role of the Statistical Council should be extended to support actively the proposed Coordination Committee in ensuring that all parts of the NSS are engaging effectively with, and responding to, all beneficial uses of official statistics. (CoP, Principle 11)*

Current situation

The position, composition and powers of the Statistical Council are laid down in the Law on State Statistics. The manner of the work of the Council is regulated by its Rules of Procedure. The functions of the Council, which are set out in the Law, are quite extensive and cover a wide range of issues of relevance to the statistical activity in the country from every aspect, including issues related to the coordination of the statistical system of the country.

Improvement action 9.1: Extending the role of the Statistical Council

SSO will take steps in the revised Law on State Statistics to extend the role of the Statistical Council by including duties to actively support the Coordination Committee.

TIMELINE:

2018

Developing a more outward facing approach

10. To stimulate further use and user engagement, the SSO should systematically document and publish on its website the requests and comments it receives from users and potential users; and similarly document and publish information on the use made of official statistics. (CoP, indicators 11.1 and 11.2)

Current situation

The SSO's compliance with the CoP is informed by their understanding and interpretation of the basic principles underpinning the Code. In respect of Statistical Outputs, these principles focus on meeting user needs and, in practice, this requires an interpretation of what use of statistics is to be seen as being of value.

The SSO has established a series of procedures and tools to deal with users' requests for clarifications, and to collect users' comments. Users' questions and answers by SSO, however, are not systematically summarised, analysed and made available publicly. In the view of the PR team, there would be real benefit, both to the SSO and to users, in drawing together and sharing information about what users are requesting, commenting on, or criticising. This would alert the SSO to emerging data needs, give SSO a platform to offer a coherent reply to requests that it cannot meet, help SSO to promote forthcoming improvements, and educate the users about the nature and limits of official statistics – and so build confidence among both institutions and the general public in the SSO as the provider of a transparent, user orientated, statistical service. This would enhance compliance with Principle 11 and other parts of the CoP and also demonstrate more generally the importance of official statistics to decision-making in all parts of a democratic society.

In the context of a country, and a public administration, that SSO notes as having relatively low statistical literacy, there is scope to broaden the beneficial use actually made of official statistics as well as to simply increase the number of users. The SSO has taken some initiatives of this kind. For example, it put in place some teaching activities, such as a "caravan" going from school to school around the country to explain statistics to school students, and organised some seminars jointly with the Chambers of Commerce, and information sessions intended for university students. However, much of this activity is about increasing awareness of the existence and value of official statistics, rather than increasing support to decision-makers, at local and national level, in their understanding and use of the data. The mission of the SSO is stated as being to produce and disseminate official statistics as "a basis for the process of decision making based on relevant information". At present the emphasis is on production and dissemination rather than on enhancing relevance to decision makers.

Improvement action 10.1: Publishing the requests and comments received from users

The SSO will develop procedures to document user requests and comments systematically, to analyse them, and to publish them on SSO web site.

TIMELINE:

2019

Improvement action 10.2: Information on use of official statistics

The SSO will use documented user requests and comments to publish an analysis of the official use of statistical data on the website.

TIMELINE:

2019

11. To better meet the demand for detailed data, the SSO should make available via its website any disaggregated data or tables it produces to meet requests from specific users. (CoP, Principle 6 and indicator 15.3)

Current situation

In addition to the data published on its website, the SSO recognises a growing demand for customised tables. In addition, it makes available tailored data sets on a regular basis to specific users. For example, some disaggregated data on trade statistics are prepared and sent monthly to the three Chambers of Commerce operating in the country, according to agreements signed between the SSO and each of the Chambers. The Chambers act as a dissemination relay of the SSO in the sense that they use the data, supplemented by market research, to serve their own clients, including potential investors, providing them with more focused data and/or analyses.

Some institutions request custom-designed output on a yearly basis, to support their preparation of publications on broad topics within their area of competence. One example is the Employment Agency, which requests tailored-made products to be incorporated in its annual macro-economic and labour market analysis. There are also many requests for data to be disaggregated at a lower geographical level, and disaggregated by categories of the variable such as product, activity, age, gender, ethnicity or mother tongue.

