



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

R E P O R T

**on implementation of the National Programme for Statistical Surveys and
activities of the National Statistical Institute in 2008**

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LIST OF BASIC ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Customs Agency	NHIF	National Health Insurance Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	R & D	Research & Development
BNB	Bulgarian National Bank	NSSI	National Social Security Institute
GNI	Gross National Income	NSS	National Statistical System
SAF	State Agency for Refugees	NCHI	National Centre for Health Information
VAT	Value Added Tax	ECP	European Comparison Programme
TFA	Tangible Fixed Assets	PPP	Purchasing Power Parities
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Communities	PRODAGRO	Nomenclature of Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Production
UCATTU	Unified Classifier of Administrative-territorial and Territorial Units	PRODENERGY	Classification of Energy products
ESS	European Statistical System	PRODCOM. BG - 2008	BG version of the list of products of the European Community
ESGRAON - TDS	Unified System for Civil Registration and Administrative Service of Population	RSU	Register of statistical units
ESA	European System of Accounts	RCHS	Regional Centre for Health Services
ExAE	Executive Agency on Environment	SBS	Structural Business Statistics
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe	WHO	World Health Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies	RSO	Regional Statistical Office
CPI	Consumer Price Index	HICP	Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices
IS	Information System	UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
STBS	Short-term Business Statistics	CAPI	Computer Assisted Personal Interviews
NACE.BG - 2008	BG version NACE Rev.2	CPA	Statistical Classification of Products by Activity
CPA.BG - 2008	BG version of CPA	FATS	Foreign Affiliates Trade Statistics
MI	Ministry of Interior	eDamis	Electronic Data files Administration and Management Information System that offers standard solutions for collecting data files in ESS
IMF	International Monetary Fund	ESA	European System of Accounts
MH	Ministry of Health	ESSPROS	European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Food	IAOS	International Association of Official Statistics

ICD	International Statistical Classification of Diseases	ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
MESc	Ministry of Education and Science	NACE	Classification of Economic Activities in the European Communities
MOEW	Ministry of Environment and Water	NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
ILO	International Labour Organization	SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
MRDPW	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works	SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	SILC	Survey of Income and Living Conditions
MF	Ministry of Finance	SITS	Standard International Trade Classification
NRA	National Revenue Agency	MBP	Multi-beneficiary Programme

INTRODUCTION

The year 2008 is characterized by 2 fundamental events – adoption of the Strategy for Development of the National Statistical System (NSS) of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2008 – 2012 and amendments to the Law on Statistics.

The Strategy outlines NSS development and ensures implementation of its functions under the conditions of full EU membership of the country in compliance with the Community Statistical Programme 2008-2012.

The adopted amendments to the Law on Statistics create conditions for NSS functioning in line with the new Regulation on European Statistics. The amendments are relevant to carrying out NSS engagements as regards the Community Statistical Programmes; creation of organization and financial tools for managing European funds in the field of statistics; application of enhanced requirements for protection of statistical confidentiality, statistical information quality; promotion of interrelations between the Bodies of Statistics, as well as provision of individual data for production and/ or scientific purposes and use of administrative sources for production of official statistics with the aim to reduce the administrative burden and costs; specifying the nomination and interrelations between the National Statistical Institute (NSI) and the Bodies of Statistics, complementing NSI functions and tasks.

The NSS activity is being carried out in dynamic environment, which formulates new challenges. The demand for statistical information by different groups of users increases. Introduction of new statistical surveys and extension and improvement of the existing surveys continue, throwing light upon the demographic changes and migration, labour market, globalization, environment, the information and communication technologies, etc. Basic priority is reduction of respondents' burden, stemming up from the obligations to provide primary data to NSS. Coordination and cooperation within the activity of NSI, the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) and the other Bodies of Statistics, as sources of official statistical information, are being strengthened. The role of official statistics is heightened by improving the communication, the quality, the innovation approaches and the management. The speeded up development of the European partnership, the international and regional cooperation is ongoing.

The development of the European Statistical System (ESS) and the objectives of the Community Statistical Programme, 2008-2012 necessitate strengthening of NSS institutional and administrative capacity in conformity with European requirements. The final goal is to transform the European statistical policy and practice into national, full application of the *acquis* and the principles laid down in the European Statistics Code of Practice in order to improve the quality of statistical information and the trust to statistics.

The Report is worked out in compliance with Art. 9, p. 6 of the Law on Statistics. It puts stress on the surveys and activities conducted for the first time, implementation of the Strategy priorities and activities carried out concerning the production of statistical information by separate thematic domains: demographic and social statistics, macroeconomic statistics, business statistics, agricultural and environment statistics. The results of dissemination of the statistical products and services, the European and international cooperation and NSI resource assurance are also presented.

I. Done for the first time in 2008

For the first time in 2008 NSI conducted:

- *Business services statistics survey (experimentally);*
- *FATS survey in Bulgaria;*
- *Specialized survey of Bulgarian, EU citizens and foreigners crossing the border of the country;*
- *Specialized survey on statistics on careers of doctorate holders;*
- *Grants of the European Commission: "Energy accounts", "Pilot study on Subsoil asset accounts", „ Pilot data collection on net social benefits".*

For the first time in 2008 NSI worked out:

- *Experimental quarterly flash GDP estimates;*
- *Quarterly non-financial national accounts for General Government and the Rest of the World;*
- *Seasonal adjusted quarterly data on GDP, employed persons and time worked;*
- *Questionnaire on "Receipts and expenditure of specialized producers of environmentally related goods and services".*

For the first time in 2008 NSI:

- *Issued a new bilingual annual publication " Sustainable Development of Bulgaria 2007";*
- *Started using NACE.BG-2008 and CPA.BG–2008 and all related to them classifications, ensuring the use of the revised system of international and European classifications;*
- *Collected and published data on children up to 18 years, placed in specialized social service institutions.*

In 2008 NSI introduced:

- *Inflation Rate Calculator on the web site;*
- *Regional press conferences conducted at the same time in the Head Office and the 28 RSOs;*
- *Access, via the RSO, of outside users to the electronic library, in which all statistical yearbooks are digitalized.*
- *Reception desk, providing services to NSI users.*
- *Fixed hour (11.00 h) for disseminating information, according to the Release calendar;*
- *Provision of quarterly current statistical data on the economic and social development of the Republic of Bulgaria to Bulgarian Embassies abroad.*

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITIES LAID DOWN IN THE STRATEGY

II.1. REDUCTION OF RESPONDENTS' BURDEN

In 2008, NSI undertook a number of measures to reduce the respondents' burden, related to the obligations of economic and non-profit organizations, households and citizens to provide primary statistical data. Efforts were exerted in 2 basic directions:

- Wider use of administrative data sources;
- Optimization of statistical tools.

The amendments to the Law on Statistics, made in the end of 2008, regulated legally NSI possibility to use data from administrative registers and information systems for production of official statistical information in the country. Within the Twinning Project BG2006/IB/FI/01 "Sustainable Development of the National Statistical System" the experience of the Scandinavian countries and Austria in using administrative data sources for statistical purposes was studied.

In 2008, wider use of information from administrative sources (MOEW, ExAE, MAF, etc.) was initiated in respect to production of statistical information in the field of water and waste statistics. Work on building up the Bulgarian part of the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS), based mainly on data from administrative sources, was finalized. In the beginning of December, anonymized data were received from the information system of education, maintained by MESc. Quality assessment of the administrative source will be made, based on the results from the received data analysis; future steps for using data from the information system of education for the purposes of education statistics will be specified.

In 2008, a number of concrete steps were undertaken to reduce the respondents' burden when providing primary data for the purposes of official statistics:

- The number of required annual reports of companies was reduced from 23 to 17, as well as the number of indicators included in each one of them;
- The exhaustive survey on enterprises from the public sector was dropped out and the number of indicators included in short-term business statistics (monthly and quarterly surveys) was also reduced;
- The structure of samples, used in short-term business statistics surveys was optimized, as a result of which the number of surveyed enterprises was reduced and also the number of surveyed goods and services;
- The questionnaires used for measuring production in kind (PRODCOM surveys) were simplified and their electronic version was drawn up on NSI web site;
- The questionnaire and the sample used for the quarterly survey on employment and earnings were optimized. Six indicators were dropped out from the questionnaire, while the improvement of stratified sample selection made possible the reduction of its volume from 14451 reporting units (companies) in 2007 to 12775 in 2008;
- The quarterly and annual survey on communication services was dropped out; from 01.01.2009, the data are being collected mainly from the administrative source, i.e. Communications Regulation Commission.

In 2008, a special survey with an electronic questionnaire was conducted on difficulties the companies were faced with when filling-in foreign trade monthly forms, considered by the Bulgarian companies to be the most burdensome and resource consuming. The results were used for developing a Statistical Guidebook for Traders, containing explanatory notes and

concrete examples from different foreign trade activity areas, with the aim to facilitate the users in preparing their declarations and to improve primary data quality.

In 2008, NSI began exploring the possibilities for implementing a new organization in conducting household budgets surveys. The basic objective is to reduce the burden of households by dropping out everyday diaries of occurred profits and expenses, they had to fill-in during all 12 months of the year.

Reduction of the response burden of companies and citizens submitting statistical data is sought not only by using administrative sources and optimizing the statistical tools but also by using new information technologies. In order to reduce the respondents' burden in submitting statistical data, more and more surveys use an electronic questionnaire, which could be obtained directly from NSI web site. Compared to the previous year, the number of respondents in 2008, who preferred to use this way of data submission was increased by 20%.

II.2. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Assessment of statistical information quality is one of the priority directions in development of the European Statistical System. Quality measurement is based on quality criteria laid down in the European Statistics Code of Practice, i.e. relevance, reliability, timeliness, accuracy, accessibility, comparability and coherence. Good quality is attached to statistical information, which satisfies all quality criteria.

A number of activities conducted in 2008 were directed towards improvement of the methodology of statistical surveys and enhancement of reliability and accuracy of statistical information.

In compliance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1165/98 of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 1158/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council, concerning short-term business statistics:

- the coverage of the producer price survey in services was extended;
- a methodology was developed and information about the number of local economic units was ensured, as well as regional data on them;
- quality assessment of indicators, concerning foreign affiliate trade statistics (FATS) in Bulgaria, was made.

In order to improve data reliability of livestock gross production, the methodology for selection of sample units of the quarterly survey on economic accounts in agriculture was improved.

In 2008, work continued on enhancing statistical information quality in the field of demographic and social statistics. Efforts were directed towards constant monitoring of coverage and reliability of the respondents' response and assurance of high degree of participation in the surveys. Selection of the households, object of survey, is being improved with a view to optimize the samples' size and to increase the degree of data representativeness and accuracy. Last year work was speeded up on preparing quality reports, regularly submitted to EC, on basic statistical surveys (LFS, HIS, SILC, Statistics of wastes, etc.).

Efforts are being exerted to quality improvement in the field of statistics of education, culture and justice by strictly applying the methodological requirements, improvement of

organization of the statistical surveys and better coordination with the respective ministries and institutions. Reliability of produced statistical information was enhanced by undertaking measures for reducing the number of non-response and using “good practices” for substituting missing values.

Several projects financed under the Multi-Beneficiary Programmes (MBP) were realized in the field of quality improvement:

- Project on implementing the new activity classification NACE Rev.2 in short-term Statistics;
- Statistical Business Registers: Support to New *Acquis* – building up a statistical unit “Enterprise Group”;
- Transport statistics: Improving the quality of statistics of air transportation of passengers, cargo and mail – jointly with experts from Directorate General “Civil Aviation Administration”;
- Transport statistics: Improving the quality of statistics of goods transport by inland waterways – jointly with experts from the Executive Agency “Maritime Administration”;
- Improvement of coverage, timeliness and quality of national accounts.

