

PEER REVIEW REPORT

ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

SLOVENIA

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURS) is the main producer of official statistics in the country. SURS forms the national statistical system together with six public institutions which are designated as authorised producers of national statistics. Besides SURS, only two of these, Bank of Slovenia (not subject to this peer review) and National Institute of Public Health are engaged in the final production of European statistics. The National Statistics Act (NSA) extends to all authorised producers and forms a strong basis for the activities of national statistics.

The national statistical system is characterised by the strong and independent SURS, close cooperation between the few main statistical producers, and a heavy reliance on administrative records for the generation of official statistics. There are two types of statistical programmes for national statistics; a five-year one and an annual programme of statistical surveys. Both are prepared and reported on by SURS in cooperation with the authorised producers. The coordination of the statistical activities is embedded in the cooperation of SURS with the authorised producers. While there are close relations at working levels and bilateral contacts at top level, the Peer Reviewers consider that the cooperation and coordination would benefit from regular multi-lateral contacts between the heads of the institutions involved.

For reasons of cost-effectiveness and efficiency and for minimising reporting burdens by firms and households, SURS and other producers make use of administrative registers and data collections for their statistical production to the maximum extent possible. Holders of administrative data are obliged to make their data available to SURS as well as observing the stipulated standards and classifications. There are signed bilateral agreements and protocols between SURS and the holders of the administrative data sources on the utilisation of the data for statistical purposes.

SURS has suffered severe budget cuts in the last few years. So far it has been possible to meet these without deterioration of the statistics produced. It now seems unlikely that further budget cuts can be met by incremental cost reductions and, if continued, the reduction in the allocation of funds to SURS would lead to reduced activities and quality losses. The cooperation on European statistics is already being jeopardised by the cuts in the budget. Another serious aspect of this development is the impact on the human resources through bans on hiring of new staff to replace retirees, and freezing of salaries. These actions have already resulted in substantial reductions in staff levels, the emergence of a generation gap among employees and created a risk of drainage of well qualified young staff to other better economic opportunities. For this reason, the Peer Review team considers it urgent not only to halt the budget reduction but also to start increasing the budget again, not least to stave away the main risk of damage to the human resource situation.

SURS operates an Internal Training Programme for its staff which is also open to staff of the authorised producers. The training is mainly carried out by internal experts and appears to have been effective. The Peer Reviewers are of the opinion that this activity would be strengthened even more by increased participation by academic experts. SURS enjoys excellent relations with the academic community which is well represented in the advisory bodies of SURS; the Statistical Council, the Methodological Council and the 23 advisory committees operated by SURS. The Peer Review team suggests that this relationship might be capitalised further still, as the budget allows, for increasing cooperation on methodological research and analysis of statistical results.

SURS and some authorised producers publish their statistical findings according to advance release calendars. Discussions have been ongoing on uniting such calendars and release practices into one release calendar published no later than in October-November each year, covering planned releases in the coming year. The Peer Reviewers recommend that these plans are implemented as soon as possible. They also recommend that SURS corrects without delay some irregularities in current release practices.

For the most part, SURS is compliant with the Code of Practice and the degree of compliance appears to have been strengthened in recent years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Resources

1. In order to ensure the production of European statistics and the continued participation of Slovenia in the European statistical cooperation, adequate funding needs to be provided for the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. This entails not only stopping further cuts in the budget of the Statistical Office but also providing some increases which reduce the current short and medium term risks of a deterioration in infrastructure and, in particular, in human resources (European statistics Code of Practice, 3.1).
2. The accounting system of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should be improved to allow full allocation of resources to statistical processes. Furthermore, ex-ante cost calculation procedures should be fully available (European statistics Code of Practice, 10.1).
3. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should study all the possibilities available to improve the economic conditions of employees and to define professional careers within the Statistical Office (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 3).

Coordination

4. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and authorised producers of national statistics should increase their cooperation to strengthen the coordination of the production and the dissemination of European statistics within the national statistical system. The Peer Reviewers endorse the plan of the Director-General of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia to establish regular (yearly) joint meetings of heads of all authorised producers, building on the bilateral meetings already held between the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and individual authorised producers. The high level meetings should also be reflected in joint meetings at working level, to explore possibilities and options for greater cooperation.
5. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and the authorised producers should press ahead with their efforts to organise and agree a coordinated release calendar and coordinated release practices (European statistics Code of Practice, 6.5 and 6.7).

Training and research

6. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should increase the presence of external teachers from the scientific community in the Internal Training Programme, particularly in courses devoted to illustrate the state of the art of methodological issues (European statistics Code of Practice, 7.6 and 7.7).
7. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should take initiatives as the budget situation allows, which boost the research collaboration between the office and the scientific community by developing joint projects in methodological issues. Such collaboration could even be extended to more detailed statistical analysis of the information produced by the Statistical Office (European statistics Code of Practice, 7.7).

Impartiality and objectivity

8. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should fully adopt the procedure of fixed-date release of official statistics and abolish the use of "no-later-than" release announcements (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6).
9. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should compile and disseminate the release calendar for any year by November of the previous year at the latest, and preferably in October. Alternatively, the Statistical Office could consider publishing quarterly release calendars with the same prior notice period (European statistics Code of Practice, 6.5).
10. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should adopt clear procedures for announcing any delays of statistical releases. Delays should be announced on the website at the earliest opportunity, together with the reason for the delay, and a new date fixed for release (European statistics Code of Practice, 6.7 and 13.4).

Accessibility and clarity

11. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should publish on their website information about datasets and analyses that have been developed as a result of special requests, which are available but not currently published or disseminated beyond the original requesting organisation(s) (European statistics Code of Practice, 15.3).
12. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should continue to improve accessibility and clarity using new and innovative methods of data presentation and collaborate with media and other external organisations (European statistics Code of Practice, 15.1 and 15.2).
13. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and authorised producers, as custodians of microdata, should study the possibility of further improving accessibility to such data by authorised researchers, learning from successful arrangements that already exist in other countries (European statistics Code of Practice, 15.4).

National Statistics Act (NSA)

14. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should consider preparing a review of the National Statistics Act in order to modernise it and strengthen its provisions on coordination and relationship with European statistics. (Coordination)

Compliance with specific quality indicators

15. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should undertake the following specific actions (European statistics Code of Practice, 4.3 and 4.4):

- Improve systematic analysis of the results of quality reports (indicator 4.3).
- Establish an appropriate plan for implementing quality reviews (indicator 4.4).
- Introduce a regular review of key statistical outputs involving the following measures (indicator 4.4):
 - Putting in place appropriate structures for internal audits,
 - Training of internal auditors,
 - Drawing up standard templates for quality reviews in case of revisions,
 - Improving the organisation of reference documentation,
 - Making arrangements for letting quality reviews result in improvement action plans.