Although the SSO is active in meeting as many of these requests as it can, it does not appear to be maximising the value to be obtained from sharing these tailored outputs more widely. Users interested in market analysis, for example, might find it helpful to be able to access all relevant tailored data sets produced for other users in a centralised place. The CoP requires equal access to all users and it would be a breach of the CoP to refuse one user access to a tabulation or analysis prepared for another user. It is potentially a breach of the CoP not to make such tabulations readily available.

Improvement action 11.1: SSO will explore different options for improving equal access to data for all users

The SSO will analyse different arrangements for providing custom made tables and accordingly will create a special link to those data on SSO website to make data available for all users.

TIMELINE:

Q1/2018

Improvement action 11.2: Publishing on the SSO website data produced upon special request from specific users

The SSO will start publishing specific data produced on a regular basis according to signed agreements and data provided on ad-hoc request on the SSO website.

TIMELINE:

Q3/2018

12. The SSO should promote a broad concept of official statistics based on the potential value of the data to support decision making. (CoP, Principle 11)

Current situation

The SSO has adopted Eurostat's SMIS+ application as a tool for self-assessment, and regards the fulfilment of Eurostat expectations – as indicated by the SMIS+ application – as important evidence of compliance with the EU acquis and CoP. This has thus become a major influence on the scope of official statistics and development priorities in the country. In practice, and in line with legislation, the SSO defines official statistics as being those statistics included in the five-year Programme of Statistical Surveys, which is in turn very much driven by the aim to comply with the EU acquis. There are many examples of statistics required at national and local level that are not covered or regarded as priorities for development. Examples were mentioned in fields such as tourism, migration, social statistics, environment or trade. The SSO is not currently orientated towards introducing new statistical products that would not be part of the EU requirements, possibly because its own progress has been heavily influenced by the IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) programmes through which it receives support.

Improvement action 12.1: Promotion of a broad concept of official statistics

The SSO will focus on investigating needs for new products which will meet the needs of different types of users, such as NGOs, media, the business community, the scientific and research community, different government agencies and local self-government through workshops, seminars and presentations. SSO will promote the use of statistics for policy-making through events organised for users and the work programme.

TIMELINE:

Q4/2017

Improvement action 12.2: Introducing new products for existing and potentially new users

SSO will analyse the results of the improvement action 12.1 and possibly new pilot surveys and/or new products will be made available for users.

TIMELINE:

Q4/2019

13. The SSO should engage constructively with statistical data from non-official sources to better support users. (CoP, Principle 11 and indicator 14.4)

Current situation

One major impact of the digital revolution is the sudden availability of a vast range of quantitative information either as a by-product of online services or from organisations that previously would not have published data in an accessible form. Financial, retail, environmental, market research and academic sources are increasingly making data available via the Internet. Some NSIs and ONAs have started exploring the potential of these 'big data' sets as a source for producing, testing, or validating official statistics. But possibly of more importance is that the digital revolution is reshaping the environment in which users of statistics operate. With quick and easy access to data of different kinds and quality, users, including the general public, are faced with many data sources and will often not know the relative strengths and weaknesses of the different sources. To maintain trust in official statistics, and maximise their utility and use, NSIs will increasingly have to guide the user – whose interest tends to be in a topic rather than a specific source – on the different sources available and the particular merits of the official statistics in that context.

Improvement action 13.1: Developing guidelines for using non-official sources

SSO will develop guidelines on the use of data from non-official sources.

TIMELINE:

2019

14. The SSO should develop its news releases, statistical releases and other products so as to provide more explanation to support the informed use of statistics. (CoP, indicator 15.1)

Current situation

The SSO currently takes a particularly cautious approach to the text – explanation and advice – it provides in metadata, statistical releases and publications. This can diminish the clarity and accessibility of these outputs, and thus reduce their usefulness. One example might be the Eurostat format metadata reports, which do not seem to be widely understood or used. One way to improve the usefulness of the quality reports would be to provide further explanations of technical terms, in such a way that less experienced users are able to assess the value of the data. Also, the SSO should aim to provide systematic links on its website between statistical tables and the corresponding metadata. Revisions between subsequent releases of data need to be explained in a more user-friendly way in order to avoid confusion about the need for revisions or about their validity.