In 2008, surveys were conducted within the Twinning project „Sustainable Development of the National Statistical System” on households budget, expenditure for tourism services and the impact of “shuttle trade”, with the aim to provide additional information about the economic activity and the consumer attitude of households, which should be used later for calculating basic indicators within the system of national economic accounts: GDP, households expenditure for individual consumption, compensation of the employed personnel and mixed income.

With the purpose of improving statistical information quality, NSI conducts regular training of interviewers on new surveys, such as the survey on ICT usage of households and individuals and the survey on ICT expenditure and investment, during the time of which the methodology and the statistical tools of surveys are being discussed. Regular mail of accompanying letters signed by NSI President, in which advance information was provided about the purpose, contents and forms of inquiries, contributed also to the higher rate of participation of households and individuals (over 90%) in the 2008 voluntary surveys.

Harmonization of concepts and definitions within ESS, on the basis of internationally adopted standards, is considered as means for improvement of statistical information quality and achievement of specific goals of the statistical system. The statistical terminology used in NSI is being harmonized by enlarging the electronic glossaries’ contents with general concepts for more than one thematic domain of SDMX standard.

Statistical experts and users of statistical information were given assistance in proper reading and application of the European classification standards, by access to the Statistical Classifications IS, ensured in 2008 via NSI web site. Possibility for extracting the methodological or explanatory notes from the system, as well as correspondence tables of transition with previous or logically related classifications serve as preconditions for easier usage of statistical products and correct application of statistical classifications.

II.3. IMPROVEMENT OF STORAGE AND DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Dissemination of statistical information is basic NSS activity, which is founded on the principles of equal access of all users to provided information products and services, objectivity and impartiality of disseminated information, timeliness and accuracy in provision of information; protection of statistical secrecy, accessibility and easy interpretation of information; assurance of the largest possible number of free-of-charge standardized publications and services; maintenance of constant contact with users; extending the share of publications in English.

In 2008, a number of concrete tasks and activities were implemented, which led to obvious improvement of dissemination of statistical information:

- new NSI communication strategy was developed;
- development of common corporate design of NSI information products and services, and of products and services disseminated on regional level by RSOs was initiated;
- for the first time, public opinion of a foreign company was studied, on the basis of which directions for improvement of statistical products and services dissemination were laid down;
- the contents of NSI web site was enlarged and the list of indicators submitted via electronic subscription of users was extended;
- the set of specialized statistical products and services, provided to users from abroad and in the country, was extended;
- work on improving the design and structure of NSI web site was initiated;
- the service of NSI electronic library was improved by ensuring to all outside users at RSOs premises a possibility for on-line reading of the complete set of digitalized Statistical Yearbooks of the Republic of Bulgaria from 1908 up to the present time.

Activating the relations with mass media and heightening the role of RSOs, as integral part of the system for relations with users was priority in the field of dissemination of information. After a long break the regular press conferences for release of statistical data on important economic and social themes, such as GDP, inflation, labour market, population and etc. began again. The practice of data release at exact hour (11:00 h), according to the dates in the Calendar Presenting the Results of the Statistical Surveys was introduced in practice, guaranteeing equal access of all users to the information. For the first time in 2008, NSI data release on Internet was accompanied by short press-information presenting the meaning and the contents of statistical indicators in a simple way.

In 2008, work on building up Foreign Trade IS was finalized successfully, by means of which free access and possibility for on-line creation of foreign trade tables will be ensured for the first time in NSI practice. Together with extension and maintenance of the good traditions in NSI publishing activity, new publications, orientated to the current needs, such as “Sustainable Development of Bulgaria, 2007” and “CPI and Inflation – answers to most frequently asked questions” were elaborated.

Within the frames of the traditional cooperation with UNICEF-Bulgaria, a new version of BulInfo product was prepared in 2008, in which indicators and related data on different national initiatives were included, such as “Millennium Development Goals”, “Strategy for Demographic Development”, “Protection of Children”, “Poverty and Social Exclusion”, etc.

For all achieved so far, NSI is faced with considerable work as regards building up of databases for general use of Data Warehouse type with control access, which should allow protected usage of micro and macrodata. Important task for implementation is building up of

databases for dissemination of statistical information, which should allow on-line service of different user requests and services and assure feedback with users.

II.4. ENHANCED IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

The NSI priority in the field of information technologies during last year was the development of communication infrastructure on the basis of state administration network. The number of RSOs, included in the state administration network was increased to 21, while for 9 RSOs the channel capacity for links with Sofia was enhanced. The system's platform for corporative electronic mail was renovated by using a modern operating system and new technical devices and software, allowing effective exchange of information between RSOs and NSI Head Office. The Business Statistics IS, which is under construction, foresees direct loading of companies' annual statistical reports via NSI web site – realization of the so-called on-line electronic questionnaires.

The use of products for building up data repository and OLAP (on-line analytic processing of information) is being extended, as well as the use of relational databases. Statistical software, such as SPSS and SAA, are increasingly in use in the statistical practice, as well as software with "open code" (or without licensing requirement) such as "Demetra". Significant progress was registered in applying GIS technologies – digital models were made for the bigger populated places.

II.5. DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND IMPROVEMENT OF LABOUR CONDITIONS

Production and dissemination of impartial, timely and accurate information about the state and tendencies in the development of the economy, the social sphere, demography and the environment is impossible without well-prepared and continuously upgrading its qualification personnel. That is why serious progress was achieved in 2008, implementing the priority of development of human resources and improvement of living conditions laid down in the Strategy for Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2008-2012.

Conditions of work were improved in NSI Head Office and the 28 RSOs in the country by repairs of the work space, new furniture and by already initiated step-by-step introduction of new information and communication technologies. Structural cabling of almost all RSOs is over 90% finalized. By supplying more than 900 new computer configurations in the beginning of 2009, computer equipment will be completed.

The directions of the Fire-brigade and Rescue Services and the instructions of the Labour Medicine Office were implemented in respect to improvement of the work conditions. Design, capital repair and new furnishing and appliances for the second and third floors of the Primorsko holiday house were accomplished. Repair and new furnishing of the bungalows at the Borovetz resting base were made. The Slivk Training Center is under overall repair, after which regular conducting of seminars and qualification courses using modern Internet and computer technologies will be possible not only for NSI personnel, but also for training within the framework of the European Statistical System.

In 2008, a process of optimization of the function and organization structure of NSI Head Office and RSOs was initiated in compliance with the nature and volume of concrete

activities. The use of interviewers on freelance contracts was extended on a tentative base, showing very good results. The NSI personnel was reduced by 9.5% in pursuance of § 23 of the Transitional and Concluding Provisions of the Law on the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2008 and in relation to CM Decree No15 on implementation of the 2008 state budget. It became possible as a result of the optimization to increase the average wages and salaries from 500.76 to 613.69 BGN within NSI system or by 22.6 %, while in NSI Head Office from 617.06 to 750.05 BGN or by 21.6 %. A system of time recording and labour costs is expected to be introduced and taken as a basis for NSI budget planning.

II.6. DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

During the first year the Strategy for the Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2008-2012 was set into operation, the development of the European partnership and international cooperation continued at accelerated rates. The objectives and tasks in this field were implemented to a very high extent, while the activities were extremely varied. The NSI continued fulfilling its engagements on carrying out the activity in compliance with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice.

With the full EU membership of Bulgaria as of 1 January 2007, NSS of the country became an integral ESS part. In 2008, representatives of NSI and other Bodies of Statistics, as well as BNB were directly involved in the legislative process of the European Community by taking part in the working meetings on statistics to the Council of the European Union and the European Commission /Eurostat.

Concerning the Statistical Programme Committee, which incorporates the Directors General of the MS Statistical Offices, positions on 10 drafts of *acquis communautaire* were prepared and coordinated within the framework of the Council of European Issues (CEI). The NSI President took part in the annual Conference of the Directors General of the National Statistical Institutes (DGINS), devoted to reduction of respondents' burden by using administrative sources for statistical purposes.

Basic means for improvement of the methodology, quality improvement and for raising the effectiveness of production of statistics were the Multi-beneficiary and National Phare Programmes under implementation and Eurostat Grant contributions. By means of them, participation of Bulgarian statisticians was ensured in working meetings, task groups, training seminars, long-term traineeship at Eurostat and MS Statistical Offices. Transfer of know-how was made and statistical surveys were conducted in fields of European significance. In March 2008, implementation of a Twining project was initiated, devoted to the reform of NSI regional structure with the Statistical Offices of Germany and France as partners.

Last year, NSI participated actively in the work of the UN Statistical Commission and the Conference of European Statisticians. Bulgaria was among the five MS, which actively joined in the elaboration of a report on the status and future development of social statistics in the world, and also in the Friends of the Chair Group, preparing a report with recommendations and standards in the field of statistics of violence against women in the world. Both issues will be submitted and discussed at the following 40th session of UNSC in New York in the end of February 2009.

Big progress was achieved in the field of regional cooperation. The experience gained during the pre-accession period allows NSI to share the knowledge within the frames of active

bilateral and regional cooperation. Bulgarian experts successfully share their experience and knowledge in different statistical fields with the countries of the Western Balkans. The National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria initiated and became a host of a high level meeting on 6 September, 2008 in Bansko, at which the Directors General of the Statistical Offices of the countries of the Balkan region discussed the possibilities, directions and forms of future cooperation.

Within the frames of signed bilateral agreements for cooperation Bulgaria hosted study visits to delegations of ROSSTAT, Russia and the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia.

II.7. ACHIEVEMENT OF MORE EFFECTIVE INTERACTION AND COORDINATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Main task in 2008 was introduction of amendments to the Law on Statistics, which meant to provide conditions for more effective interaction and coordination within NSS. Work on this task was finalized successfully. The adopted Law on the Amendment and Supplementation of the Law on Statistics (prom. SG, 14 Nov 2008) creates necessary preconditions for the successful and effective implementation of activities, concerning not only statistical data collection, processing, analysis and storage, but also submission and dissemination of official statistical information in the country. The important task of alignment of the internal legal basis of NSI and other NSS Bodies with the amendments of the Law on Statistics is to be implemented. The National Statistical Council is to be created in conformity with the amended Law on Statistics and transformed into an active and effective body, ensuring transparency, publicity and public control over the activity of official statistics in our country.

In 2008, a process of updating NSI agreements with the Bodies of Statistics and other public institutions was initiated, with the aim to achieve better coordination of activities and terms for production of statistical information, provision of continuous exchange of experience and training on issues related to the changes and recent achievements in the statistical methodology and active cooperation, satisfying the newly emerged information needs, thus avoiding unnecessary introduction of additional statistical surveys when the required data are available.

Joint preparation and participation of NSI and the Bodies of Statistics in European programmes and projects on developing statistical methods, conducting new surveys and developing new statistical indicators continued. Development and implementation of a system for self-assessment and monitoring over the observance of CoP principles in all NSS bodies was initiated in 2008. Active participation in the work of inter-institutional commissions and working groups continued.

Implementation of a number of important new activities became possible as a result of extension and broadening of the inter-institutional cooperation, better coordination and integration within NSS framework. The NSI prepared and provided information to the National Revenue Agency about the weighted average VAT rate in 2007, for calculating the total amount of contribution of Bulgaria to EU on own resources accrued on VAT. Together with experts from the Ministry of Finance and the Bulgarian National Bank, NSI elaborated and submitted information about the General Government debt and deficit for 2007 and also updating data for the 1997 -2003 period.

As a result of the joint work between NSI, MF, NRA and CA, vital methodological improvement in the field of tax statistics was made. On Eurostat recommendation, in connection with preparation of data on government deficit, time series were prepared for the 1995 – present time period, with time adjusted monthly data on tax income in the budget, in compliance with the period for carrying out the transactions, subject to taxation. More effective interaction and coordination within NSS framework was achieved with MH, NCHI as regards organization of statistical activities and participation in Eurostat activities. Representatives of NSI take part in preparation of the 2008 Annual Report of the National Drug Council. The NSI received full support from MI and MT in conducting the specialized survey of Bulgarian, EU citizens and foreigners crossing the border of the country. In the field of education statistics big progress was achieved, aiming at coordinated activities with MESc for future usage of the MESc information systems on secondary and tertiary education for statistical purposes. The NSI promoted the cooperation with ExAE and MOEW to fulfill the growing annual commitments on European projects in the field of environment and prepare a National report on the state and protection of the environment in the Republic of Bulgaria.