Performance indicators on reporting burden

16. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should undertake the following measures (European statistics Code of Practice, principle 9):

- Introduce the compilation of performance indicators of reporting burden at unit level,
- Arrange for periodic analysis by senior management of indicators of reporting burden.

Compliance with the Code of Practice by authorised producers

17. The authorised producers should introduce a policy for and improve their treatment of errors and revisions and fully regularise their quality reporting.

2. INTRODUCTION

This peer review report is part of a series of assessments, the objective of which is to evaluate the extent to which National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and the European Statistical System (ESS)¹ comply with the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP).

The CoP, which sets out a common quality framework for the ESS, was first adopted in 2005 by the Statistical Programme Committee and updated in 2011 by its successor, the European Statistical System Committee. The CoP — 15 principles and related indicators of good practice — covers the institutional environment, the statistical production process and the output of European statistics. The ESS is committed to fully complying with the CoP and is working towards its full implementation. Periodic assessments review progress towards reaching this goal.

The first global assessment, a round of peer reviews in 2006–2008, explored how the NSIs and Eurostat were progressing in implementing the parts of the CoP relating to the institutional environment and dissemination of statistics (principles 1–6 and 15). This resulted in reports for each NSI and Eurostat, available on the Eurostat website². These reports also include a set of improvement actions covering all the principles of the CoP; these informed the annual monitoring of the implementation of the CoP in the ESS in the period 2009–2013.

The scope of this second round of peer reviews is broader: The assessment of CoP compliance covers all principles; the CoP compliance of selected other national producers of European statistics (as well as the NSI) in each country is assessed; and the way in which statistical authorities coordinate the production and dissemination of European statistics within their statistical systems is explored.

It should be underlined that there is a fundamental difference between the reports in the previous round of peer reviews conducted in 2006–2008 and the reports from this round. In the 2006–2008 round compliance with principles 1 to 6 and 15 of the CoP was assessed by means of a four-level scale (fully met; largely met; partly met and not met) and improvement actions were agreed on all 15 principles. After five years of continuous development most of the improvement actions have been implemented and significant progress towards full compliance with the CoP has been made. Therefore, rather than stating the state of play for all principles of the CoP, the reports from the 2013–2015 round mainly focus on issues where full compliance with the CoP has not been found or further improvements are recommended by the Peer Review team.

In order to gain an independent view, the peer review exercise has been externalised and an audit-like approach, where all the answers to the self-assessment questionnaires have to be supported by evidence, has been applied. As in 2006–2008, all EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA countries and Eurostat are subject to a peer review.

Each peer review in the Member States and EFTA/EEA countries is conducted by three reviewers and has four phases: completion of self-assessment questionnaires by a country; their assessment by Peer Reviewers; a peer review visit; and the preparation of reports on the outcomes. The peer review of Eurostat has been conducted by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

¹ The ESS is the partnership between the Union statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), the national statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. This Partnership also includes the EFTA /EEA countries.

² <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/first-round-of-peer-reviews>

To test and complete the methodology, it was piloted in two countries, Iceland and Slovakia, over the summer of 2013.

The peer review of Slovenia was conducted by Mr Hallgrímur Snorrason (chair), Mr Jaume Garcia Villar and Mr Jagdev Singh Virdee, who conducted a peer review visit to Ljubljana on 29 September to 3 October 2014. The programme of the visit is in Annex A and the list of participants in Annex B.

This report focuses on compliance with the CoP and the coordination of European statistics within the Slovene statistical system. The report highlights some of the strengths of the Slovene NSI (SURS) in these contexts and contains recommendations for improvement. Improvement actions developed by the SURS on the basis of this report will be published within the four-week period starting when the final report is sent to the NSI.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURS) is, according to the National Statistics Act (NSA), a professionally independent government office, with the head of SURS being directly accountable to the Government and the Prime Minister. The NSA stipulates that the basic tasks of national statistics shall be implemented by SURS, with the assistance of authorised producers. There are six institutions that have been designated as authorised producers. Two of these, the Bank of Slovenia and the National Institute of Public Health are producers of European statistics. Currently, SURS employs around 310 persons as well as less than 20 temporary staff. SURS is a process-oriented institution. Four subject-matter sectors are responsible for the development of each field of statistics, and four sectors support them through the whole statistical production process. In addition, there are four supporting units.

Mission and vision of Slovene national statistics

The strategy, mission and vision for the whole Slovene statistical system are defined by the Medium-term Programme of Statistical Surveys. The main objectives are set as: increasing the use of statistical data, preserving the confidence of all stakeholders, increasing the recognition of national statistics, and implementing the activity according to the cost-benefit principle. The mission of national statistics is to provide quality and timely data on the situation and changes in the economic, demographic and social spheres and in the areas of the environment and natural resources. Data are to be comparable in time, between places and internationally. Data for national and international needs are to be provided at optimal costs. The vision of the Slovene national statistics includes the following aspects: To be a trustworthy system, friendly towards users and data providers; to be a modern system with the highest standards in the entire statistical process; to implement to the largest extent the principles of the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP) and the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) Public Commitment on European Statistics; to provide appropriate working conditions for professional and highly-motivated employees; and to perform its activity in the most cost-effective way.

Advisory bodies

The operation of national statistics is monitored by the Statistical Council of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter referred to as „the Statistical Council“). The Statistical Council is a professional advisory body for strategic and development questions of national statistics, established by the NSA. It includes representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia; the Government; SURS; experts in the field of statistics; the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia; the Bank of Slovenia; employers; trade unions; and the judiciary. Meetings are convened at least twice per year.

SURS operates 23 statistical advisory committees for individual fields of statistics, with more than 500 members representing users, data providers, the academic community, SURS and authorised producers. Each advisory committee meets at least once per 18 months; in practice they meet about once per year. Their main tasks are to exchange knowledge; discuss content of the medium-term and annual programmes; to propose rationalisation and modernisation of national statistics; discuss classifications; inform the Statistical Council; discuss questions and initiatives of data providers and data users; and to inform the public about their work. SURS also operates a Methodological Council which is composed of statistical experts from the academic community and SURS experts. Experts from authorised producers are invited to participate in the meetings of the Methodological Council.

Statistical legislation and statistical programmes

The main legal acts for the operation of SURS and the national statistical system are the National Statistics Act (NSA), the Medium-term Programme of Statistical Surveys and the Annual Programme of Statistical Surveys. The NSA determines the principles of national statistics, organisation and status of performing activities of national statistics, programme of statistical surveys, methodological bases of surveys, obligation of institutions keeping registers, data collection, data processing and storage, protection, use and dissemination of data, international statistical co-operation and penalty provisions.

The two statistical programmes, the medium-term one and the annual programme, are prepared and reported on by SURS in cooperation with the authorised producers. There are signed agreements between SURS and the two authorised producers producing European statistics (the Bank of Slovenia and the National Institute of Public Health) which define the division of work between producers of statistics.

