REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA

STATISTIČNI URAD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY -

Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

2006-2008

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0 INTRODUCTION

With the adoption of the European Statistics Code of Practice and monitoring its fulfilment, there is a need for the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) to prepare a real action plan (and in some cases for some authorised producers of official statistics in Slovenia to prepare their action plans). The basis for preparing the total quality management strategy at SORS is the current Medium-Term Programme of Statistical Surveys for 2003-2007 and some other documents, especially those prepared by Eurostat.

The document begins with the definition of its purpose, which is to combine the quality concept as presented in the Medium-Term Programme of Statistical Surveys and the European Statistics Code of Practice, to determine the weak points at SORS and to plan overall development of SORS. The document will be discussed at SORS (by the Director General's Board) and presented to the Statistical Council of the Republic of Slovenia.

0.1 Mission of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

National statistics provides to public administration bodies and organisations, the economy and the public data on the status and trends in the economic, demographic and social fields, as well as in the field of environment and natural resources. These data must be of sufficient quality, timely and comparable in time, space and internationally. Data for national needs and international dissemination are provided at minimal costs and low burden of respondents. By respecting statistical confidentiality it strengthens the users' trust and by constant education and training it builds professional independence.

Keywords of our mission such as statistical confidentiality, users' trust and professional independence describe the fundamental statistical principles, the respect of which enables provision of quality statistical data for the needs of users in Slovenia and international users.

0.2 Vision

Modern approach to total quality management, competency of the staff, up-to-date harmonization with the international environment, user-orientation, modernisation of processes and improvement of working conditions are the most important activities which enable the Slovenian statistical system to complete the mission.

0.3 Values

Values of SORS as well as the entire statistical system in Slovenia are being developed in the atmosphere of the growing importance of official statistical data, especially for the support to economic and social reforms, changes in regional division of Slovenia, etc. The requests and importance of users, especially key users in the EU such as the European Central Bank and the European Commission. national authorities such as Government, the National

Bank and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, key enterprises, research community and general public are growing.

Trust of all participants (users, data providers and producers of statistics) is becoming essential. Independence of the institution and profession is a guaranty to keep this trust.

Knowledge, experience, team work, respect for privacy, quality and user-friendly environment are values that can importantly influence satisfaction of users and staff.

0.4 The quality aspect in the Medium-Term Programme of Statistical Surveys 2003-2007 (OJ RS 10-335/2003)

Taking into account the recommended conceptual quality framework, SORS has been developing quality within the framework of four main pillars:

1. Data users and data providers
2. Human resource development
3. Quality of statistical products and services
4. Process orientation

For managing the four pillars of quality, it is necessary to have a modern management approach at all levels which has to take into account:

- Balance of satisfying the needs of various interest groups (users, data providers, employees, providers of funds and the society)
- Users as the judges of quality and the importance of assessing their present and predicting their future needs
- Actions of top management that affect the corporate culture
- Understanding and transparency of processes and communication with the environment and among employees
- Common values and corporate culture, which should include all employees
- The quality of operation, which is linked to the culture of permanent learning, innovation and development
- Good relationship with partners
- Ethical and generally accepted social norms, including statistical confidentiality and data protection

0.5 Additional information and input documents

On 24 February 2005 the Statistical Programme Committee adopted the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP), which is the first instrument at the European level whose purpose is to systematically improve the quality of official statistics in Europe and thus increase the trust of users and data providers in statistics. The 15 principles included in the CoP are divided into three parts – institutional environment, statistical processes and statistical output. They

were prepared on the basis of existing international standards and the declaration on the quality of the European Statistical System.

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Code of Practice, which is fully consistent with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in the Region of the Economic Commission for Europe and with national and EU statistical legislation. SORS's adoption of the CoP stimulated the preparations for the development of the revised quality strategy, which will determine in detail the activities that are defined in the Medium-Term Programme of Statistical Surveys 2003-2007. At the same time SORS will follow the adopted Eurostat's definition of the quality of statistical surveys, which is addition to costs and burden includes six components: *adequacy, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, clarity and accessibility, comparability, and coherence*.