In the field of R & D statistics an inter-institutional working group was set up with MF and MESc to put into practice the requirements of Commission Regulation (EC) No 753/2004 concerning the statistics of science and technology. In the field of information society statistics meeting were held with the Communications Regulation Commission and the State Agency for Information Technology and Communications. Concluding contracts with both institutions is expected.

In 2008, work was initiated jointly with MLSP on a project, testing the European socio-economic classification, which will facilitate not only the implementation of this classification in the management of labour market but also ISCO 2008 during the coming two years.

II.8. HEIGHTENING THE TRUST IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Strict observance of scientific principles and adherence to the adopted international and European methodologies, provision of transparency in production of statistical information, as well as application of effective policy on dissemination of information and servicing of users are of key importance for heightening the trust in official statistics.

Last year a number of concrete measures were launched for heightening the trust to NSS, as follows:

- a project was initiated on developing methods for assessment and analysis of the degree of trust in official statistics and the factors, which define it. For the first time a sociological study was conducted by Alfa Research Agency for defining the degree of users' trust in NSS;
- more information is found on NSI web site about the nature, methodology and meaning of basic statistical surveys and indicators in an accessible and void of technical details way, for achieving wider transparency in production of statistical information;
- the dialogue with all user groups was activated and a user-oriented approach for provision and publication of statistical information was adopted;
- active media campaign was undertaken for making popular and approving the role of official statistics in society.

The above-mentioned activities and measures for improving the quality of statistical information are also directly related to heightening the trust in official statistics.

III. REPORT BY THEMATIC DOMAINS

III.1. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

III.1.1. Demographic statistics

By putting into operation the Demography IS in 2008, the deadlines for obtaining annual data on the number, structure and territorial distribution of population were significantly reduced and methodological data comparability in time was ensured. The RSOs possibilities for remote generation of tabular output in electronic and conventional kind were expanded, which also contributed to satisfy in a better and quick way the increasing needs of demographic data.

In order to improve the quality of incoming information in Demography IS, activities were undertaken and finalized on raising the effectiveness of interaction between the demographic system and the ESGRAON – TDS system. On the basis of a bilateral agreement signed between the two institutions total data validation was made on causes of death in Demography IS. New forms of documents were suggested and should be implemented in 2009, concerning registration of the demographic events with additional indicators – place of birth, status of economic activity, education, as well as new organization of document flow system, coding the information for reporting causes of death in compliance with the requirements of the International Classification of Diseases – X Revision of the World Health Organization.

For the first time during the last three decades demographic projections were made by domains. They are available at NSI territorial structures to be submitted to regional users. The methodology used in projections is complied to a greatest extent with the requirement of Eurostat and UN.

According to Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and the Council concerning Community statistics on migration and international protection, the 2008 year is appointed as a first reference year for provision of statistical data on external migration processes for each MS. Organization and technology are set up for collection of statistical data on estimates of external migration by using data from Demography IS and administrative sources of MI and SAR. In order to estimate the external migration flows and socio-demographic structure of their participants, a survey of Bulgarian, EU citizens and foreigners passing through fixed Border Control Points in the country was initiated as of June 2008.

As regards implementation of the obligations, assumed on European and international Regulations in the field of demography, tables with national and regional statistical data were prepared and submitted to Eurostat, UNSD, UNECE and ILO together with the necessary analyses and meta-information. Experts of NSI took active part in Working groups within the framework of Eurostat and UNECE, which leads to improvement of the mutual exchange of information in this field. A number of current tasks were implemented in respect to information assurance of monitoring of the National strategy for demographic development of the country, the National activity plan on equality of women and men, the National strategy on migration and integration and the respective action plan.

III.1.2. Labour market

Some changes were made in the regular labour force survey (LFS) in 2008, beside the implementation of current tasks on conducting and dissemination of information:

- additional questions were included in the questionnaire, by means of which full coverage of the compulsory indicators was achieved in compliance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 430/2005;
- the survey period observed was extended, covering all 52 calendar weeks of the year (instead 48, as up to 2007) according to Eurostat requirements. For this purpose, the three-month sample of LFS was increased by 1500 households;
- application of the so-called “wave approach” was initiated, where part of the indicators are observed by annual periodicity instead of three months aiming at reduction of respondents’ burden;
- Ad hoc module on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants” was conducted in compliance with Commission Regulation (EC) No102/2007, and our country applied a short version of the module.

In order to improve the measurement of employment in agriculture in 2008, an ad hoc survey on agricultural activity of households to LFS was conducted within the framework of EC Grant. The objective was to analyze the discrepancy of employment data from LFS conducted by NSI and those conducted by MAF.

Instrumentarium for the “2009 Labour Force ad hoc module on entry of young people into the labour market” was elaborated, financed under EC Grant. Work was finalized on the LFS ad hoc module „Accidents at work and work-related health problems“, conducted during the second quarter of 2007 (within the Multi-beneficiary Phare Programme 2005). Microdata from the module and a report on data quality were submitted to Eurostat.

An expert from the Statistics of Households and Employment Division attended a long-term training course on issues of LFS quality at Eurostat. Experts took also part in the work of Eurostat working groups on labour market statistics in Luxembourg and seminars on problems of LFS in Stockholm and Athens.

Beside the regularly conducted annual exhaustive and quarterly sample surveys of employees, hours worked and wages and salaries in companies, budgetary organizations, political and public organizations, unions and movements and financial institutions in 2008, data processing of the structure of earnings survey, conducted in 2006, was finalized. The main survey results were put on NSI web site. For the first time NSI calculated the following structural labour market indicators - tax rate on low wage earners, unemployment trap, low wage trap, net income from earnings, gender pay gap in unadjusted form. In 2008, the labour cost indexes for 2005 and 2006 were recalculated by economic activities according to the new NACE.BG-2008. The activity was supported by EC Grant.

Last year experts from MLSP and NSI discussed the possibilities for statistical evaluation of informal remuneration of labour by branches. The MLSP worked out an analytical report on informal remuneration on the basis of 2006 data, which helped to develop expenditure policy and to lay down measures for limiting the hidden economy and unregulated employment.

Labour market policy data basis was updated on the grounds of administrative data from the National Employment Agency and NSSI. The contents of information about the active and the passive measures and labour market programmes, which is necessary to be collected and entered in the database was clarified, as well as the deadlines and the list of indicators, reporting on the achieved progress. In October, information was sent to Eurostat for

verification of data entry. Data precision is expected on the basis of recommendations and comments sent by Eurostat.

III.1.3. Life-long learning (LLL)

In 2008, beside the regular activities on production and dissemination of statistical information about the activity and expenditure of all public and private institutions in the field of pre-primary, basic, secondary and tertiary education, and also information about those who have attained qualification degree and scientific title by fields of education, the efforts of education statistics were directed towards vocational training of adults and life-long learning in response to the priorities laid down in the Lisbon strategy. In the field of vocational training of adults data were provided on the courses, organized by the vocational training schools and Vocational Training Centers, leading to attainment of professional qualification degree.

During the reporting year, the results of the education and training survey of population of 25-64 years of age, conducted in the November – December 2007 period, were processed and published on NSI web site. The survey was conducted using a methodology, prepared by Eurostat and compulsory for all EU Member States. In this form and contents the survey was conducted for the first time in Bulgaria, while in the future it will be conducted at intervals of 4-5 years. Main objective of the survey was to measure the degree of participation of the economically active population (25-64 years of age) in LLL and in particular – in its three basic forms – formal education and training, informal training and independent training.

III.1.4. Culture

In 2008, NSI continued implementing the tasks on development, production and dissemination of statistical information about the publishing activities, the radio programme and TV activities and the film production activities. Information was also assured about the activity of libraries with fund of library editions amounting to more than 200 Thousand volumes, that of museums, community clubs, theatres, opera and operetta, circus and musical bands.

III.1.5. Public health and health and safety at work

During the reporting year NSI and NCHI continued with regular conducting of exhaustive annual statistical surveys on the activity of hospital and health establishments using a methodology harmonized with Eurostat definitions, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The methodology of indicators of practicing physicians by specialties was specified in compliance with the amended legal basis in our country and in pursuance of the European Directive of Physicians Specialties.

For the first time in 2008 data were collected on children up to 18 years of age in specialized institutions for submitting social services. Statistical data were assured on bed fund, personnel, accommodated children by basic health and social categories of the Houses for Medical and Social Care for Children. Institutionalization rate of children in these houses was calculated for the 2000-2007 period.

Development of the methodology of the System of Health Accounts continued, its objective being to estimate all health costs, i.e. the public, as well as the costs of households and the non-profit organizations – foundations, associations, the costs of private health insurance

funds and international organizations. In 2008, within the procedure of joint data collection by Eurostat, WHO and OECD, data for the 2003-2006 period were prepared and validated by an international expert team. National data were assured by integrated usage of data from NSI statistical surveys and detailed information about the costs by kind provided by MH and NHIF. Last year, NSI conducted a sample Health Interview Survey (European Health Interview Survey) financed by EC Grant. It is conducted on the basis of a unified methodology for all MS and aims to assure comparable data on the health status, way of life (health determinants) and population usage of health services for all EU countries.

In 2008, NSI representatives participated actively in work within the framework of Eurostat programme “Partnership on Health Statistics”, based on which the methodology is being developed and the EC surveys on public health and health and safety at work – planned.

The National Centre for Health Information, as a Body of Statistics, has implemented all tasks within NPSS’2008, being the responsible executor or co-executor. Through the RCHS Network, planned annual exhaustive surveys were conducted on in-patient and out-patient health establishments; psychiatric and dermato-venereological hospitals; centres for urgent medical aid; oncological dispensaries; pulmonary establishments (pneumophthiziatra); centres for hematology-transfusion; centres for hemodialysis; registered cases of infectious diseases; hospitalized cases in health establishments by type of diseases and age groups. Exhaustive annual surveys were conducted jointly with RCHS on active tuberculosis and chronic non-specific pulmonary diseases, venereal diseases and trichophytia, malignant neoplasms. Statistical surveys were conducted, observing all parameters laid down on NPSS’ 2008, such as: theme/ object of the survey, ways of conducting the survey, deadlines, as well as form and type of data submission.

Statistical data on accidents at work in Bulgaria in 2006 were collected and processed according to the NSSI statistical system, called “Accidents at Work”.

III.1.6. Statistics of household budgets, living conditions and social protection of population

In 2008, the following amendments and changes were made in the household budgets survey:

- Additional questions were included in the survey on housing, housing conditions, supply with durable goods, received households social transfers;
- Household income classification was replaced by a new, more detailed one, providing, according to Eurostat recommendations, comparability between the household budgets surveys in EU Member States and the results from the SILC survey;
- Changes were made in the classification of consumer expenditure (COICOP/HBS) in compliance with Eurostat requirements and for the needs of CPI compiling.

Versions for future changes in the methodology and organization of the household budgets survey were elaborated, orientated towards reduction of burden of persons and households, taking part in the survey. Work will continue in this direction also in 2009.

In 2008, a data quality report on the 2005 survey was prepared and sent to Eurostat in respect to data comparison of EC household budgets survey. The NSI participated in preparing the editing version and in submission of additional information about Eurostat final data quality report on the 2005 household budgets survey in the EU Member States.

Experts, working on the household budgets Survey, took active part in a number of international and inter-institutional groups, related to implementation of the tasks in the National activity plan on social inclusion and the National strategic report on pensions, and also in updating the calculation methods of official poverty line in 2009.