The Statistical Council and statistical advisory committees are involved in preparing the programmes. Consultation with the wider public occurs through drafts being published on SURS's website and on the government's E-democracy website. After adoption, the programmes are published in the Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia. The Medium-term Programme is adopted by the Government for a period of five years. It determines the main objectives and priority subject-matter areas of Slovene national statistics, and provides the basis for the preparation of annual programmes. The main elements on which the Programme is based are the European Statistical Programme, multiannual programmes of international institutions and other international initiatives, and consultations with national stakeholders. The Annual Programme is adopted each year by the Director-General of SURS. It gives a detailed overview of all statistical surveys (information on planned surveys; their content, purpose, work to be done, data providers and deadlines for providing data, whether reporting is obligatory or not, reference period, first release deadlines and legal basis). The report on the implementation of the programme is prepared annually and submitted to the Statistical Council.

Dissemination and communication with users

The objective of SURS as regards dissemination is to satisfy data needs of users. SURS works on timely detection of new user initiatives and needs, and responds to them. It includes users in developing new statistical products and services and prepares tailor-made products and services on request. SURS uses different channels and methods to reach the users. Statistical results and services are available free of charge to all users, published in line with the advance release calendar and are also available in English. Microdata are made available to researchers through a safe centre and remote access.

Quality commitment

SURS has publicly made a commitment to execute the work in line with a Quality Statement that is based on the principles of Total Quality Management, the CoP and the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Quality issues are managed at different levels of the organisational structure, from top management to working level, and other organisational structures such as expert working groups assure that the decisions on strategic issues are made on the basis of informed opinion. Quality related issues on general level are managed and coordinated by the Sector for General Methodology and Standards. The quality manager follows the implementation of the CoP, takes care of standards related to quality reporting, supervises preparation of quality reports, organises user satisfaction surveys, prepares training on quality and supports other activities related to quality management.

SURS has defined its own business process model in line with the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), and a comprehensive description of the statistical process has been prepared. "Quality Guidelines" based on this have been published. Other quality guides and methodological manuals have also been compiled and are applied. National standard and annual quality reports covering most surveys are prepared regularly in line with the latest standards of the European Statistical System (ESS) for quality reporting.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

4.1 STRENGTHS OF THE NSI IN RELATION TO ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND TO ITS COORDINATION ROLE

The national statistical system of Slovenia is a very closely-knit one with close and easy relationships between the institutions involved. The system seems well fitted to the realities of the small Slovene society and administration; it is characterised by a strong and independent NSI (SURS), few other main producers of official statistics, and a heavy reliance on administrative records for the generation of official statistics.

The legal basis for the operation of the statistical system is strong and decisive and is contained in the National Statistics Act (NSA) from 1995, amended in 2001. Both the legal basis and its implementation are fully in line with CoP Principle 1 of Professional Independence. The NSA is not limited to SURS but covers all national statistics. The NSA stipulates that national statistics is a professionally independent activity of implementing the programme of statistical surveys. The national statistics shall be based on the principles of neutrality, objectivity, professional independence, rationality, statistical confidentiality and transparency. According to the NSA, national statistics are to be performed by SURS and certain other statistical producers which are authorised as such in the two programmes of statistical surveys. The medium-term programme is issued as a decree and has the force of a legal instrument.

The professional independence and integrity of SURS is acknowledged and confirmed by all producers and users. The release and presentation by SURS of the results of the statistical activities is praised as being completely professional and neutral. Since late 2013 there is no privileged pre-release access and data are released to all users at the same time.

The NSA in combination with the programme of statistical surveys provides a strong mandate for the collection of data, fulfilling well the requirements of CoP Principle 2 on Mandate for Data Collection. The NSA defines the data providers as the holders of administrative data collections (records, registers, databases etc.) as well as natural and legal persons (cf. CoP Principle 2 indicator 2.2). The holders of administrative data are obliged to make their data collections available to SURS as well as observing the standards and classifications stipulated by SURS (cf. CoP indicators 8.7-8.9). For most surveys, natural and legal persons are through the stipulations of the statistical programme obliged to supply the data requested. Failure to do so or wilfully providing incorrect data is, in accordance with the NSA, subject to fines. However, the authority to levy fines has not been used and SURS relies instead on other means to enlist the cooperation of respondents to supply data. Response rates of enterprises are high, close to 90%, but response rates of individuals and households are lower, considerably lower for the heaviest household surveys.

The reliance on administrative records carries the risk that changes in legislation or in administrative procedures may disturb the flow of data for statistical purposes. SURS counteracts this by monitoring and seeking to influence such changes by several means; mainly through governmental coordination procedures, through a special Statistical Advisory Committee on Administrative Data Sources, and by

bilateral arrangements and signed agreements and protocols with the holders of the administrative data (cf. CoP indicator 8.8). There are also common actions of administrative data holders and SURS, aiming at the reduction of administrative burden (cf. CoP indicator 9.6). Moreover, a government programme on the reduction of administrative burden also provides SURS with an opportunity to promote the use of administrative data and for merging reporting requirements.

SURS is much respected by producers and users alike and its professional leadership of the national statistical system is fully recognised. The leadership of the national statistical system and cooperation with other producers is exercised in preparation of the programmes of statistical surveys. The medium term (five-year) programme is drawn up by SURS in cooperation with the authorised producers and the various advisory committees. Similarly, the annual programme is a joint product of SURS and the authorised producers of official statistics and contains all the surveys to be conducted by all the producers of national statistics in the coming year. The medium term programme is reviewed and reported on in the third year of its implementation as well as being subject to final reporting at the end of the programme period. The annual programme is subject to regular annual reporting. While under preparation, both types of programmes are discussed by the Statistical Council which also discusses the reports on implementation.

The coordination of the official statistical activities does not follow a top-down model but is embedded in the cooperation of SURS with the authorised producers at the various levels of the activities. In the Slovene setting this pragmatic approach and the close relations between the managers and the experts of the different institutions are found to work well and be effective. While acknowledging the strength of these practices, the Peer Review team suggests that coordination might be enhanced further still through increased multi-lateral cooperation as further discussed below. The coordination of and the participation in the ESS cooperation follows a similar pragmatic pattern of consultations between the relevant institutions.

SURS has strong relations with users. Users are represented in the Statistical Council and both users and producers participate in the 23 advisory committees operated by SURS (cf. CoP indicators 11.1 and 11.2). The Peer Review team met with a range of users, from key institutions, academia and media; all of these expressed satisfaction with the attitude of SURS to users, the ease of access by users to SURS and its experts, and with the services provided. SURS was found to be very accessible and forthcoming for providing explanations and information as well as responding positively to requests for new compilations. The access to microdata was in particular appreciated by the academic community.