0.6 The basis for preparing the total quality management strategy

The basis for preparing the total quality management strategy is the definition of the four pillars within the framework of which SORS develops the field of quality (see item 04). For realising the 15 principles of the CoP, five strategic objectives were determined, namely:

1. Professional independence of the system of national statistics and the mandate for data collection are kept at least at the present level.
2. Meeting the needs of data users and data providers should be balanced.
3. Quality of statistical products and services should be evaluated and published in a user-friendly way for most statistical surveys.
4. Modernisation of statistical processing to achieve better quality and efficiency of the statistical system.
5. The values of quality, lifelong learning and development should be followed by all employees.

Further on the document presents each of the five strategic objectives with subobjectives which follow the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The exception is the fourth strategic objective, which is not covered by the CoP but is strategically important for quality improvement at SORS. Each subobjective is composed of: (i) indicators important for monitoring the implementation of the objective and (ii) activities that will be necessary for implementing the objective.

1 Professional independence of the system of national statistics and the mandate for data collection are kept at least at the present level.

Subobjectives within this objective are:

1. **Professional independence of the system of national statistics is kept at least at the present level.**
2. **The mandate for data collection is kept at least at the present level.**

1.1 Professional independence[1]

The professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European and Slovenian Statistics.

Indicator	Activity
1. The independence of the statistical authority from political and other external interference in producing and disseminating official statistics is specified in law.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
2. The head of the statistical authority has sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. He/She should be of the highest professional calibre.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.

[1] In line with the **1st principle of the CoP.**

3. The head of the statistical authority and, where appropriate, the heads of its statistical bodies have responsibility for ensuring that European and Slovenian Statistics are produced and disseminated in an independent manner.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
4. The head of the statistical authority and, where appropriate, the heads of its statistical bodies have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
5. The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
6. Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
7. The statistical authority, when appropriate, comments publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of official statistics.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.

1.2 Mandate for data collection[2]

Statistical authorities must have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.

Indicator	**Activity**

[2] In line with the **2nd principle of the CoP.**

1. The mandate to collect information for the production and dissemination of official statistics is specified in law.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
2. The statistical authority is allowed by national legislation to use administrative records for statistical purposes.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
3. On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authority may compel response to statistical surveys.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.

2 Meeting the needs of data users and data providers should be balanced.

Subobjectives within this objective are:

1. **Respecting statistical confidentiality in accordance with Slovene legislation and international standards.**
2. **Providing impartiality and objectivity within the system of national statistics.**
3. **Non-excessive burden on respondents.**
4. **Relevance of statistics regarding users' needs.**

2.1 Respecting statistical confidentiality in accordance with Slovene legislation and international standards.[3]

The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes must be absolutely guaranteed.

Indicator	Activity
1. Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
2. Statistical authority staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
3. Substantial penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality.	Preparation of the revision of the Rules on Data Protection (June 2006) and guidelines on statistical data protection (October 2006).

[3] In line with the **5th principle of the CoP.**

4. Instructions and guidelines are provided on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice.
5. Physical and technological provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases.	Preparation of the revision of the Rules on Data Protection (Fall 2006) and moving to a new building (2008-2009).
6. Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.	Further work on remote access to microdata (2006) and work of the Data Protection Committee, which guarantees strict respect of the established protocols.

2.2 Providing impartiality and objectivity within the system of national statistics[4]

Statistical authorities must produce and disseminate European and Slovenian Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.	Keeping the present level of legislation and practice. Setting up a record of critical opinions regarding the objectivity of national statistics (from printed and electronic media).
2. Choices of sources and statistical techniques are informed by statistical considerations.	Continuation of the current practice.
3. Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.	At the beginning of 2006 the Rules on Publishing Corrigenda were introduced; in 2006-2008 continuation of the consistent implementation of the Code of Practice.