In 2008, NSI initiated regular, annual panel SILC surveys (EU-SILC project) in conformity with Regulation (EC) No 1177/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning Community statistics on income and living conditions. The survey is being financed under EC grant. The project is of importance for the comparative study of poverty and social exclusion and their following up in time for particular EU Member States, as it provides harmonized income data in two dimensions: cross-sectional and longitudinal. Field survey was conducted within the April – July 2008 period in 4387 households and 10533 persons aged 16 and over. National data were prepared and work on assessing the quality of data and the statistical procedures for replacing missing values, data weighting and data calibration was initiated. In parallel with the survey data processing in 2008, began the preparation of SILC '2009.

Discussion and preparation of two experiments were launched during the reporting year (to be financed under EC grants in 2009):

- Combining data from the NSSI administrative register and NSI survey on SILC with the aim to improve the coverage and reliability of information;
- Using CAPI technology when conducting inquiries (use of portable PC in interviews).

By solving the first issue and implementing CAPI technology in field work, better quality of income data will be achieved and the respondents' burden will be reduced.

In compliance with Regulation (EC) No 458/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the following two Regulations of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European system of integrated social protection statistics (ESSPROS), 2006 statistical data filling-in was finalized in 2008, by basic module of the system and by module of pension beneficiaries. Implementation of ESSPROS on national level jointly with NSSI was financed under MBP 2006 project on social protection statistics. The pilot survey on social services provided from non-government organizations could be considered as main project activity, conducted for the first time in our country. Short review of the social protection system and analysis of the results, obtained for the 2005-2006 period are to be published in the Statistics Journal.

In 2008, working meetings of MLSP and NSI were held, relevant to the survey planned in NPSS'2008 on determining the scope of working poor – employed persons, living in poverty. Due to insufficient volume of the household budgets survey sample (3000 households), which was expected to be source of information about determining the number and structure of the working-poor in our country, it was decided to end-up the survey work.

III.1.7. Crime and justice

In 2008, the statistical survey on punished criminality was conducted jointly with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defence, the Supreme Court of Cassation in the Republic of Bulgaria, the National Prosecutor's Office, the Regional Prosecutor's Offices, the district, the regional and martial courts in the country. Information of public significance was provided about crimes ending with a sentence and convicted persons with effective sentences, including convicted juvenile persons. Data were prepared and disseminated on punished criminality on

national level, by planning regions, districts and municipalities, by kind of crimes and year of commitment, by basic socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, citizenship and economic activity), penalties imposed, previous sentences, recidivism and other. Data on convicted juvenile persons are also divided by use of alcohol and drugs, living conditions of persons, reasons for crime commitment and other.

In 2008, the regular survey on the activity of local commissions for prevention of minor and juvenile delinquency was prepared and conducted. Data were provided to the Central commission for prevention of minor and juvenile delinquency and all interested administrations and users.

III. 2. MACROECONOMIC STATISTICS

III.2.1.National economic accounts and monitoring of own resources

Main tasks in the field of national economic accounts were related to the methodological development and improvement of data quality, heightening the level of compliance with EC and reducing the terms for data provision. The NSI proceeded with its work on regular compilation of annual data on GDP and its components by production method, income approach and final consumption expenditure for 2006, preliminary data for 2007 and data by institutional sectors for 2006. For the first time, data were prepared and disseminated on persons employed, hours worked and labour productivity in conformity with the methodology of national accounts for the period as of 1995 – annual, as well as quarterly.

In 2008, the methodology and available statistical and administrative information about the development of households' regional accounts were studied – i.e. primary distribution of households' income and secondary distribution of households' income. Work will continue in 2009 by compiling time series for the 2000–2006 period. Work went on developing and improving national financial accounts.

With the aim to reduce the respondents' burden and simplify, and also in pursuance of the requirements of ESA'95 for classifying the financial indicators by primary maturity and institutional sectors, the statistical questionnaire forms on debits and credits by institutional sectors of non-financial enterprises and owned securities, and derivatives by institutional sectors were simplified.

During the reporting period, NSI submitted regular quarterly information by main macroeconomic indicators in national accounts. For the first time experimental quarterly flash GDP estimates on the 45th day after the end of the reporting period were made and published. Seasonal adjusted quarterly data on GDP by production approach, income approach and final consumption expenditure for estimates, employed persons and hours worked were provided within Eurostat revised programme for data transmission on ESA'95, using Demetra standard software of Eurostat.

Basic tasks implemented in the field of monitoring own resources refer to provision of GNI data, report on data quality and inventories. On their basis, Eurostat estimates the quality and exhaustiveness of GNI data and their compliance with ESA'95. In 2008, data were provided on GNI for 2006, preliminary data for 2007 together with the respective quality report and inventory report.

For the first time in 2008, in respect of the requirements of Regulation No 1553/98 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the amendments in the Law on Value Added Tax in 2007, NSI prepared and submitted to NRA information about the weighted average VAT rate in 2007, for calculating the total amount of contribution of Bulgaria to EU on own resources accrued on VAT, on the basis of macroeconomic indicators on national accounts and detailed version of Supply-Use tables.

The NSI took active part in Revision of ESA'95 and in joint projects with Eurostat and Member States, thus aiming at optimum methodological compliance of the national accounts indicators between MS.

Important priority in the field of macroeconomic statistics for NSI was improvement of coordination and efficiency of the relations between the NSI, the BNB and the MF, which provide basic information about production of national accounts. Updating the Memorandum for Cooperation between the three institutions, which regulates clearly the obligations and terms of each one of them in respect to data provision necessary for production of national accounts, is in progress.

III.2.2. Monetary and financial statistics

The Bulgarian National Bank develops and produces the basic part of monetary and financial statistics. The NSI conducts annual and quarterly statistical surveys on insurance, health insurance companies, pension companies, specialized investment companies, and financial and insurance intermediation by electronic forms. Important task for 2008 was implementation of NACE.BG-2008, concerning the enterprises from Financial sector. Changes were made in the statistical forms for insurance, pension companies and health insurance companies with the aim to facilitate their filling-in.

III. 2.3. Government finance statistics

The efforts in the field of government finance statistics were orientated towards further methodological development and improvement of data quality. Recording of all taxes and social contributions by the time adjusted cash method for the 1995 – 2007 period was made, following Eurostat recommendations, as a result of their mission on evaluation of General government excessive deficit in March 2008. Its elaboration was submitted to Eurostat for agreement. This method for recording taxes and social contributions is expected to be implemented in NA compilation practice in 2009 and for coordinated data use by NSI and other institutions. Using the time adjusted cash method together with the changed methodology for treating the debts written off to enterprises and for writing off the Iraq debt to Bulgaria, necessitated data revision of non-financial indicators for general government for the 2002 – 2007 period. For the first time, more detailed information was provided about general government by separating market from non-market services and calculating time series for the 1999 – 2001 period.

Publishing additional quarterly indicators of general government was initiated in 2008 – i.e. taxes on products, other taxes on production, receivable interests, gross capital formation, subsidies on products, subsidies on production, individual and collective consumption, by providing also data on the 1999-2001 period

III. 2.4. Consumer prices

Conducting monthly statistical surveys on consumer prices provided necessary information about calculation of national consumer price index (CPI), harmonized index of consumer price (HICP) and price index for a small basket, consisting of 100 goods and services of vital and public benefit, meant for the 20% lowest income households.

In 2008, the sample of outlets was updated; the selection of goods and services included in the consumer basket – improved; the coverage of some indices by commodity groups - extended. The statistical weights system for constructing CPI was improved and the use of information from additional sources was extended. Methods, concerning treatment of electricity, heating energy and fixed telephone services prices in the index were improved in relation to changes made in the tariffs, offered during the year. The consumer profiles, used in calculating the price index of road transport insurance were updated.

Consumer price index numbers of medicines, tobacco, automobiles, accommodation services, books, newspapers, mobile telephone services, air transport and package holidays were improved in compliance with Eurostat recommendations on HICP, outlined in the Compliance Country Visit Report of September 2007. Application of quality assessment methods by changing the quality of goods and services - representatives continued and was expanded.

Work on building up new Consumer Prices IS for collection, processing, analysis, storage, provision and dissemination of statistical information about consumer prices was main priority in 2008. The system was developed based on new modern tools and provides a possibility for speeding up and facilitating the data processing processes. Introducing the system in regular operation will start in the beginning of 2009.

Work on the pilot study on Owner-Occupied Housing (OOH) in the Framework of the Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices – Stage 3C, financed by EC was initiated

The NSI continued its participation in ECP according to Regulation (EC) No 1445/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, establishing common rules for the provision of basic information on Purchasing Power Parities and for their calculation and dissemination. They serve as a basis for conducting international comparison of GDP per capita. In 2008, following the Programme work plan, NSI conducted specialized consumer price surveys on the following goods and services–representatives: E08-1 “Services”, E08-2 “Transport, restaurants, hotels”, as well as a rent survey in real estate agencies, used for calculation of PPPs and correction coefficients for adjusting EU officials’ salaries and pensions. The 2007 results of the capital goods price surveys (selected machinery and equipment and construction projects) were finalized.

Quality and protection of delivered individual data were improved as a result of the implemented methods for control during the pre-survey work and the four stages of data validation. Eurostat developed and MS, including Bulgaria, implemented new tools for on-line and off-line work in the PPP database, achieving the following i) simplified navigation, coordination of parameters and flexible data entry of prices on individual items, ii) enlarged possibilities for preliminary comparisons and analysis of the results at different stages of data validation, iii) appropriate environment for electronic translation of the descriptions of goods and services representatives. Terms for publishing the ECP results were shortened..

III.2.5. Statistics of foreign trade

During the past year, Foreign Trade IS was successfully developed. The objective of the project is creation of a single entry point for all incoming data from different sources, usage of a unified technology for information processing and control, unified rules for data evaluation and audit and assurance of a single exit point to all users by using modern technologies. In the beginning of the year implementation of the system in practice was initiated. The NSI won a project within the framework of ESS “Modernization of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics” (MEETS), the objective of which is simplification of Intrastat system. Work on reduction of response burden when filling-in foreign trade data continued by activities financed under MBP 2006 project.

In 2008, NSI took active part in the preparation of changes in European regulations in the field of foreign trade statistics. Integral part of activities was the improvement of work on monthly collection and dissemination of information about the movement of commodity flows. Achievement in the field of foreign trade is due to the improved cooperation between the NSI, the NRA and the Customs Agency. A special survey was conducted by electronic questionnaire on difficulties and burden of respondents, the results of which were used in developing a special Statistical Guidebook for Traders, with explanatory notes and concrete examples from different fields of foreign trade activities. The design and contents of foreign trade heading on NSI web site was improved.

III.3. BUSINESS STATISTICS

III.3.1. Structural business statistics – annual data on industry, construction, distributive trade, transport, communication and services

In 2008, the efforts were directed mainly to production and dissemination of annual information about the activity of enterprises in each of the industry, construction, transport, communications and services sectors in pursuance of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 58/97 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1618/99, concerning the criteria for evaluation of quality of structural business statistics. Data on the main macroeconomic indicators – gross output, intermediate consumption and value added, employed, wages and salaries – were provide within a fixed term.

Another key direction of work in the field of structural business statistics in 2008 was quality improvement of data, obtained at the lowest level of aggregation by more accurate estimate of non-response, more detailed micro data check-up and provision of full and logical compliance of the related indicators in different forms (elements) of the annual report, filled-in by the economic units.

Questionnaires for the annual survey on production and sales of industrial products based on PRODCOM.BG-2008 were optimized in order to facilitate the respondents and an electronic version in Excel format for data submission was elaborated. The software for data processing and data control was updated aiming at improvement of the survey data quality and reliability and provision of more detailed output information.

In pursuance of Commission Regulation (EC) No 772/ 2005, a statistical survey on steel extraction enterprises was conducted last year with the aim to provide annual statistical data on steel production in 2005, 2006 and 2007 from enterprises producing pig-iron, steel or products.