The methodological basis of the operations of SURS is strong. International standards, classifications and methodologies are applied by all authorised producers. There is good cooperation with academia and main users as well as the authorised producers, on approaches and methods. This cooperation takes place at several levels; in the 23 advisory committees, in the Methodological Council and in the Statistical Council provided for in the NSA. Furthermore, SURS maintains close contacts with the University of Ljubljana regarding the issues treated in the working group for the development of the European Master in Official Statistics, of which the university is a member.

SURS places emphasis on quality. The commitment to quality is declared publicly (e.g. on the SURS website) and SURS has clear structures and tools to implement quality management (cf. CoP

indicators 4.1). Its quality management system is supervised by top management but carried out at each level of the statistical production process. The quality monitoring is the responsibility of each of the heads of sections and is coordinated within the sector for General Methodology and Standards. Main pillars of the quality assurance framework are Quality Guidelines, standardised quality reports and specific methodological manuals (cf. CoP indicators 4.2 and 4.3). The Quality Guidelines and the methodological manuals are made available to the authorised producers who also participate in the SURS training programme, such as courses on the CoP and on quality.

SURS has a strong work force with a high level of education attainment. This is the result of both conscious recruitment of university graduates replacing retired staff with less education and a continuous training programme aimed at increasing the skills of new staff and renewing skills of older staff (cf. CoP indicators 7.5 and 7.6). The training programme is robust and includes regular training on quality and the CoP. The Peer Review team met with several young staff members and found them to be well educated, very familiar with their areas of work, greatly motivated and very capable of communication. Recent cuts in the budget of SURS involving, inter alia, a ban on hiring of staff and freezing of salaries, have created considerable risks concerning the sustainability of the high level of human resources at SURS, as further discussed below.

SURS is in the main compliant with the CoP and the degree of compliance is said to have been strengthened since the previous peer review in 2007. The evidence for the compliance of the authorised producers of national statistics is less clear but several developments have been cited as showing improvements in recent years. SURS seeks to promote the CoP among the authorised producers in many ways. The SURS Quality Guidelines are made available to these producers and regular quality reporting has been introduced by the main authorised producer subject to this peer review (the National Institute of Public Health). Staff of the authorised producers is invited to participate in the training programme at SURS where courses on the CoP and on quality are given. Furthermore, SURS monitors the CoP compliance of the authorised producers by an annual self-assessment questionnaire.

The Peer Review team learned of several innovative actions and improvements of practices undertaken in recent years with the objective of enhancing the statistical operations and strengthening compliance with the CoP. Of the innovative practices which have been established or are under way, mention can be made of the following:

- Establishment of the Methodological Council; the Council was established in 2007 in order to provide a systematic review by external experts from the academic community of the statistical methods used. The Methodological Council is composed of seven experts from the academic community and three internal experts and is chaired by the head of Sector for General Methodology and Standards. Experts from authorised producers are invited to the meetings of the Methodological Council as relevant.
- The development and introduction of a metadata driven application, SOP, for standardised data processing in the fields of data editing, imputation, aggregation and tabulation across the various sub-processes of the SURS business process model.

- Monitoring by SURS of the CoP compliance by authorised producers through annual self-assessment questionnaires.
- Establishment and operation within SURS of a Young Statisticians' Group. The purpose of the group is to contribute to networking and inclusion of young statisticians into SURS. The group participates in the preparation of SURS's conferences and events, and organises events for young staff members.

4.2 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 RESOURCES

According to principles 3 and 10 of the CoP, resources available for statistical authorities should be sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements in an effective way. In that sense, the economic and financial crisis originating a few years ago has had direct implications both in demand for new and timelier statistics and in reducing the resources of the statistical authorities given the significant cuts in public expenditures. These two elements work in opposite directions; hence, the specific requirements for effectiveness of principle 10 become extremely relevant in the situation of decreasing resources allocated to the production of official statistics.

Slovenia has not escaped this. The budget of SURS in 2013, excluding rents (no rents were paid before moving to a new building in 2012), was EUR 10.5 million, equivalent in nominal terms to around 81% of the budget in 2007; slightly less than 70% if the figures are adjusted for inflation. This reduction is not homogenous across different types of expenditures: investments have been reduced to almost one third of the level in 2007, expenditure on international cooperation has been reduced by half and wages and salaries of permanent staff by 20%. A similar scenario is found as regards human resources figures. Permanent staff has been reduced by 17% in this period and there has been a ban on recruitment; retired people are not substituted and no new positions are in place.

Even under these circumstances, when answering about the adequacy of the resources to meet current statistical needs, SURS response is that they are currently adequate. This is because SURS has followed a strategy based on three pillars:

- Increasing the use of administrative registers,
- Optimising the different production processes by using more advanced statistical methodologies and a better IT infrastructure,
- Increasing the productivity of their employees through training, dedication and commitment.

It is worth mentioning that in spite of the significant reduction in human resources, the structure of the employment by educational level has improved; in 2007 71% of the employees had an educational level higher than secondary school whereas this ratio was 81% in 2013.

At the present time, there are many indications that the budget of SURS has reached a critical low and that a possible demand for further cuts can no longer be met by incremental decreases in operation cost. Thus, if maintained, continued budget cuts will inevitably affect the performance of SURS in terms of carrying out its obligations in the annual and medium term programmes. The

financial and human resource situation appears to have reached a limit and, if crossing this red line, there is a high probability of affecting the quality of the statistical production, both because of the difficulty of making use of the modern and adequate technical infrastructure and because of the reduction of human resources, both in quantity and quality. This last effect on human resources has not only a short-run dimension but also a medium-long term one due to the generation gap which is being created by the ban on hiring young people for a significant number of years.

According to Article 3 of the NSA, SURS is a professionally independent government office whose status is defined by the Act on the Government of Slovenia and the NSA. Article 18 of the NSA stipulates that activities and functions of SURS shall be financed from the national budget in accordance with the approved financial plan and as a professionally independent government office. SURS is directly involved in the phase of preparation and harmonisation of the national budget also and as pointed out in the self-assessment questionnaire, the human resource plan and the size of the staff is determined through direct negotiations between the Director-General of SURS and the Prime Minister.