The SSO's caution about offering any greater amount of commentary or analysis is partly due to SSO seeing itself as fundamentally a producer of standardised statistics, rather than a service provider. But it is also influenced by a concern to avoid the risk of inappropriate comment, or the unfounded accusation of inappropriate comment. In consequence, it does not produce any custom-designed analyses, seeing such products as a particular risk to the perception of professional independence and political neutrality. Internally, the SSO examines and analyses data as part of the validation process, and is thus forming its own views of what lies behind trends and patterns in the data, but it does not share these insights with users. Again, the focus is on production of statistics rather than on optimising the service to decision-makers.

Improvement action 14.1: Improving the content of the dissemination products

The SSO will improve the content of its current news releases, statistical releases and other products with additional explanations of relevant statistics.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement action 14.2: Implementation of the newly developed content of the dissemination products

The SSO will implement the newly developed content of its news releases, statistical releases and other products.

TIMELINE:

2019

15. Drawing on international best practice, the SSO should develop new solutions over time to allow academic researchers and other approved users more flexible access to microdata than the current arrangements permit. (CoP, Principle 11 and indicator 15.4)

Current situation

The SSO provides access to microdata for researchers according to the Rulebook for access to microdata. Within the premises of the SSO, there is a Safe Room, which is equipped with technical tools and where service by SSO employees is provided. The procedures for access to microdata are aligned with the established practices in the ESS. When this service was established, there were several meetings with the research community where the usefulness and effectiveness of this service were discussed. Remote access was also discussed some years ago and practices across Europe were considered. The topic was discussed with different experts and the recommendation was that remote access is a costly solution, needs a lot of resources and one should have a pragmatic approach, not to make big investment for just a few requests annually.

Improvement action 15.1: More flexible access to microdata

The SSO will follow-up on the new methods and solutions for access to microdata for researchers that are being introduced in the EU countries and beyond, and will update the rules and the procedures to offer better service.

TIMELINE:

2018

Improvement action 15.2: Survey the needs of researchers for micro-data

SSO will create a questionnaire for the researchers working in the safe room, to express their opinion about the offered service and their proposals for improvement.

TIMELINE:

2019

Improvement action 15.3: Flexible and regulated access to micro-data for researchers

SSO will implement at least one update in the procedure in the defined timeframe based on the findings from the survey under action 15.2.

TIMELINE:

2020

Improvement action 15.4: Sharing microdata through Eurostat remote access

The SSO will explore with Eurostat the option to share micro-data through the Eurostat remote access procedure by providing permission for sharing the submitted data for the most requested data sets.

TIMELINE:

2019

16. When a pre-announced date or time in the advance release calendar is changed, the SSO should publish the reason for the change in order to maintain confidence in its impartiality; it should also allow users to assess punctuality by keeping track of the changes made in the original version. (CoP, indicators 6.5 and 13.4)

Current situation

Indicator 6.5 of the CoP requires that 'statistical release dates and times are pre-announced' and indicator 13.4 says 'divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set'. The advance release calendar improves the service to users, who can plan their access to official statistics in a more informed way. The release calendar is also a way to keep control over timeliness and punctuality, which are quality criteria of the CoP.

Based on the annual statistical programme, the SSO publishes on its website a yearly Advanced Release Calendar informing users of the date on which they can expect individual statistical releases and during which month statistical publications will be issued. Releases are always issued at the same time, at 12:00, with texts available in .pdf formats, and related tables downloadable in .xls format. The yearly calendar is prepared three months before the first publishing date foreseen for the next year. According to its dissemination policy, the SSO reviews the Release Calendar on a quarterly basis, and if a change has to be made, it informs its users at least three days before the original planned date of publishing.

Improvement action 16.1: Explanation of the reason for the change in the pre-announced date or time in the advance release calendar

The SSO will provide an explanation of the reason for the change in the pre-announced date or time in the advance release calendar.

TIMELINE:

2017 - implemented

Improvement action 16.2: Users can see punctuality changes made in the original version in the official release calendar

SSO will mark punctuality changes made in the original version in the official release calendar so that users can easily see the changes.

TIMELINE:

2017 - implemented