Last year, for the first time, regional data were provided on the number of local units engaged in construction.

In 2008, NSI provided data to Eurostat about foreign affiliate statistics in Bulgaria, data on 11 indicators for the reporting 2006 year according to Regulation (EC) No 716/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council after check-up of primary and secondary data confidentiality.

Last year, main task in the field of structural business statistics implemented within agreed terms was production and dissemination of information about the investments in acquisition of tangible fixed assets, acquired tangible fixed assets by kinds for all sectors of the economy and by territory; about the volume of foreign direct investments in the non-financial sector enterprises for the entire year by economic activities, fields and foreign partner country.

In 2008, instrumentarium for the annual statistical surveys was updated in compliance with the changes in the national accountancy. New indicators were included for improvement of comparability and full harmonization with the requirements of EC Regulations concerning structural business statistics. The purpose of the changes was to reduce the burden of respondents when filling-in their annual statistical reports.

III.3.2. Short-term business statistics

In 2008, Bulgaria continued on a monthly basis to provide fully compliant, in respect of methodology, levels of details and terms for transmission to Eurostat, data on development of industry, construction and trade following Council Regulation (EC) No 1165/98 and Regulation (EC) No 1158/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1165/98 concerning short-term business statistics. The short-term indicators are part of the Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs), which provide a basis for the development of EC Economic and Monetary Policy and are the quickest source of information concerning the state of economy.

Transition to NACE.BG -2008 (BG version of NACE Rev.2) and its implementation from the beginning of 2009 was main task in the field of short-term statistics in 2008. In pursuance of Council Regulation (EC) No 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics, work on re-basing the time series of industry and construction production indices, industry and retail trade turnover indices and producer price indices to the new base year 2005, instead of 2000, for all groups was successfully finalized in 2008.

Experts from NSI Trade Division developed a method on back casting of time series by retail trade volume indices of 2000, which Eurostat estimated positively, as an original and applicable solution for transition between the two classifications and it was presented at international meeting in Bucharest. From the beginning of 2009, STBS data will be published by the new NACE.BG-2008, defined in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1983/2005.

Implementation of NACE.BG-2008 in short-term business statistics was supported financially within MBP 2006 project.

In 2008, quarterly statistical information was provided regularly about expenditure on acquisition and acquired tangible fixed assets, and also about the volume of foreign direct investments by economic sectors. According to the requirements of Council Regulation (EC) No 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics, Annex B „Construction”, information was

provided from local administrations about issued permits for construction of new buildings by type (residential and non-residential) and useful floor area.

Within STBS in transport, communications and services, quarterly data were produced and published on the financial results of enterprises from the public and private sector. This information was used for compiling basic aggregates of quarterly economic accounts for the non-financial sector, such as: gross output, intermediate consumption and value added.

For the first time in 2008, in pursuance of the requirements of the new Annex 8, that amended Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 58/97 concerning structural business statistics, NSI conducted experimental survey on turnover of enterprises providing business services by kind of products and by location of users. Non-financial enterprises on the basis of the economic activity groupings of the National Classification of Economic Activities (NACE.BG-2003) were included in the survey: computer services; legal, accounting and consulting activities; architectural and engineering activities; advertising and marketing activities; intermediation activity related to labour force.

For heightening the STBS compliance level in EC, work on extending the scope of the new indicator “producer price indices in services”, introduced by Regulation (EC) No 1158/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council continued in 2008. Five transport and communications activities were covered by the producer price survey in 2007, while in 2008 work was initiated on extending the survey coverage by including activities of freight transport by road.

In the field of STBS, constant efforts were made to improve quality and reliability of data provision by constant monitoring of coverage and reliability of input primary data, high response rate and by improving the sampling technique.

III. 3.3. Energy statistics

Basic tasks in the field of energy and raw material balances were reduced to conducting current statistical surveys and compiling Overall Energy Balance in a matrix that covers production of primary energy, converted energy, final energy and non-energy consumption of energy resources, national material balance sheets and balance sheets in value and volume, necessary for compilation of annual national economic accounts.

Along with the other regular tasks in 2008, new surveys, classifications and forms for primary data collection were introduced in the field of energy statistics. The classification of raw materials used for drawing up material balance sheets was updated in compliance with the changes made in the national PRODCOM.BG and NACE.BG-2008. A new PRODENERGY.BG-2008 was elaborated, on the basis of which information about energy products is being collected and processed. Electronic report versions of “Resources and Realization” and “Electricity and Heat Production” were created and published on NSI web site with the aim to facilitate the users in filling them. A new form for annual reporting of bio fuels was prepared on the basis of which information is being collected about enterprises producing and/ or carrying out trade activity with liquid bio fuels. The methodology of prices of electricity and natural gas, delivered to the end-user in industry and households was changed. Project implementation on Data Collection Related to Gas Export/ Import and Transit Statistics has started.

III.3.4. Transport

During the past year, planned specific quarterly and annual statistical surveys on transport were conducted successfully together with production of monthly information within the framework of short-term business statistics. On the basis of these surveys information about the status and development of main mode of transport was assured.

In pursuance of Council Regulation (EC) No1172/98, a weekly statistical survey on road freight transport was conducted on the basis of a sample. Its objective was to assure quarterly and annual comparable data of Bulgaria with the remaining EU Member States by indicators such as: goods carried and transport performance - total, by type of carriages /internal and international/ and by type of goods for owners of road freight vehicles above 6 Tons, doing services both for hire and reward and on own account. In order to improve data quality and assure comparability on European level, the sample survey technique was developed further in 2008.

By means of quarterly exhaustive statistical surveys, regular data were provided on passengers and goods carried - total and by type of goods of railway transport, according to Regulation (EC) No 91/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulation (EC) No1192/2003; by type of goods of bus transport, inland waterway and maritime transport, trolleybus, tramway and underground transport. Information about the activity of the oil pipeline and gas pipeline was provided by quarterly statistical surveys.

Statistical surveys on civil aviation are conducted by the Directorate General "Civil Aviation Administration" at the Ministry of Transport according to the requirements, sources, reporting statistical forms and terms agreed, laid down in Ordinance RD-08-20 for collection of statistical information about civil aviation in the Republic of Bulgaria. Besides, complete and reliable statistical information provided for the needs of users, implementation of the state obligations on Art. 36 of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation and Regulation (EC) No 437/ 2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 February 2003 on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of passengers, freight and mail by air was guaranteed.

In 2008, monthly data were provided on transport activity of airline operators, doing scheduled air services of passengers, goods and mail; transport activity of airports by stage of flight, flight origin/destination, and also quarterly data on flight origin/destination from airline operators doing scheduled air services of passengers, goods and mail.

Information about the activity of maritime and inland waterways ports, collected by the Executive Agency "Maritime Administration", as well as the datasets prepared for Eurostat were in line with the specific nomenclatures and reporting forms of Council Directive No 80/1119/EEC on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods by inland waterways and Council Directive No 95/64/EC on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods and passengers by sea, and also with the next amendments and supplementations, entering into force by Regulation (EC) No 1365/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 September 2006, Commission Regulation (EC) No 1304/2007 of 7 November 2007 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 425/2007 of 19 April 2007.

Data on the first three quarters of 2008 were sent in conformity with Eurostat request for sending information up to 6 months after the end of the reporting quarter. During the past period changes were made and the scope of port operators was extended by new registered

operators: public transport ports of national importance – with territory and infrastructure of state ownership, not subject to privatization and public transport ports of regional importance – with territory and infrastructure of private and municipal ownership.

Implementation of the Improving the Quality of Statistics of Goods Transport by Inland Waterways project within the MBP 2006 was finalized in 2006. Its main objective was to update the statistical returns on inland waterways port activities according to the mentioned Regulation on inland waterways transport. Main activities were carried out such as: analysis of the existing system for collection, processing and transmission of information to Eurostat; preparation of technical specification for software changes; updating the software and testing the changes made via experimental implementation; holding a seminar in the town of Ruse for explaining the changes made and discussing the improvements; installation of software at all port operators on the Danube River; pilot operation and transmission of information about the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2008. Final report was sent to Eurostat.

The National Police Service at the Ministry of Interior provided NSI with information about road traffic accidents in the Republic of Bulgaria and number of vehicles - by type of vehicle and by region.

III.3.5. Tourism

Full compliance of tourism statistics with Eurostat and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) requirements continued in 2008, which is a precondition for collection of methodological adequate and international comparable data on the activity of accommodation establishments, tourism trips of population and international tourism.

The monthly sample survey on Bulgarians and foreigners crossing the border of the country, initiated in June 2008, is of importance for providing accurate and complete statistical information about tourism. Information collected will complement the monthly data on Bulgarians and foreigners crossing the border of the country, received from the Border Police Directorate General at MI and will be a main source for developing tourism satellite accounts and balance of payment of the country.

The NSI proceeded with regular conducting of a quarterly survey on the activity of accommodation establishments, following a methodology developed jointly with the State Agency for Tourism. On the basis of the survey, data were provided on accommodation establishments, total for the country, by districts and by municipalities on types of accommodation establishments (hotels, mountain chalets, camping sites and other accommodation establishments for short-time rest); number of beds and beds occupied; bed-nights in use, nights spent (by Bulgarians and foreigners); persons accommodated (Bulgarians and foreigners) and revenues from nights spent. Regular conducting of a quarterly pilot survey on tourism trips and tourism related expenditure was initiated in 2008 according to Council Directive No 95/57/EC on collection of statistical information in the field of tourism.

NSI continued the work on building up a tourism satellite accounts system and the first three standard tables were experimentally elaborated. Work on satellite accounts will go on in 2009.

III.3.6. Statistical business register

In 2008, work continued on maintaining and updating the Register of Statistical Units, which contains data on the economy, activity, form of property, availability of foreign participation

in financial and non-financial enterprises and non-profit institutions and thus creates the basis for conducting sample statistical surveys and applying post-stratified techniques for determining accuracy of the estimates. Together with the regular tasks, a number of measures were undertaken during last year for improving the register's quality, and the activity on providing services to internal and external users was facilitated.

Within MBP 2006, NSI works on the Statistical Business Registers: Support to New Acquis project – building the statistical unit “Enterprise Group” according to Regulation (EC) No 177/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a common framework for business registers for statistical purposes.

Work continued on Business Demography project, aiming at harmonized data collection on newly-born, closed and survived enterprises in EU Member States and EFTA countries.

III.4. AGRICULTURAL, FORESTRY AND FISHERY STATISTICS

Last year, NSI elaborated annual production accounts separately for agriculture, forestry and fishery (gross production, intermediate consumption, inseparable secondary non-agricultural activities and value added) by current and constant prices (at preceding year prices) - final for 2006, preliminary for 2007 and for 2008 by quarters. In pursuance of Regulation (EC) No 138/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council the following were developed: annual data on satellite economic accounts in agriculture by current and constant prices (at preceding year prices) - final for 2006, preliminary for 2007 and first assessment of income in agriculture for 2008; data on statistics of unit value in 2007 and tables for links between national economic accounts and satellite accounts in agriculture for 2006.

Regional economic accounts in agriculture were elaborated and published in time for 2004, 2005 and 2006 according to the new Classification of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes in Bulgaria. Quarterly and annual indices (forecast) for 2008 were compiled at producer prices and by means of production, used in agriculture at base 2000=100, preceding year=100 and the respective quarter of the preceding year=100. Related to the new base of Eurostat 2005=100, new weight schemes were calculated for weighting producer price indices, means of production and investment goods, used in agriculture.

Significant part of agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics is being developed, produced and disseminated by MAF according to NPSS. In 2008, twelve survey topics and participation in 3 projects were planned within MBP 2006. The survey on evaluation of the yield and first estimate for production of wheat and barley was conducted in June 2008 by specialists engaged in agriculture on the basis of direct surveying of the field. Indicators, important for formation of the yield and determining the status of crops before harvest time, were surveyed and estimation for production of wheat and barley–crop year 2008 was also made.