The Peer Reviewers find that in order to ensure the Slovene production of European statistics and the continued participation of Slovenia in the European statistical cooperation the utmost emphasis should be placed on preventing further cuts in the budget of SURS. They also recommend that some increases are considered, in particular to ease the ban on recruitment and advancement of young statisticians as well as easing the freeze of salaries in order to reduce the negative effects of the generation gap mentioned above on the future performance of SURS.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 1. In order to ensure the production of European statistics and the continued participation of Slovenia in the European statistical cooperation, adequate funding needs to be provided for the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. This entails not only stopping further cuts in the budget of the Statistical Office but also providing some increases which reduce the current short and medium term risks of a deterioration in infrastructure and, in particular, in human resources (European statistics Code of Practice, 3.1).**

It must be emphasised to those responsible for the final figures of the budget that producing official statistics of quality requires considerable resources and that much effort has been spent on making the statistical production as effective as possible. Such discussion and advocacy requires that proposals are supported by evidence. This implies that it is necessary, as much as possible, to apply an accounting system which allows the allocation of resources to statistical processes and to justify that the costs of statistics are related to the needs. According to the answers to the self-assessment questionnaire the allocation of resources to statistical processes is only partly implemented by SURS.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 2. The accounting system of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should be improved to allow full allocation of resources to statistical processes. Furthermore, ex-ante cost calculation procedures should be fully available (European statistics Code of Practice, 10.1).**

Continuous effort to increase the productivity of human resources is one of the pillars of the strategy of SURS to overcome the budget cuts and the reduction of human resources. In their meeting with the Peer Review team, junior employees of SURS pointed out that while they were happy and motivated at SURS this might be a short-lived situation as their salaries had been stagnant for a few years and that there were no promotion mechanisms applied. This compared quite unfavourably to the situation of similarly qualified people in other activities, not least in the private sector.

This issue is very much related to the generation gap created by the budget cuts and the ban on new hiring. There is a serious risk of losing some human capital if economic conditions of staff are not improved. The junior staff members at SURS are very qualified and their skills and abilities are increasingly valued in the market. One example of this is the impact that the “big data” phenomenon is having on the attractiveness of such experts with high skills in statistics and computation. The limitations of being a public sector institution in terms of flexibility in contracting people and fixing salaries are well known but it should be explored what possibilities there are to be imaginative and creative in order to mitigate the effects of the risk of losing people once they are qualified. This risk could be even more serious if, as expected, the economic situation starts to improve increasing the capacity of hiring qualified people by firms and institutions.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 3. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should study all the possibilities available to improve the economic conditions of employees and to define professional careers within the Statistical Office (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 3).**

4.2.2 COORDINATION

The Peer Review team observed considerable evidence of good cooperation between SURS and providers of data for producing statistics, and with authorised producers. SURS is consulted and represented in discussions relating to any changes in administrative procedures that may have an impact on source data, and this is increasingly important as the dependency on administrative data grows. Close links between SURS, authorised producers and data providers are maintained at working levels, partly through the advisory committees operated by SURS. Bilateral meetings between the heads of SURS and authorised producers are held when the need arises. However, the Peer Review team observed that there has been less cross-cutting cooperation at the top level. The Director-General of SURS has held one high level meeting with the heads of authorised producers, which highlighted common issues such as compliance with the Code of Practice.

The Director-General of SURS is aiming to convene high level meetings regularly in the future, and at least once a year. The Peer Review team feels that such meetings may help to raise awareness of the inter-dependency of the national statistical system, in particular of how data available from one authorised producer may be useful to others, as well as SURS.

These meetings should also be used to develop consistency in compliance with all aspects of the CoP by all parts of the national statistical system. For example, no authorised producer has policies in place for dealing with revisions and errors. Although it was suggested that, if needed, they would apply SURS policies, the discussion indicated that awareness of the need for such policies should be increased. Improved coordination should also result in better compliance with Principle 10 of the CoP (Cost effectiveness – Resources are used effectively), particularly indicators 10.3 (Proactive efforts are

made to improve the statistical potential of administrative data and to limit recourse to direct surveys), and 10.4 (Statistical authorities promote and implement standardised solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency).

In order to improve the overall coordination across the national statistical system, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

4. **The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and authorised producers of national statistics should increase their cooperation to strengthen the coordination of the production and the dissemination of European statistics within the national statistical system. The Peer Reviewers endorse the plan of the Director-General of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia to establish regular (yearly) joint meetings of heads of all authorised producers, building on the bilateral meetings already held between the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and individual authorised producers. The high level meetings should also be reflected in joint meetings at working level, to explore possibilities and options for greater cooperation.**

SURS publishes an annual release calendar, which covers the outputs of SURS. Some authorised producers publish their own release calendars, but not all. SURS has initiated discussion on the compilation of a joint release calendar for the national statistical system (NSS). Peer Reviewers met one of the authorised producers who agreed that there should not be any barriers to developing a common calendar. Completing the peer review self-assessment questionnaire had helped their understanding of the need as well as understanding other aspects of the CoP. There has been some progress in planning for a common calendar, aiming to cover releases due to be published from the beginning of 2015.

In order for all parts of the national statistical system to comply with Principle 6 of the CoP (Impartiality and Objectivity) in respect of release practice, particularly indicators 6.5 (Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced) and 6.7 (All user have equal access to statistical releases at the same time), **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

5. **The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and the authorised producers should press ahead with their efforts to organise and agree a coordinated release calendar and coordinated release practices (European statistics Code of Practice, 6.5 and 6.7).**

4.2.3 TRAINING AND RESEARCH

SURS has continuous vocational training as an integral part of its human resource policy as stated in the Medium-term Programme of Statistical Surveys. There, the activity of "Optimisation of the internal organisational structure and human resource management" is associated with the cost-effectiveness principle. The main characteristics of the structure for the vocational training implementation are:

- The relevance of the annual interviews with employees performed by section heads to identify necessities,
- The Internal Training Programme,
- The attendance at relevant training courses and conferences.

The Internal Training Programme seems to play a crucial role in providing and maintaining adequate qualification of the SURS employees, as it was expressed by junior staff. It is also emphasised in the answers to the self-assessment questionnaire related to Principle 7. As mentioned in the "Note on training and recruitment plan" prepared by SURS, the majority of the courses of the Internal Training Programme are taught by SURS experts and only certain subjects are taught by external experts.

SURS enjoys a close relationship with the scientific community, expressed not only in the answers of the self-assessment questionnaire related to indicator 7.7, but also recognised by the academic people who attended the meeting of the Peer Review team with representatives of the scientific community. In the opinion of the Peer Reviewers, this relationship should be exploited in some way benefitting both partners of this cooperation in the educational field. Academic people can contribute to maintain the methodologies used in SURS updated at the state of the art by participating more actively in the teaching of training courses.