[4] In line with the **6th principle of the CoP.**

4. Information on the methods and procedures used by the statistical authority are publicly available.	In 2006 publication of the methodology of statistical surveys (standardised system) on the web (www.stat.si).
5. Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.	In December 2005 first publication of the annual advance release calendar for 2006; in 2006 this became a regular activity. Setting up a protocol which should precisely define changes in the advance release calendar and procedures in the case of deviations.
6. All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time and any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements should be revised so as to ensure impartiality.	The current practice of releasing data and information at 10:30 on the announced date continues. Preparation of the SWOT analysis for privileged access to data and organisation of a wide discussion at SORS about this possibility (Fall 2006). Preparation of procedures for preventing information leakage before publication (from SORS).
7. Statistical releases and statements made in Press Conferences are objective and non-partisan.	The current practice continues. Preparation of procedures for providing objective statements at news conferences.

2.3 Non-excessive burden on respondents[5]

The reporting burden should be proportionate to the needs of the users and should not be excessive for respondents. The statistical authority monitors the response burden and sets targets for its reduction over time.

Indicator	Activity
1. The range and detail of European and Slovenian Statistics demands is limited to what is absolutely necessary.	Activities related to as extensive use of administrative sources as possible continue. After the adoption of Eurostat methodology for the so-called rolling reviews, the introduction of such reviews at SORS.
2. The reporting burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations through appropriate sampling techniques.	Setting up a common system of reporting on the use of resources (financial and human) and on the burden of data providers by statistical surveys. Studying the possibility of co-ordinated sampling (2007).
3. The information sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used where possible to facilitate its return.	Introduction of electronic reporting infrastructure (2007), standardisation of questionnaires (2007).
4. Best estimates and approximations are accepted when exact details are not readily available.	Continuation of the current practice.
5. Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information.	Continuation of activities related to as extensive use of administrative sources as possible.
6. Data sharing within statistical authorities is generalised in order to avoid multiplication of surveys.	Continuation of the current practice.

[5] In line with the **9th principle of the CoP.**

2.4 Relevance of statistics regarding users' needs[6]

European and Slovenian Statistics must meet the needs of users.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Processes are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and advise on their emerging needs and priorities.	Continuation of activities related to the co-operation with the main users within the Statistical Council and statistical advisory committees. In addition to the regular Customer Satisfaction Survey, as necessary subject-matter web surveys are conducted (2006-2007).
2. Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme.	The Statistical Council and statistical advisory committees as the highest representatives of national users discuss and adopt annual programmes of statistical surveys at their regular meetings. Annual programmes of statistical surveys show the priority statistical surveys (2007 Statistical Programme).
3. User satisfaction surveys are undertaken periodically.	In addition to the regular Customer Satisfaction Survey and monitoring the trust in national statistics, as necessary subject-matter web surveys are conducted (2006-2007).

[6] In line with the **11th principle of the CoP.**

3 Quality of statistical products and services should be evaluated and published in a user-friendly way for most statistical surveys.

Subobjectives within this objective are:

1. **Quality commitment**
2. **Accuracy and reliability**
3. **Timeliness and punctuality**
4. **Coherence and comparability**
5. **Accessibility and clarity**

3.1 Quality commitment[7]

All ESS members commit themselves to work and co-operate according to the principles fixed in the Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System.

Indicator	Activity
1. Product quality is regularly monitored according to the ESS quality components.	Preparation of the action plan for preparing and publishing standard quality reports for most statistical surveys. Preparation of the modernised strategy of evaluating and presenting sample errors (December 2006).
2. Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics.	Continuation of work on the quality indicators database, which includes all parts of the statistical process (2006-2007).

[7] In line with the **4th principle of the CoP.**

3. Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations, including tradeoffs within quality, and to guide planning for existing and emerging surveys.	Preparation and adoption of: (i) the procedure for dealing with methodologies of new statistical surveys and the revision of existing statistical surveys and (ii) the procedure for reviewing existing statistical surveys (June 2006). Analysis of the possibilities of setting up formal processes for the so-called trade-off between various quality dimensions.
4. Quality guidelines are documented and staff are well trained. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.	Preparation and adoption of guidelines on monitoring the quality of statistical surveys (Fall 2006). Expansion and completion of SORS's quality site (December 2006). Preparation of textbooks, handbooks, presentations, etc., with examples from everyday practice for key areas of the statistical process (e.g. sampling, dissemination, etc.) with the purpose to improve the knowledge of employees about statistical methodology (2007-2008). Preparation of the action plan for preparing textbooks, handbooks, presentations, etc., for individual parts of the statistical process. Implementation of the recommended "Common Assessment Framework" (CAF) (end of 2006).
5. There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using external experts where appropriate.	See activity under item 3 within subobjective 3.1.