The survey on land cover and land use of the territory of Bulgaria (**BANCIK'2008**) was realized in the June-July 2008 period, using Eurostat methodology (Parliament and Council Decision No1445/2000/EC). Data were collected on agricultural areas, including main crops on 6 planning regions (NUTS 2). In pursuance of Council Regulation (EEC) No 837/90 and Council Regulation (EEC) No 959/93 the survey on statistical information about field crops – crop year 2008 was conducted by interviews with agricultural producers in the November-December 2008 period, which assured information about harvested areas, average yields and production of field crops. Results will be published in the beginning of 2009.

During the reporting period three statistical surveys on production and processing of fruits and vegetables– crop year 2007 were conducted. Based on the survey on fruit production, information was collected about harvested areas of orchards, quantities of produced fruits – by species, way of realization and etc. Based on the survey on vegetable production, information was collected about areas under vegetables, quantities of produced vegetables by species– average yields and production from open areas and greenhouses, ways for realization of produced quantities. By the survey on activities of the enterprises, processing fruits and vegetables, results were obtained about the industrial processed quantities of fruits and vegetables by species and realization of produced quantities.

The statistical survey on vine and wine production – crop year 2007 was conducted in the beginning of 2008 by interviews with vine producers. Information was collected about areas under vines with wine and table grapes, production of wine and its realization. The published information about the industrial production of wine is on the basis of data provided by the Executive Agency on Vine and Wine.

Statistical surveys on livestock, production of meat, milk and milk products were carried out following the Ordinance on statistical surveys on pigs, cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats and production of meat, milk and milk products (SG, No93/17 Nov.2006), which is in compliance with the existing European legislation. In pursuance of the Ordinance, in 2008 two statistical surveys were conducted on pigs, cattle, sheep and goats and poultry as of 1st May and 1st November 2008. Information was collected about the number of livestock and poultry by type and category, production and realization of quantities of milk produced; the number of slaughtered heads of livestock and poultry, production of eggs and also about the activities of hatcheries in 2007. Results of the survey as of 1st November 2008 will be published in the beginning of 2009.

In the beginning of 2008, exhaustive surveys were conducted on the activity of the slaughterhouses for production of meat, number of milk processing enterprises and production of milk products during 2007. Information about the activity of the slaughterhouses and production of meat and about the activity of milk processing enterprises and production of milk products is being collected monthly on the basis of an exhaustive list of the economic units.

Results of the sample farm structure survey conducted in 2007 were published in 2008. Main objective of activities under the Farm Accountancy Data Network in 2008 was to provide clear and timely information about the income of agricultural producers in order to be taken right managerial decisions on national level and to measure the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy over the Bulgarian agriculture. With the aim to assure the current operation of the System, a steady sample of agricultural farms was maintained during the year.

In 2008, the Agrostistics Directorate of MAF finalized its participation in two Eurostat projects within MBP 2005, i.e. “Improving the Quality of the Current Statistics on Vineyard” and “Development of an Approach to Collect Information on Units Engaged in Subsistence and Semi-Subsistence Farming”. Jointly with Eurostat experts the Agrostistics Directorate organized and carried out the activities on LUCAS 2008.

Activities on the Improving the Quality on the Current Statistics on Vineyards project were completed in the agreed terms in 2008. In 2008, an inquiry was conducted on the basis of a

sample of settlements. Individual data were entered in PC programme, controlled and analysed. Final report was prepared and sent to NSI and Eurostat.

Activities on the Development of an Approach to Collect Information on Units Engaged in Subsistence and Semi-Subsistence Farming project were completed in the agreed terms. On the basis of the elaborated definitions of subsistence and market-orientated farming in the end of 2007, methods and tools for the pilot survey on data collection, conducted in the July-October 2008 period, were elaborated. Data are entered, controlled and analyzed. Interim and final reports were prepared and sent to NSI and Eurostat.

In 2008, work on Land Use and Land Cover Area Frame Statistical Survey project (LUCAS 2008) was finalized. The first phase of the project on preparation of the survey was realized in the beginning of the year. The second phase on conducting the survey (field surveys, quality check of data collected by experts from the Agrostistics Directorate and their transmission for data control to Eurostat) was successfully implemented. The third phase was initiated, i.e. analysis and presentation of the results and preparation of a final report. The term for implementation of LUCAS 2008 project was extended to 31 March 2009.

Main activities of the pilot study on use of fertilizers were carried out in 2008. Preparation of the pilot survey and interviews on the field were successfully realized. Results are to be processed and analyzed and duly sent to Eurostat.

In 2008, activities were initiated on: i) pilot study on estimating the volume of water used for irrigation and ii) project on development of a model for determining production costs in agriculture. Work on these projects will continue also in 2009.

III. 5. MULTI-DOMAIN STATISTICS

III.5.1. Business tendencies

Last year, a wide range of users – bodies of government, public organizations, students and other- showed interest in the quarterly review “Key indicators for Bulgaria”, published on NSI web site. It contains data, comments and graphs on main macro-economic indicators, classified under the following topics: production, individual consumption, investments, labour market, international transactions, prices and monetary and financial indicators.

The results of the monthly business surveys, conducted by NSI with EC financial support within the framework of the Joint Harmonized European Union Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys were also of great importance for the economic analysis and short-term projects in 2008. Information collected from managers in the industry, construction, retail trade and services sector about current and prospective business activities, and also from consumers about their buying and saving intentions is used for drawing up an economic analysis, monitoring and projections by the EC Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs. The surveys' indicators are widely used as components of composite leading indicators for analysis and determining the turning points in the business cycle. Quarterly consumer surveys, by means of which information is being collected about the financial status of households, general economic situation of the country, inflation, unemployment, savings, intentions of making costs for durable goods and purchasing a home or buying a car served also for making an analysis of the tendencies in the development of public opinions on main economic processes and phenomena.

III.5.2. Sustainable development

In 2008, NSI started work on developing a system of indicators for monitoring the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Bulgaria. As a result, a new annual publication “Sustainable Development of Bulgaria 2007” was issued for the first time. The issue is bilingual (Bulgarian/English) and contains data on nine themes related to the sustainable development: socio-economic development, sustainable consumption and production, social inclusion, demographic changes, public health, climate change and energy, sustainable transport, natural resources and global partnership and good management. The publication is addressed to a wide range of users – administrations and institutions that develop and implement the economic and social policy of the country, as well as non-governmental organizations and all social circles that work actively in the field.

III.5.3 Statistics and accounts of environment

The NSI conducted successfully a number of surveys on the environment in 2008, being included in NPSS and evolved from obligations of the Republic of Bulgaria on European Regulations:

- elaboration of integrated NAMEA – air accounts by economic sectors;
- survey on the quantity of generated non-hazardous waste in the country, ways of its treatment and storage, in which the traditional survey on waste conducted by studying the basic population of enterprises was replaced by a new methodology of a sample survey on waste;
- survey on waste generated by the households and the small business and a survey on generation, removal and treatment of waste on the territory of firms from agriculture, forestry and fishery activity;
- survey on water consumption, by means of which information is provided about the annual balance of water use: water abstraction, water use and waste water, as well as a survey on water use by water supply companies;
- survey on production of packaging goods and packages.

In 2008, information was provided about activities, relevant to environmental protection and in particular, about the activities on preventing pollution of sea waters and the Danube River, protected territories and natural scenery in the country, management of environmental protection activities, imposed sanctions and fines. Information about environmental protection expenditure was also assured – i.e. about the amount of investments, current costs, financial sources and allocation of the funds by basic uses and about availability and movement of the tangible fixed assets with ecological use by accounting value

A survey on revenues and expenditure for protection and restoration of environment by specialized producers was conducted for the first time in 2008. Collection of detailed information from the municipalities about costs made by specialized firms as regards collection, transportation and storage of waste from households continued.

During the reporting period, work on building up a unified information basis about emissions in the atmosphere and improving the methods of assessment continued jointly with MOEW in compliance with the requirements and recommendations of international bodies.

III. 5.4. Regional statistics and geographic information systems (GIS)

The electronic publications “Local Government Authorities’ 2008” and “Regions, Districts and Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria” were issued in 2008, containing data on 2006 and 2007. The publication “Regions and Districts in the Republic of Bulgaria, 2002-2006” was prepared and issued as printed matter. Due to changes in the coverage of regions at NUTS2 level, this publication and the respective annual electronic publications were prepared in two versions – with the old and new coverage of the regions. The IS for regional statistics was expanded by data on the 2005–2007 years.

During the year under review, NSI functions concerning information support to the requirements laid down in the Law on Regional Development on defining regions for targeted support (being regions for targeted impact up to the middle of 2008) were successfully implemented.

In 2008, the Classification of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes in Bulgaria was implemented, being the Bulgarian analogue of the European NUTS. After the amended Parliament and Council Regulation No 1059/2003 and the amendments to the Law on Regional Development entered into force, the classification was adopted in the practice of NSS Bodies by order of NSI President.

The Urban Audit project (phase IV) continued in 2008. New element of the project is inclusion of Stara Zagora town, thus covering all towns in Bulgaria having population over 100 000 Thousands.

Work on applying GIS technologies relevant to development of thematic graphic layers of statistical information and elaboration of digital models of the big settlements continued in order to solve different specific tasks of NSI activities and to assure specialized information needs of different external users.

By agreement with the Agency for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre, cadastral plans for some district towns were received on a periodic basis. On the basis of a developed methodology, the statistical georeferenced information about residential buildings and dwelling stock was attached to the received cadastral plans. In 2008, the following towns were processed by so doing. i.e. Blagoevgrad, Dobrich, Montana, Targovishte, Haskovo, Shumen and Yambol. At present, NSI has at its disposal georeferenced information about 26 district towns, 5 towns including Sofia capital with all its settlements, as well as digital maps of other 10 towns based on the cadastral plans.

Together with the newly built up digital models of the mentioned towns, work on updating the elaborated so far digital models continues on the basis of collected statistical information about the annual movement of residential buildings and dwelling stock in the country. The elaborated digital models of settlements will be used as an information basis when preparing and organizing the coming census of population and housing fund.

Updated versions of digital map bases of settlements are provided as a result of the good institutional relations, maintained with MAF. On the basis of this information, updated format of the administrative-territorial division of the country is being generated and maintained.

Activities on cartographic presentation of some statistical issues in the field of demographic and social statistics continued, by means of which visualization of the results of the statistical

surveys for the country as a whole and for particular administrative-territorial and territorial units was improved. The NSI manages and maintains the National register of populated places and set up the Unified classifier of administrative-territorial and territorial units.

III.5.5. R & D activities and information society

During the reporting year, in compliance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 753/2004 as regards statistics on science and technology, NSI provided information about gross domestic expenditure on R&D activities and the personnel, engaged in R&D in the regulated term by observing the requirements of the „Frascati Manual”, a methodological manual of OECD and Eurostat. Important task was also data provision on R&D expenditure in sector “Higher education” by type of higher schools and sources of financing for 2006, following the Common UOE (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, OECD, Eurostat) questionnaire. Information was provided about the personnel of science in 2007 (scientists by fields of science, academic rank and degree, institutional sectors and gender), and also about the results of carried out R&D activities (research topics worked out for creating new and improved products, technologies, methods and systems). In pursuance of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 58/97 concerning structural business statistics (Annex 2 and Annex 4), NSI provided data on the personnel engaged in R&D and expenditures on R&D in the economic sectors “Industry” and “Construction” at 3rd digit by NACE.BG-2003 (BG version of NACE Rev.1.1).

For the first time in 2008 information was collected and published about R&D budgetary expenditure, broken down by socio-economic objectives in 2007. Last year, metadata on R&D statistics were submitted to Eurostat for the first time in unified electronic format, the aim being to standardize collection, comparison, storage and dissemination of R&D metadata of all EU Member States and OECD. On the basis of the results from the conducted statistical surveys on R&D activities and scientists, an annual report was prepared concerning the tendencies of development of science activities, which was included as a separate section in the NSI analytical publication “Statistical Panorama – Bulgaria 2007”. In order to reduce the respondents’ burden, the R & D questionnaire was simplified in 2008.