Although SURS cooperates with the University of Ljubljana in the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme in Statistics, at the meeting with the scientific community mentioned above, the representatives of academia emphasised that employees of SURS and SURS as institution could participate in academic activities given their specific knowledge about official statistics, which is a relevant field in most social science degrees. This bidirectional relationship should produce efficiency gains not only because of the contents of the programmes but also because it will have a positive impact on the motivation of the employees, serving also to make more evident the role of the statistical office in the society, i.e. contributing to increase its credibility.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 6. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should increase the presence of external teachers from the scientific community in the Internal Training Programme, particularly in courses devoted to illustrate the state of the art of methodological issues (European statistics Code of Practice, 7.6 and 7.7).**

Similarly, as pointed out by the participants in the meeting of the Peer Review team with the scientific community, there is room for increased collaboration between SURS and academia in research projects. Although SURS is involved in some projects with the scientific community, increasing this practice should facilitate the development of new products and methods and also help to increase the statistical analysis of the information produced by SURS. Additionally, this might contribute to the motivation of the staff of SURS since this collaboration should facilitate not only the presentation of the results of the projects in conferences but also the publication of the research in recognised journals.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 7. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should take initiatives as the budget situation allows, which boost the research collaboration between the office and the scientific community by developing joint projects in methodological issues. Such collaboration could even be extended to more detailed statistical analysis of the information produced by the Statistical Office (European statistics Code of Practice, 7.7).**

4.2.4 IMPARTIALITY AND OBJECTIVITY

SURS's annual release calendar contains two categories of release dates – "Fixed dates" and "No later than" dates. The current calendar on the SURS website in respect of October-December 2014 shows about two thirds of the release dates to be of the type "No later than". The Peer Review team consider this to be non-compliant with the Principle 6 of CoP and urges SURS to fix all release dates in the advance release calendar. It is appreciated that there may be difficulties in being able to establish dates for the whole year ahead. However, this is done in most ESS countries. If this is considered problematic in the immediate future, international good practice suggests that three months' notice is sufficient. SURS could consider the option of publishing quarterly release calendars with fixed release dates one quarter ahead of the period covered.

In order to comply with the need to publish fixed release dates, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 8. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should fully adopt the procedure of fixed-date release of official statistics and abolish the use of "no-later-than" release announcements (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6).**

SURS aim to publish their release calendar for the forthcoming year by December. In practice, publication has occurred in January of the year concerned. This means that users have little or no notice of statistics that are due to be released in January or soon thereafter. The Peer Review team therefore considers that this practice does not comply with indicator 6.5 (Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced) for part of the year.

In order to provide adequate notice to users of official statistics, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 9. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should compile and disseminate the release calendar for any year by November of the previous year at the latest, and preferably in October. Alternatively, the Statistical Office could consider publishing quarterly release calendars with the same prior notice period (European statistics Code of Practice, 6.5).**

During the peer review visit to Slovenia, there was a postponement of a statistical release, and the announcement of the delay did not provide a new release date. It was explained that this and some other improvements to announcements would be implemented with the launch of the new SURS website, due before the end of 2014.

The Peer Review team feels that a simple procedure of making a statement on the existing website, announcing the delay, the reason for the delay, and a new release date, could be implemented immediately. Launch of the new website has already been delayed from 2013, and there does not seem to be any need to wait for a new website to implement this procedure. The current practice

does not comply with Principle 13 of the CoP (Timeliness and punctuality), particularly indicator 13.4 (Divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set).

The Peer Reviewers therefore recommend that:

- 10. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should adopt clear procedures for announcing any delays of statistical releases. Delays should be announced on the website at the earliest opportunity, together with the reason for the delay, and a new date fixed for release (European statistics Code of Practice, 6.7 and 13.4).**

4.2.5 ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY

The Peer Reviewers met with several users of the regular statistics and additional services of SURS, and very positive feedback was provided from all sectors (public and private institutions, academia, media), as described in the previous section on strengths. In particular, these users, who are very well engaged with SURS, were appreciative of access to microdata and of the possibilities of obtaining special tabulations on request. However, these outputs are not publicised in any other way, although they would be made available if someone asked for them. Other users may find such datasets useful, but are unlikely to know of their existence. Wider awareness of such existing outputs may increase potential users' awareness of the possibility for further analyses using existing datasets.

In light of this and bearing in mind the Principle 15 of the CoP (Accessibility and Clarity), particularly indicator 15.3 (Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and the public is informed), the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 11. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should publish on their website information about datasets and analyses that have been developed as a result of special requests, which are available but not currently published or disseminated beyond the original requesting organisation(s) (European statistics Code of Practice, 15.3).**

The discussions with media revealed that they would like to see more statistical information on social media. They would also like to encourage SURS to use a greater variety of tools, visualisations and info graphics. SURS should use their strengths in communication and above all use language that everyone understands. Media also encouraged SURS to create „streams“ of data rather than to print publications. Moreover, the media representatives stated that they would like to collaborate with SURS of which they already had some good experience.

In light of this, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 12. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should continue to improve accessibility and clarity using new and innovative methods of data presentation and collaborate with media and other external organisations (European statistics Code of Practice, 15.1 and 15.2).**

Additionally, users from the scientific community, although they were very satisfied, as mentioned above, with the actual accessibility to microdata compared with the situation some years ago, emphasised the necessity of continuing with improvements to facilitate access to microdata in a similar way as it happens in some European countries. This is in line with the policy followed by SURS in recent years of increasing accessibility as much as possible without affecting confidentiality. Improved collaboration between SURS and the scientific community, as mentioned above, could also facilitate the increased use of microdata. The reputation and credibility of SURS and authorised

producers following this policy would be enhanced if their microdata lead to research that ends up in publication of authoritative papers in international journals. The international scientific community highly respects those statistical institutions which are active and positive in facilitating safe access to microdata.

In order to pursue this objective of increasing accessibility to microdata by qualified users, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 13. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and authorised producers, as custodians of microdata, should study the possibility of further improving accessibility to such data by authorised researchers, learning from successful arrangements that already exist in other countries (European statistics Code of Practice, 15.4).**

4.2.6 NATIONAL STATISTICS ACT (NSA)

As discussed above, the NSA lays a strong legal foundation for the operation of Slovene national statistics. The NSA has a number of redeeming features, not least as concerns the mandate for data collection by SURS and authorised producers, and obligations of holders of administrative data collections and registers which may be used for statistical purposes and are of great importance owing to the heavy reliance of Slovene official statistics on administrative data. The NSA was originally enacted in 1995 and amended in 2001. Not surprisingly, it reflects the current attitude at the time when Slovenia was gaining its independence. One of the strong features of the NSA is that it focuses on national statistics rather than individual institutions and hence covers all the producers of national statistics. On the other hand, its provisions on coordination by the NSI (SURS) are more indirect than direct and it does not refer to European statistics as such. It also appears to be somewhat old-fashioned in its structure and provisions.

The Peer Reviewers are of the opinion that SURS should consider modernising the NSA. A new Statistics Act should maintain all its basic and strong elements, while strengthening others such as its relations to European statistics and its provisions on coordination of official statistical activities. A specific consideration should be given to the use of the term "national statistics". This might more appropriately be termed official statistics in line with international practices as well as those of many European countries.

An appropriate moment for enacting a new Statistics Act might be following the enactment of a new Regulation on European statistics.