3.2 Accuracy and reliability[8]

European and Slovenian Statistics must accurately and reliably portray reality.

Indicator	Activity
1. Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are assessed and validated.	See objective 3.1, item 1.
2. Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented according to the framework of the ESS quality components.	See objective 3.1, items 1 and 2.
3. Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes.	Setting up the system and the Intranet site for reporting good practice and exchanging the opinions of methodologists (2007).

3.3 Timeliness and punctuality[9]

European and Slovenian Statistics must be disseminated in a timely and punctual manner.

Indicator	Activity
1. Timeliness meets the highest European and international dissemination standards.	Continuation of current activities.
2. A standard daily time is set for the release of European and	Continuation of current activities.

[8] In line with the **12th principle of the CoP.**

[9] In line with the **13th principle of the CoP.**

Slovenian Statistics.	
3. Periodicity of European and Slovenian Statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible.	Continuation of current activities.
4. Any divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set.	Setting up a protocol that will precisely define changes in the advance release calendar and procedures in the case of deviations.
5. Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate quality can be disseminated when considered useful.	Continuation of current activities.

3.4 Coherence and comparability[10]

European Statistics should be consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it should be possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (e.g. arithmetic and accounting identities observed).	Setting up a system for comparing annual and short-term statistics, time comparisons and comparisons with national accounts (2008).
2. Statistics are coherent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time.	Setting up systematic management of documents on breaks in time series.
3. Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources.	Continuation of the current work.
4. Statistics from the different surveys and sources are compared and reconciled.	Recording urgent problems regarding deviations; discussion within the Director General's Methodological Board.

[10] In line with the **14th principle of the CoP.**

5. Cross-national comparability of the data is ensured through periodical exchanges between the European Statistical System and other statistical systems; methodological studies are carried out in close co-operation between the Member States and Eurostat.	Continuation of the current work.

3.5 Accessibility and clarity[11]

European and Slovenian Statistics should be presented in a clear and understandable form, disseminated in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Statistics are presented in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.	Preparation of organised training of subject-matter specialists–methodologists in improving the quality of commenting statistical data in writing (2006-2007). Systematic monitoring of the comments of users and visitors of SORS's website (2007).
2. Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy.	Continuation of the current work (web publishing, SI-STAT Database, printed publications).
3. Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and are made public.	Continuation of the current work.
4. Access to microdata can be allowed for research purposes. This access is subject to strict protocols.	Continuation of work on remote access to microdata (2006) and continuation of work of the Data Protection Committee, which guarantees strict respect of the established protocols (see objective 2.1, item 6).

[11] In line with the **15th principle of the CoP.**

5. Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems.	
6. Users are kept informed on the methodology of statistical processes and the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the ESS quality criteria.	See objective 3.1, item 1. See objective 2.2, item 4.

4 Modernisation of statistical processing to achieve better quality and efficiency of the statistical system.

Subobjectives within this objective are:

1. **Adequacy of resources**
2. **Sound methodology**
3. **Appropriate statistical procedures**
4. **Cost effectiveness**

4.1 Adequacy of resources[12]

The resources available to statistical authorities must be sufficient to meet European and Slovenian Statistics requirements.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Staff, financial, and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current European and Slovenian Statistics needs.	Setting up a system for monitoring resources and data requests. Informing the Ministry of Finance (membership of the statistical subcommittee at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN)) and the Statistical Council of the Republic of Slovenia about the situation.
2. The scope, detail and cost of European and Slovenian Statistics are commensurate with needs.	
3. Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new	Inclusion into »rolling reviews« within Eurostat.

[12] In line with the **3rd principle of the CoP.**

European and Slovenian Statistics against their cost.	See objective 3.1, item 3 – including the increase in costs and burden.
4. Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all European and Slovenian Statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.	Setting up a system for monitoring negative priorities according to Eurostat methodology.