In connection with implementation of the Bulgarian commitments on the EC Women and Science project and preparation of the third publication of „She Figures – 2009”, data were prepared and provided on the structure of teaching staff in the higher schools, on the projects financed from national funds for scientific researches, on the structure of scientific councils and governing body of the higher schools. The publication of „She Figures – 2009” will be worked out on the basis of this information.

In pursuance of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1450/2004 concerning Community statistics on innovation, a survey was conducted on innovation activity of enterprises for the 2004 - 2006 period (CIS 2006) and the methodology for the next wave of survey was developed, covering innovation activity of enterprises for the 2006-2008 period.

Three national representative sample surveys were conducted in the field of statistics of information society in 2008, financed within the framework of MBP 2006 and in conformity with the requirements of Eurostat and Regulation (EC) No 808/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning Community statistics on the information society - “Survey on individuals, households and the information society”, “Survey on enterprises and the information society” and “Survey on ICT expenditure and investment”.

In the field of communications, the following were conducted: quarterly exhaustive survey on post services, assuring information about the postal traffic; annual exhaustive survey on the activity of licenced operators for courier services and the status of communications infrastructure; annual exhaustive survey on the status of post communication means – post, telegraph and telephone stations, postal agencies and post boxes.

III. 6. STATISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

III.6.1. Statistical classifications

As of January 2008, NSI started applying the revised macro-economic classifications - NACE.BG-2008 and CPA.BG-2008. Based on them the new versions of PRODCOM.BG-2008, PRODAGRO.BG-2008 and PRODENERGY.BG-2008 were developed.

Explanatory notes to CPA.BG were developed in 2008 and their printing will be finalized in 2009. The NSI elaborated a Bulgarian version of the UN Standard International Trade Classification (SITC, Rev.4). Update of the Nomenclature of Countries and Territories for the External Trade Statistics was made.

During the reporting period, NSI proceeded with activities on rendering regular methodological assistance on the use of classifications in the statistical and social practice by preparing written and oral answers to requests and consulting the Bodies of state administration and other users. Special attention was devoted to rendering assistance to specialists of NSI and other Bodies of Statistics in using the new NACE.BG-2008.

III.6.2. Metadata and standards

In 2008, NSI continued the activities on current maintenance of data and metadata on separate data categories according to the SDDS requirements. The following electronic glossaries could be found on NSI Intranet site: “Glossary of Statistical Terms”; “Metadata Common Vocabulary”; „Common Dictionary”; „Concepts” and „Metadata”, containing guidelines and statistical metadata documents.

In connection with implementing standards for electronic exchange of data and metadata (SDMX) in NSI practice, the following were translated and adapted to NSI practice: “Content-Oriented Guidelines” and its annexes “Metadata Common Vocabulary”, “Cross-Domain Concepts” and “Statistical Subject-Matter Domains”.

The practice of the Statistical Offices of EU Member States and Eurostat was studied in respect to formulating unified approach when building up the metadata model in NSI. Metadata standards, applicable in NSI statistical practice were studied. The UNECE Common Metadata Framework was adapted to the current statistical practice.

III.6.3. Information and communication technologies and information systems

Maintenance and administration of NSI information systems are of great importance for the effective functioning of NSS and NSI overall activity. In 2008, important steps were made towards centralization of activities on administration of servers and database management systems. Continuous monitoring and control of the servers, servicing the statistical information systems, was made. It includes administration of the operating systems, the data base management systems of the servers at NSI Head Office, as well as periodic archiving of all centralized databases. The NSI document flow system is being also administrated and

maintained.

Activities were held, guaranteeing information and technical security of the corporative information system, inclusive those on updating the definitions of anti-virus packets Symantec, Panda and Inoculate, installed on the servers at NSI Head Office and RSOs and on the routers for Internet access.

In order to apply up-to-date software in the process of compilation of statistical data, three times more licences for the statistical packages SAS and SPSS were installed. The coverage of statistical data transmitted via the unified entry point of Eurostat eWA/eWP (eDAMIS Web Application /eDAMIS Web Portal) was extended. Sending statistical data and metadata to other international statistical institutions through the IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) is ongoing.

Another important activity that assures the functioning of the statistical system in NSI is maintenance of hardware and the accompanying system software. Modernization and improvement of the local network continued, including building up of the internal network for new users, setting up extra optical segments in the network, buying modern switches and putting them in operation.

One of NSI tasks in 2008 concerned the Statistical Classifications IS publishment on Internet, by means of which an opportunity was provided to users outside NSI system to make on-line references for current data on a given classification, data on supporting statistical classification documents, corresponding tables, and links with other classifications. Last year, the supply contract on Development of Application Software for Survey Processing System, financed within the National Phare Programme (EuropeAid/123917/D/SUP/BG-BG2004/016-711.09.05 Sub-project 5) – component “Data Collection and Primary Data Processing”, was terminated due to a failure of the contractor to perform his contractual obligations in the contracted term.

The new Demography IS, implemented in 2007, showed very good operational characteristics. Its technological development during the year was directed towards improvement of the logical coherence of information about separate indicators and their algorithms, with the aim to improve the information quality and to reduce the time for primary data editing. Terms of Reference was developed for extending the coverage of the system, assessing the external migration flows and changes of the software interface related to the new model of “Birth message” document, which reflects the requirements of international Regulations.

In 2008, a new Inflation IS was developed and building up of Business Statistics IS was initiated. The last stage of building up the Integrated Statistical Georeference Information System for early warning, planning and managing the country under crises was successfully finalized. A module for development and management of NSI war-time and crisis plans to the Classified information sub-system was experimentally introduced in practice.

In line with the Agreement between NSI and the Registry Agency, registration, maintenance and provision of queries from the special BULSTAT register database continued in 2008. Data input and data processing of special statistical units for periodical statistical surveys continued.

In pursuance of MC Decree No 90/ 9 May 2008, a specialized register of the statistical units was successfully put in operation. Jointly with the interested institutions, potential producers and suppliers of special and civic production and services to the benefit of defence were entered in the register. A specialized statistical survey on filling-in the register database was conducted, the results of which were submitted to authorize users.

III.6.4. Other national surveys and activities

The Ministry of Economy and Energy carries out activities on maintenance of administrative registers and information databases of inter-institutional importance, financed from its budget, according to the form and kind envisaged in the 2008 National Programme for Statistical Surveys.

Activities according to the Register of Issued Licences to Firms for Activities with Precursors of Anaesthetic and Psychotropic Substances are carried out during the entire year. Information sources are the licences for activities with precursors and registration certificates, issued according to the Law on control over drugs and precursors and the Regulation for control on precursors by drugs, adopted by CM Decree No 116/3 June 2004, final amendment in State Gazette 40/2006.

Activities according to the Register of issued licences to producers of alcohol, alcoholic drinks and distillates are carried out on an annual base and include data on the responsible persons for production; data on production units; produced assortments; legal and tax registration, unregistered producers, pursuant to Art 49 and Art 50 from the Ordinance for conditions and order for registration, licensing, deleting from the Register and deprivation of the licences; data that are liable to registration, the way of diaries keeping, the contents and the form of harvest declarations and the commodity availability and control over the registered persons and their activity (adopted by CM Decree No 54/2000, prom. SG 31/2000, amend. SG 59/2001, amend. SG 82/2001, amend. SG 8/2002, amend. SG 66 / 25 July 2003); date of licences; deleted licences.

Activities according to the Register of issued, refused and deprived licences to traders with waste and debris from ferrous and non-ferrous metals and scrap are in compliance with the Law on waste management, the Ordinance for trade activity with waste and debris from ferrous and non-ferrous metals in line with CM Decree No 316/22 Nov 2004 and cover regular exhaustive information about licenced firms, doing trade with waste and debris from ferrous and non-ferrous metals and about date of issuance and date of licence action.

Activities according to the Public register of issued licences for production of optical disks (CD ROMs) and matrices for their production are carried out annually and include information about issued licences, name of the firm, seat and address of the management, type of production in line with the Law on administrative regulation of production and trade with optical disks, matrices and other data carriers, comprising objects of the copyright and its related rights

III .7. MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

NSI continued its participation in activities on implementing the European Statistics Code of Practice as NSS priority task. Bulgaria sent to Eurostat a set of documents (questionnaire on quality-assessment activities, progress report on the implementation of improvement actions

and peer review teams' recommendations agreed during the peer review and a summary report on NSS compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice), which served to prepare the final 2008 report to the European Parliament and the Council on implementation of CoP. The Task force on the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice was provided with a set of improvement actions covering all indicators that measure the degree of implementation of Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources. In conformity with the recommendations of the peer review, quality management policy and programme were developed and also a programme for implementing a quality management model.

The NSI was included in the work of the new European Statistical System Quality Coaching project, which aims to support the implementation of the peer review recommendations on quality audits.

Work on the Definition of Process Variables and Development Standards project was finalized, under which actions in three basic directions were carried out: interviewers' satisfaction survey, internal quality survey (on the basis of self-assessment results of statistical products in NSI statistical divisions by quality components and quality documentation status; development of quality indicators) and preparation of Guidelines for managing Relevance as a component of quality assurance framework. A detailed list of quality process indicators was also prepared. A seminar was held with representatives from RSOs and Eurostat to get acquainted with Eurostat basic quality requirements, work on CoP implementation and project results.

IV. DISSEMINATION OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION

In 2008, NSI developed by priority the activity on dissemination of statistical data from all fields of statistics – demographic, social, economic, regional, environment and information society. Work continued on quality improvement of provided information products and services, satisfying new needs and extending the circle of potential users from the country and abroad. At the same time, when providing statistical information to users, strict control is being accomplished for protection of data secrecy of natural and legal persons according to Chapter Six of the Law on Statistics.

In answer to the increasing interest in statistical products and services a Dissemination of Information Department was established and structured into three divisions: „E-services“, „Relations with users and presscenter“ and „Publications“.

IV.1. E-SERVICES

In 2008, RSOs gained total access to 877 digitalized publications in the electronic library. The process of scanning NSI statistical publications continued. In general, 10 367 digital pages were developed. Four international book exchanges were carried out with statistical offices and international organizations. Editing of the electronic catalogue continued, as well as the processes of re- premarking and bar coding of library book-stock.

During the reporting period, 3283 users were served in the library and 12 731 library units were used. In total, the registered number of user visits at Internet portal of the library was 23 999 and average more than 15 000 digital pages were read per day. In the Integrated library system, 597 526 information searches were realized.

Compared to 2007, the number of Internet pages on NSI site increased with more than 1000 and reached the number of 3390. New or renovated of them are 1379 pages. For the last year NSI web site was visited 1 003 488 times, 607 987 of them being unique. The site was visited 2749 times average per day, while on the day of utmost visits, i.e. 31st March, it was visited 12 901 times and an increase is being observed by more than 500 visits per day compared to the previous year. Inflation rate calculator was provided to users of statistical information.

IV.2. RELATIONS WITH USERS AND PRESSCENTER

Information corridor began functioning in 2008, as a physically separate place for users on the first floor at NSI premises, offering a wide set of statistical products and services. Access to disabled persons to the information corridor was assured. Reception desk was set up for the users of statistical information, where within the working hours experts consult the citizens about the chances of provision of statistical data, supply the necessary information, take and finalize requests for preparation of specialized information products and services.

In 2008, the renovated room for press conferences and briefings began functioning actively. Press conferences were resumed after a long period of a break. A fixed hour was introduced for disseminating results of the statistical surveys, i.e. 11.00h on the date for dissemination according to the Release calendar, published on NSI web site. In this way information at the same time to all groups of users from the country and abroad: media, bodies of the legislative, executive and judicial power, NSI web site, RSOs, non-profit organizations, companies, the scientific society, citizens and others is guaranteed.