In the light of this **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 14. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should consider preparing a review of the National Statistics Act in order to modernise it and strengthen its provisions on coordination and relationship with European statistics.**

4.2.7 COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIFIC QUALITY INDICATORS

While the Peer Review of the issues of quality showed that SURS is for the most part compliant with the CoP, it was evident, both from the self-assessment questionnaire and in the discussions on the different requirements of the CoP as regards quality, that some aspects of Principle 4, indicators 4.3

and 4.4, are either not implemented or partly implemented. Thus, the Peer Review team found that the requirement for systematic analysis of quality reports was not fully implemented and that there was scope for enhancing the regular reviewing of key statistical outputs in line with the CoP. These are not major issues but aligning current practices to the CoP in this respect would, in the opinion of the Peer Reviewers, strengthen them and enhance compliance.

In light of this and in order to fully comply with the CoP Principle 4 on commitment to quality, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

15. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should undertake the following specific actions (European statistics Code of Practice, 4.3 and 4.4):

- Improve systematic analysis of the results of quality reports (indicator 4.3).
- Establish an appropriate plan for implementing quality reviews (indicator 4.4)
- Introduce a regular review of key statistical outputs involving the following measures (indicator 4.4):
 - Putting in place appropriate structures for internal audits,
 - Training of internal auditors,
 - Drawing up standard templates for quality reviews in case of revisions,
 - Improving the organisation of reference documentation,
 - Making arrangements for letting quality reviews result in improvement action plans.

4.2.8 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ON REPORTING BURDEN

The self-assessment questionnaire and the Peer Review discussions of Principle 9, non-excessive burden on respondents, revealed certain short-comings of compliance as regards monitoring the response burden. In particular, the requirement of compiling performance indicators on reporting burden at the level of unit is not met and arrangements for periodic analysis of performance indicators of reporting burden by senior management are not fully implemented.

In light of this and in order to fully comply with the CoP Principle 9, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

16. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia should undertake the following measures (European statistics Code of Practice, principle 9):

- Introduce the compilation of performance indicators of reporting burden at unit level,
- Arrange for periodic analysis by senior management of indicators of reporting burden.

4.2.9 COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE BY AUTHORISED PRODUCERS

As mentioned above the National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ) and the Bank of Slovenia, not considered in this peer review, are the only authorised producers involved in the production of

European statistics. The other authorised producers are either involved only in the production of national statistics or in the process of producing European statistics but without final responsibility for the statistical results (Ministry of Finance).

Although the peer review team only had the opportunity of meeting the NIJZ representatives, the basic comments and the recommendations can be extrapolated to the other authorised producers. The first element to consider is that the NIJZ expresses clearly (several times in the answer to the light self-assessment questionnaire) that IT and human resources are not adequate in magnitude to meet the statistical needs. This is not a result of budget cuts but of increases in demand for statistics and statistical services. NIJZ has sought to compensate for the inadequate resources by replacing retirees by people with higher qualifications and relying on experts from other departments of NIJZ or people from universities. This possibility is a consequence of the two types of activities done in the health data centre of NIJZ: producing statistics and performing data analysis.

In any case the recommendation made to SURS of seeking budget increases and strengthening the accounting system for providing a better basis for discussing budget needs, also applies to the health data centre of NIJZ. In this case, however, they should emphasise the resource constraints in the statistical production of official statistics.

The NIJZ is certified by ISO 9001, having a separate process for statistics which describes the statistical production. For a long time, NIJZ made use of the quality policy of SURS as its own. SURS renewed its quality statement in April 2014, but NIJZ found the new statement not fully applicable to their activities and from then on SURS and NIJZ do not share the same quality declaration. Although procedures and guidelines seem to follow closely those of SURS, NIJZ seems to have its own procedures, clearly stated in the case of data protection and in the case of some internal guidelines.

As mentioned before when discussing the issue of coordination among the producers of national statistics, improving the bilateral and, in particular, the multilateral coordination should help to improve the compliance of the CoP by all authorised producers, even if they are not producing European statistics.

The Peer Reviewers have found that some specific aspects of compliance with the CoP should be improved. These concern releases, treatment of errors, and revisions. With respect to the releases, it would be a significant improvement if all the authorised producers and SURS agree on a common release calendar as discussed and recommended above. As regards errors, the calculation of sampling errors should be done for all surveys carried out by authorised producers. On revisions, although the NIJZ experts stated that revisions do not usually apply to the statistics they publish, it seems relevant to define a revision policy. Finally, the health data unit of NIJZ compiles quality reports of their surveys. Until very recently, these have not covered all surveys and they have been subject to substantial delays. In this respect, NIJZ is encouraged to regularise its quality reporting, ensuring timely publication and coverage of all surveys.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 17. The authorised producers should introduce a policy for and improve their treatment of errors and revisions and fully regularise their quality reporting.**

4.3 NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE VIEWS WHERE THEY DIVERGE FROM PEER REVIEWERS' ASSESSMENT

The report does not diverge in any major issue from SURS's own assessment of its compliance with the ESS CoP. SURS would like to express its appreciation for the work done by the Peer Review team, for open and constructive discussion during the visit and for valuable recommendations provided.

ANNEX A: PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT

PEER REVIEW VISIT TO SLOVENIA

29 September – 3 October 2014

AGENDA

Peer Review team

Hallgrímur Snorrason, Chair
Jaume García Villar, Reviewer
Jagdev Singh Virdee, Reviewer

National Coordinator Team

Karmen Hren, Deputy Director-General
Tina Steenvoorden, Head of Standards Department (Peer Review National Coordinator)
Tomaž Smrekar, Director of Dissemination of Statistical Data and Methods
Tatjana Novak, Director of General Methodology and Standards
Andreja Hočevan, Head of International Cooperation and European Affairs
Polona Štrekelj, Legal and Human Resource Matters

Eurostat Observer

Zsuzsanna Kovacs, administrator of the unit D4. Government Finance Statistics, Risk and quality management

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
Day 1 – Monday, 29 September 2014			
From-To	Subject	Institution	Name, position
09.00 – 10.30	1 Peer Review Team internal meeting	SURS	Peer Review team
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 12.00	2 Preparatory meeting with the NSI coordinator team and, possibly, other national participants in the visit to discuss practical aspects of the visit.	SURS	Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevan, Polona Štrekelj
12.00 – 12.30	3 Welcome and introduction of programme, organisational matters	SURS	Genovefa Ružič, Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevan, Polona Štrekelj
12.30 – 13.30	4 General information session with a description on how the national statistical system is organised (bodies, distribution of responsibilities, relations between authorities).	SURS	Genovefa Ružič, Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevan, Polona Štrekelj
13.30 – 14.15	Lunch		
14.15 – 15.15	5 Coordination role of the NSI	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Genovefa Ružič, Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevan, Polona Štrekelj
15.15 – 15.30	Coffee break		

