POLICY FOR REVISIONS OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Definition

Revisions are broadly defined as a change or changes in the value of a statistic released to the public by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

Revisions may be effected for at least eight reasons:

1. Incorporation of source data that is more complete or superior in some other way.

2. Incorporation of source data that bears out concepts more closely.

3. Replacement by source data of judgement values or values derived largely by statistical techniques.

4. Incorporation of updated seasonal factors.

5. Updating of the base period.

6. Changes in statistical methods.

7. Changes in concepts, definitions, and classifications.

8. Correction of errors in source data and computations.

"Current revisions" are those that affect the current monthly or quarterly data. "Annual revisions" are made after the data for all the months or quarters of a year become available. Less frequent revisions, often of an interval of more than four years, are called "comprehensive", "major", or "benchmark" revisions. Typically, they are occasions for major changes in statistical methods and changes in concepts, definitions, and classifications. Often, these revisions are carried back for a good number of years. Revisions that correct error have no predictable time frame.

Guidelines in the Implementation of Revisions

In effecting revisions, the NSO endeavours to follow the following practices:

1. The main users of official statistics are consulted in order to identify their needs and priorities.

2. Users are provided with a revisions statement in respect of each statistical compilation or series.

3. All "current revisions" are maintained on a comparatively stable basis from year to year.

4. Any major conceptual or methodological revisions are introduced, in so far as is reasonably possible, every five years.

5.   Wherever possible and reasonable, revisions are applied to several years of data in order to provide consistent and usable time series.

6.   Information on revisions is made available to users regularly.   For example,

    (a)   Preliminary (or provisional or estimated) data and revised data are identified as such.

    (b)   Advance notice is always given of major changes in concepts, definitions, classification and in statistical methods.

    (c)   The sources for revised data are profiled when the revised series are released.

    (d)   Where a consistent dataset cannot be provided, breaks in series are documented.

7.   Periodically, the sources, direction and dispersion of revisions in respect of major statistical aggregates are analysed and made them available to users.

When an error in reporting or processing is detected, the revision is made in a transparent and timely manner.