Interest to the statistical information provided by NSI to different groups of users is on the increase. The number of finalized requests and users served in the country and abroad in 2008 increased by approximately 11 % compared to the previous year. The volume of provided information, mainly to ministries and institutions with which NSI has signed agreements for exchange of information and on concrete individual requests has increased considerably. Better quality of servicing of users and their satisfaction with obtained statistical information products and services is being confirmed also by the results of the users' satisfaction inquiry on provided products and services, conducted at every 6 months.

IV.3. PUBLICATIONS

Priority of NSI publishing activity in 2008 was satisfying the requirements of different groups of users of statistical publications and presenting information in a form facilitating its use. Out of the total number of 40 titles proposed to the users of statistical information in 2008, 10 are produced as printed matter, 17 as printed matter with analogous electronic version on CDs, and 13 electronic publications only on CDs and NSI web site.

Improvement of NSI publishing activity continued and user-friendly statistical publications are being created by:

- increasing the number of bilingual publications (with a parallel English translation) – in 2008, 24 titles and 2 separate publications in English;
- offering analogous electronic versions to 63 % of the printed issues;
- enriching the publications with necessary metadata, data provision with good balance between graphic and tabular form; making equal and expanding all compulsory elements on the cover and title pages and in the inner book, including information

pages with indexes, addresses and telephone numbers for contact, advertising texts, etc.

In total, 21 330 printed and electronic (on CD) publications were circulated, distribution being as follows: 16 570 printed matter and 4 760 electronic editions.

In 2008, 968 consultancies were provided to users in the country and abroad on different aspects, related to the publications and their dissemination, of which 382 were in a form of e-mails, 487 – by telephone and 162 on the spot at NSI Publications division, 2/3 of them offered to foreign users. In the recent years, a lasting tendency to increasing users' interest to NSI publications is observed, as well as increasing interest on the side of foreign users to statistical information contained in the respective publication.

As of 1st April 2008, work was initiated on Eurostat project “Dissemination of Statistics: User Support on European Statistics” (ESDS Help Desk) within the Multi-beneficiary Phare Programme 2006. The Bulgarian ESDS Help Desk is a part of the network of similar centers in the National Statistical Institutions in all EU Member States. Through this network Eurostat carries out its strategy directed towards free-of-charge dissemination of statistical information. Users of Eurostat site have the opportunity of free-of-charge access to harmonized statistical information, included in Eurostat databases, and also to all publications in electronic format.

Greater part of requests refers to consumer price indexes and inflation in EU Member States. There are demands for information about employment, education, external trade and tourism. A tendency is being outlined to an increased interest of users towards the activity of ESDS Help Desk in Bulgaria.

V. EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

V.1. EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP

In 2008, NSI participated actively in the *EU acquis communautaire* in the field of statistics. For that purpose framework positions and instructions on drafts of legal acts were prepared as follows: for the meetings of the Working Party on Statistics to the Council of the European Union – 7, for the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) – 4, and also for the Economic and Financial Committee and the Working Party of Enlargement. The NSI participated regularly in meetings of the Council on European Issues, where current problems were considered, related to engagements and requirements proceeding from the EU membership of the country. The 2008 plan for implementation of the engagements proceeding from the EU membership was fulfilled by adopting the Law on Amendment and Supplementation of the Law on Statistics (prom. SG 98/14 Nov 2008). Within the coordination mechanism, Working group 12 “Statistics” proceeded with the work on organizing and coordinating the activities on approximation of the Bulgarian legislation in statistics to the *EU acquis communautaire*. Representatives of NSI took part in 13 meetings of the Council Working Party on Statistics. For the meetings, in which NSI did not take direct part, instructions were prepared, coordinated and sent to the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Union in Bruxelles. Prepared framework positions were loaded on EU-net system. The NSI prepared and coordinated also framework positions on the negotiating Chapter 18 “Statistics” of EU candidate countries- Croatia and Turkey.

The NSI took active part in the 65th, 66th, 67th and 68th meetings of the Statistical Programme Committee (SPC). Immediately before the meetings, positions on comitology issues were prepared and submitted for coordination within the Council on European Issues.

The Multi-beneficiary Phare Programmes continued to be basic instrument for improvement of qualification of the Bulgarian experts in different fields of statistics, transfer of know-how and improvement of quality of statistical products and services.

Seventeen ad hoc data collection projects within MBP 2005 were successfully implemented. Under the activity - Provision of "Tailor-made Expertise" study visits on HICP and environment accounts were carried out in the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), France. Implementation of activities on the programme was finalized by elaboration of quarterly reports to Eurostat and monitoring reports to NSI President.

Work on implementing activities within MBP 2006 was initiated. Experts of NSI took part in meetings on pilot projects – 7, long-term traineeship – 10 and in seminars – 72. Implementation of 15 ad hoc data collection projects within the programme is ongoing.

In 2008, work of 10 out of a total number of 33 projects in the field of statistics, financed by EC Grants was completed.

Activities on the National Phare Programme continued towards creation of conditions for NSS sustainable development. Implementation of the concluded on 24th March 2008 Twinning contract BG2006/IB/FI/01 "Sustainable Development of the National Statistical System" was initiated, while on 30th November 2008 after a successfully conducted tender procedure was signed the supply contract thereto. Within the Twinning project 2 study visits were carried out in Denmark with the aim to study the experience in time reporting system and in France in order to get acquainted with INSEE regional organization.

The NSI continued its participation in monthly and semi-annual meetings, reviewing the implementation of projects under the National Phare Programme, included in the Sectoral Monitoring Subcommittee No 8 "Public Administration/ Developing the Administrative Capacity".

V.2. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Within the framework of other international organizations and their specialized bodies, NSI delegations took part in 36 conferences, working sessions, seminars, joint meetings and round tables. Last year, NSI participated actively in the work of the 39th United Nations Statistical Commission and in the 56th plenary session of the Conference of the European Statisticians, as well as in a Joint UNECE-UNFPA Training Workshop on Population and Housing Censuses for South Eastern European countries, international conferences on "Quality of Official Statistics", Italy, "Climate Change and Official Statistics", Norway and "Comparative Analysis of Enterprise Data", Hungary.

In October 2008, NSI took part in the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) Conference on Reshaping Official Statistics, conducted in Shanghai, China.

The development of regional cooperation was further improved. The experience acquired during the pre-accession period allows NSI to share what has been learned within the

framework of active bilateral and regional cooperation. A meeting of the NSOs Directors General of the Balkan countries took place in Bansko on 6th September 2008 with the aim to discuss the development of cooperation in the field of statistics. The NSI took also part in the Final Conference of the CARDS 2005 Twinning Project “Support to the Statistics Sector of BiH”, Sarajevo.

Within the framework of signed agreements for bilateral cooperation 2 working meetings of official delegations from the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation and the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia were held in December

In 2008, the total number of NSI participations in different working groups and target forces, meetings of pilot projects, seminars and training courses, study visits and consultations in the country and abroad was 571, while the number of participations of other Bodies of Statistics and state institutions involved in statistical activities - 86.

VI. RESOURCE ASSURANCE

VI.1. PERSONNEL, TRAINING

In the beginning of 2008, the total number of personnel within NSI structural units was 1 494, of which 421 on the pay roll at the Head Office and 1 073 - at RSOs.

After cutting down the personnel in line with CM Decree No 15 of 1st February 2008 on implementing the state budget of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2008 and the adopted new organization structure of NSI as of 1st July 2008, the total number of personnel within NSI structural units is 1 352, of which 384 on the pay roll at the NSI Head Office and 968 – at RSOs.

Annex 1 shows the structure of employed persons within NSI system, including at NSI Head Office by education, gender, legal basis and age. The quoted data show that qualified and educated specialists work within NSI system. The share of employees with tertiary education predominates - 92.0 % at NSI and 65.9% at RSOs respectively. A large part of them have service of many years with valuable practical experience acquired in concrete statistical domains. At the same time during the last 10 years negative tendencies such as ageing and speeded outflows of employees are observed. The share of employees over 50 years of age is 51.7 % at NSI Head Office and 44.6 % at RSOs. One of the main reasons for the observed disturbing tendencies is that of low payment.

A detailed plan relevant to training of employees within NSI system in 2008 was developed in pursuance of the Strategy for Training Employees in the State Administration adopted by MC Decision No 85 of 2002. The training covered fields such as statistics, foreign language training, administrative capacity, European administration and international cooperation, organization, administration and legal basis and informatics. In 2008, 1 420 NSI employees were included in different forms of training, such as training courses, seminars, instructions mainly with RSOs employees, consultancies in the country and abroad, study of experience of other countries and long-term traineeships abroad. Thirty-four seminars were organized in the country, including 752 NSI participants in total and 2 158 man-days, by paying special attention to training of RSOs personnel.

Training courses and long-term traineeships at Eurostat and seminars for acquaintance with the world statistical experience were the basic forms of training in the field of international

cooperation, in which 588 man-days were put in work. Seventeen NSI experts participated in long-term traineeships at Eurostat.

In total, 42 NSI employees continued their education in leading Bulgarian universities, for attaining qualification degree for extra-mural and distance-learning mode of attendance.

Eight RSOs experts took part in multi-modular specification in the field of public administration, organized to higher schools for enhancement of professional qualification by the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform.

VI.2. BUDGET

The National Statistical Institute carries out its activities within the framework of the approved budget for 2008, which according to the annual defined plan as of 30 November 2008 amounts to 27 941 303 BGN. The subsidy from the state budget amounts to 21 300 939 BGN, from own revenues – 4 872 000 BGN and the balance in BGN in currency accounts from the preceding period - 1 762 760 BGN. The total amount of planned expenditure amounts to 27 941 303 BGN, of which 5 154 154 BGN from Multi-beneficiary Phare Programme contracts between the EC and NSI.

Annex 2: NSI budget

Structure of NSI personnel as of 31.12.2008

Structure of Personnel by:	NSI - total		Head Office		RSO	
	No	%	No	%	No	%

Education

Tertiary	951	72.9	322	92.0	629	65.9
including:						
Scientific title Doctor	4	0.4	4	1.2	0	0.0
Qualification degree – Master	848	89.2	299	92.9	549	87.2
Qualification degree – Bachelor	78	8.2	17	5.3	61	9.6
Qualification degree – Prof. Bachelor	21	2.2	2	0.6	19	3.2
Secondary Specialized Education	353	27.1	28	8.0	325	34.1
Total	1304	100.0	350	100.0	954	100.0

Sex

Female	1117	85.7	286	81.7	831	87.1
Male	187	14.3	64	18.3	123	12.9
Total	1304	100.0	350	100.0	954	100.0

Legal basis

Civil Service Act	889	68.2	317	90.6	572	60.0
Labour Code	415	31.8	33	9.4	382	40.0
Total	1304	100.0	350	100.0	954	100.0

Age (years)

Below 20	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
21 - 30	67	5.1	18	5.1	49	5.1
31 - 40	269	20.6	87	24.9	182	19.1
41 - 50	362	27.8	64	18.3	298	31.2
51 – 60	576	44.2	168	48.0	408	42.8
Over 60	30	2.3	13	3.7	17	1.8
Total	1304	100.0	350	100.0	954	100.0

NSI budget

(BGN)

INDICATORS	ANNUAL PLAN, SPECIFIED as of 30.11.2008
Own revenues	4 872 000
- Non-tax revenues	4 872 000
Expenditure	27 941 303
- Salaries and remunerations to the personnel under the Labour Code and the Civil Service Act	9 704 714
- Other remunerations and payments to the personnel	3 542 040
- Social Security contribution	2 930 265
- Current (ongoing) maintenance	8 685 584
- Capital outlays	3 078 700
Subsidies from the State budget	21 300 939
Balance in BGN equivalence in currency accounts from a preceding period	1 762 760
Transfer from MLSP under programmes of temporary employment	5 604