4.2 Sound methodology[13]

Sound methodology must underpin quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. The overall methodological framework of the statistical authority follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices.	Continuation of current activities.
2. Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority.	Setting up a record of methodological workshops and conferences available to all employees via the Intranet.
3. The business register and the frame for population surveys are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to ensure high quality.	Continuation of current activities. Publishing of quality reports for registers as sampling frames: the Central Population Register for population, the Business Register of Slovenia for enterprises and the Statistical Farm Register for farms (2007).
4. Detailed concordance exists between national classifications and sectorisation systems and the corresponding European systems.	Continuation of current activities.

[13] In line with the **7th principle of the CoP** (indicators 5 and 6 and covered by the 5th strategic objective).

5. Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited.	See objective 3.1, item 3 (included are external experts).

4.3 Appropriate statistical procedures[14]

Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, must underpin quality statistics.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Where European and Slovenian Statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for the administrative purpose must be a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes.	Continuation of the current work.
2. In case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection.	Continuation of the current work.
3. Survey designs, sample selections, and sample weights are well based and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required.	See objective 3.1, items 3 and 4.
4. Field operations, data entry, and coding are routinely monitored and revised as required.	Continuation of the current work. In 2007 the introduction of a more systematic approach to analysing fieldwork for personal and household surveys.
5. Appropriate editing and imputation computer systems are used and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required.	Continuation of the current work.
6. Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent	Setting up clear procedures for publishing data revisions.

[14] In line with the **8th principle of the CoP.**

procedures.	

4.4 Cost effectiveness[15]

Resources must be effectively used.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Internal and independent external measures monitor the statistical authority's use of resources.	See objective 2.3, item 2.
2. Routine clerical operations (e.g. data capture, coding, validation) are automated to the extent possible.	Expansion of implementing automatic and selective data editing in business statistics (2007).
3. The productivity potential of information and communications technology is being optimised for data collection, processing and dissemination.	Continuation of the current work.
4. Proactive efforts are being made to improve the statistical potential of administrative records and avoid costly direct surveys.	Continuation of the current work.

[15] In line with the **10th principle of the CoP.**

5 The values of quality, lifelong learning and development should be followed by all employees.

Subobjectives within this objective are:

1. **Promotion of the quality concept and of the importance of the Code covers all employees.**
2. **Employees are systematically trained for their field of work or for a possible new workplace with the intention to provide better quality of all aspects of the process of statistical surveys.**
3. **Monitoring the development in statistical methodology and exchange of good practice is enabled for all employees in a simple way.**

5.1 Promotion of the quality concept and of the importance of the Code covers all employees

Indicator	Activity
1. Employees know the basic quality concepts according to the European definition.	Continuation of the current work by informing employees via the quality site on the Intranet, by periodic lectures and by publishing standard quality reports.
2. Employees are aware of the importance of the Code in their everyday work.	Setting up the Intranet site for the Code of Practice (2006), dissemination of a leaflet containing explanations about the Code to all employees (2006).

5.2 Employees are systematically trained for their field of work or for a possible new workplace with the intention to provide better quality of all aspects of the process of statistical surveys.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Employees participate in relevant international courses and consultations and communicate with colleagues at international level with the intention to learn from the best and to improve their knowledge.	Continuation of current activities. Defining the profile of a statistician on several levels with the intention of competence development (2006).
2. Systematic self-learning for the field of statistics is enabled at the workplace and is stimulated.	See 3.1, item 4.

5.3 Monitoring the development in statistical methodology and exchange of good practice is enabled for all employees in a simple way.

Indicator	**Activity**
1. Introduction of good practice within the office is enabled in a simple way.	Setting up the system and the Intranet site for reporting good practice and exchanging the opinions of methodologists (2007).
2. Employees participate in relevant international courses and consultations and communicate with colleagues at international level with the intention to learn from the best and to improve their knowledge.	Continuation of current activities. In addition, the profile of a statistician is defined on several levels with the intention of competence development (2006).

6 References

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