15.30 – 17.00	6	The statistical law and related legislation (CoP principles 1, 2, 5 and 6)	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevan, Polona Štrekelj, Matjaž Gorenc
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Day 2 – Tuesday, 30 September 2014

From-To	Subject	Institution	Name, position
09.00 – 10.45	7 Programming, planning and resources, including training (CoP principles 3, 9 and 10)	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Tina Steenvoorden, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevan, Polona Štrekelj, Tomaž Špeh
10.45 – 11.00	Coffee break		
11.00 – 12.00	8 Cooperation / level of integration of the ESS	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Tina Steenvoorden, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevan, Polona Štrekelj,
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch		
13.00 – 14.30	9 Meeting with main users – Ministries and other public/private institutions (including Central Bank as a user)	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Franček Drenovec, Alenka Kajzer, Jože Verbič, Tatjana Pajnkihar Napret, Andreja Poje, Tina Steenvoorden, Tatjana Novak
14.30 – 14.45	Coffee break		
14.45 – 15.45	10 Meeting with main users – Media	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Aljaž Vindiš, Nataša Briški, Miha Jenko, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar

Day 3 – Wednesday, 1 October 2014

From-To	Subject	Institution	Name, position
09.00 – 10.30	11 Quality (organisational structure, tools, monitoring, ...) (CoP principles 4 and 11 to 15)	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar, Karmen Hren, Tatjana Novak, Rudi Seljak
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 13.15	12 Dissemination, including consultation with users (CoP principles 6, 11 and 15)	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Tomaž Smrekar, Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Tatjana Novak, Rudi Seljak
13.15 – 14.00	Lunch		

14.00 – 16.00	13	Methodology, data collection, data processing and administrative data (CoP principles 2, 7 and 8)	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Tatjana Novak, Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Polona Štrekelj, Nataša Železnik Gorjan, Tomaž Špeh, Rudi Seljak
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Day 4– Thursday, 2 October 2014				
From-To	Subject	Institution	Name, position	
09.00 – 10.30	14 Meeting with Other National Authorities – National Institute for Public Health	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Metka Zaletel, Darja Lavtar, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar	
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break			
10.45 – 12.30	15 Meeting with Junior staff	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Martin Bajželj, Tine Peštaj, Jaka Erpič, Aleš Krajnc, Petra Blažič, Alenka Martinuč, Mateja Zgonec, Jana Živec, Tanja Vidic	
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch			
13.30 – 15.00	16 Meeting with main data providers/respondents		Peer Review team Eurostat observer Alenka Rotter, Vlasta Vuković, Majda Oman, Tanja Fink, Mateja Korelc, Tina Steenvoorden, Tatjana Novak	
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break			
15.15 – 17.00	17 Meeting with main users – Scientific community	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Mojca Bavdaž, Janez Štebe, Jože Samč, Boris Majcen, Anže Burger, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar	
Day 5– Friday, 3 October 2014				
From-To	Subject	Institution	Name, position	
09.00 – 10.30	18 Peer Review team discussion		Peer Review team	
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break			
11.00 – 12.45	19 Clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas	SURS	Peer Review team Eurostat observer Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevar, Polona Štrekelj	
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch			
13.30 – 15.30	20 Meeting with senior management: conclusions and recommendations	SURS	Peer Review team Genovefa Ružič, Karmen Hren, Tina Steenvoorden, Tomaž Smrekar, Tatjana Novak, Andreja Hočevar, Polona Štrekelj	
15.30 – 17.00	21 Preparation of the report: task sharing	Peer Review team	Peer Review team	

ANNEX B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Peer Review Team
1	Mr Hallgrímur Snorrason (chair), Iceland
2	Mr Jaume Garcia Villar, Spain
3	Mr Jagdev Singh Virdee, UK
	Eurostat observer
4	Ms Zsuzsanna Kovacs, administrator of unit D4
	SURS management
5	Ms Genovefa Ružić, Director-General
	National coordinator team
6	Ms Karmen Hren, Deputy Director-General
7	Ms Tina Steenvoorden, Head of Standards Department
8	Mr Tomaž Smrekar, Director of Dissemination of Statistical Data and Methods
9	Ms Tatjana Novak, Director of General Methodology and Standards
10	Ms Andreja Hočvar, Head of International Cooperation and European Affairs
11	Ms Polona Štrekelj, Legal and Human Resource Matters
	Other SURS staff members
12	Mr Matjaž Gorenc, EDP Infrastructure and Technology
13	Mr Tomaž Špeh, Head of Output Processes Support and Internet Technologies Department
14	Mr Rudi Seljak, General Methodology and Standards
15	Ms Nataša Železnik Gorjan, Director of Data Collection
16	<i>Junior staff of the SURS</i>
17	Mr Martin Bajželj, Editorial Board, Regional Statistics
18	Mr Tine Peštaj, Legal and Human Resource Matters
19	Mr Jaka Erpič, Short-term Business Statistics
20	Mr Aleš Krajnc, Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Statistics
21	Ms Petra Blažič, General Methodology
22	Ms Alenka Martinuč, Data Collection
23	Ms Mateja Zgonec, Standards

24	Ms Jana Živec, Structural and Global Business Statistics
25	Ms Tanja Vidic, Environment and Energy Statistics
Representatives of main users	
26	Mr Franček Drenovec, Advisor to the Management, Bank of Slovenia
27	Dr Alenka Kajzer, Deputy Director, Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development
28	Mr Jože Verbič, Expert in Animal Nutrition, Agricultural Institute of Slovenia
29	Ms Tatjana Pajnkihar Napret, Advisor to the Secretary General, Association of Employers of Slovenia
30	Ms Andreja Poje, Executive Secretary, Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia
Representatives of media	
31	Mr Aljaž Vindiš, Graphics and Data, Dnevnik
32	Ms Nataša Briški, Director & Editor-In-Chief, Metina lista
33	Mr Miha Jenko, Journalist & Columnist, Delo daily
National Institute of Public Health	
34	Ms Metka Zaletel, Director of Health Data Centre
35	Ms Darja Lavtar, Head of Methodology
Representatives of main data providers/respondents	
36	Ms Alenka Rotter, Head of Farm Register Service, Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment
37	Ms Vlasta Vuković, Head of Department, Public Payments Administration of the Republic of Slovenia
38	Ms Majda Oman, Expert in Finances, Ljubljanske mlekarne
39	Ms Tanja Fink, Expert in Informatics, Slovenske Železnice
40	Ms Mateja Korelc, Product Manager, DataLab
Representatives of the scientific community	
41	Ms Mojca Bavdaž, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Economic, University of Ljubljana
42	Mr Janez Štebe, Assistant Professor, Social Science Data Archives
43	Mr Jože Sambt, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana
44	Mr Boris Majcen, Director, Institute for Economic Research
45	Mr Anže Burger, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana