

Statistical Office of the SR

Quality Declaration of SO SR

Declaration of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic on Quality Policy and Quality Management System

Introduction

Recently, we have observed the rise of increasing demands on quality of statistics¹. In previous years the data accuracy was the only criterion of quality of statistics. An increasing number of users of statistical survey results as well as variety of their demands have claimed further enhancement of quality standards (relevancy, availability, timeliness, coherency etc.). Apart from that, changes continued in society, gradual integration of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (further as SOSR) into the European Statistical System, creation of a competitive environment as well as so called European users of statistics increase the pressure not only on quality of statistics, but mainly on introduction of the Quality Management System (QMS).

The declaration expresses basic projections and commitments of the President and Top-Management of the SOSR for quality of statistics policy, as well as creation, documentation, implementation, maintaining and increase of efficiency of the Quality Management System of the SOSR.

1. The Strategy of the SO SR management for ensuring the quality of statistics

The SOSR management commits to execute the policy of quality, which is based on requests of statistics users and set by rules, principles, recommendations and conclusions of the standard STN EN ISO 9001:2000 and by further relevant documents.

Following tasks will ensure successful realisation of the commitment by the SOSR management:

- to set-up and maintain defined quality objectives of the SOSR,
- to assign elaboration, implementation and maintaining of the efficient and effective Quality Management System to reach its objectives,
- to focus attention on requests of statistics users in all departments of the SOSR,
- to assign implementation of clearly defined processes, which facilitate to fulfil requests of statistics users and other involved parties and reach the objectives of quality,
- to ensure availability of all necessary sources,
- to assign performance of the periodical examination of the Quality Management System,
- to select activities related to policy and objectives of quality,
- to select activities of improvement of the Quality Management System.

2. Quality criteria and control

2.1 Criteria of quality of statistics

Management of the SOSR will assess the quality of statistics through following criteria:

A. Accuracy, credibility and acceptability

The rate of accuracy is set by deviation between the statistical estimation and actual state of examined phenomenon. Accuracy is tied up with credibility. Accuracy of estimation cannot be determined by internal analysis of estimation because later estimations must include more data and statistical analysis. Greater effort for obtaining further data and detailed analyses of environment must be done to get improved final result. Management of the SOSR will elaborate rules for achievement of accuracy of statistical results through comparison of result estimations and through analyses of reasons of insufficient credibility of sources at creation of statistical estimations and will prepare measures for their elimination or moderation. Important element of the accuracy criterion is its acceptability. Its control maximises probability of unusual development demonstrated by data.

B. Relevancy

The ability to serve the customers requires reaching relevancy (validity) of statistics that means the qualitative examination how statistics fulfil plans and needs of their users. For this reason, the SOSR declares its intention and preparedness to identify permanently current and potential users of statistical data and to monitor their needs and expectations. It will also monitor the current development in society and its influence on changes in users needs, with intention to react flexibly.

C. Reliability

The management of the SOSR will create conditions for production of statistics that is reliable and credible, that requires:

- informal independence and impartiality of the SOSR
- professional approach of statisticians
- application of standard and science-based methods of collection, processing, archiving and publishing of statistical data, as well as used methodology
- transparent publishing of statistical results
- active training of users on possibilities and limitations of statistics

D. Timeliness

Statistics are valuable for their users just in the case statistical results are published in time and according to the time schedule. The management of the SOSR commits to create such conditions, that will minimise deadlines of publishing of produced statistical data, i.e. time from the beginning of the statistical production process up to publishing final results in accordance with scheduled or agreed deadlines or recommendations of international institutions will be minimised.

E. Coherence and comparability

Statistics must provide coherent and continuous image on society. The management of the SOSR will assure coherence of produced data in following three areas:

- International comparability - in all spheres, where it is possible, the creation of statistical data will follow international standards and norms to ensure their international comparability.
- Time comparability - consistent time series will be implemented, so that statistics will be easily and plausibly comparable in different time periods.
- Content comparability - statistical conceptions must refer to various needs of users. Therefore using of unified definitions of indicators, classifications, items and standard methods of processing and evaluating of statistical data will be promoted.

F. Accessibility and comprehensibility

Publishing is an important part of the process of statistics production. It must be easily accessible and in appropriate form and should include information about its creation and quality (concerning comprehensibility). For these reasons the management of the SOSR will take following steps:

- to inform continuously on currently available data
- to increase the user comfort of access towards statistical data
- to prepare the documentation to statistical results, which will include information about methods and content of their creation, as well as methods of evaluation of their quality
- to communicate permanently with providers of statistical data, which are also potential users of statistical information.

2.2 Control of quality criteria

Importance of individual quality criteria of statistics is not always equal. It depends on demands of users and on the purpose that concrete statistics are used for. It is necessary to set importance of individual criteria for every statistical survey to obtain a complete overview on quality of statistics. Individual criteria of quality will be continuously profiled into measurable indicators and standards in order to allow fast and precise control of their fulfilment. Results of control will be properly documented and the appropriate attention will be paid to reasons of possible discrepancies.

3. Quality of statistics creation process

Quality of statistics is determined by quality of its creation. In the process of creation of statistical data only activities based on following criteria will be applied:

- Orientation to user,
- Efficiency,
- Flexibility,

- Transparency,
- Integration,
- Harmonisation.

The management of the SOSR will regularly monitor the efficiency of all realised processes and activities leading to the accomplishment of declared criteria of statistics quality.

Successful fulfilling of these criteria is possible to reach only if activities and related sources are managed like a process. Therefore the management of the SOSR will implement the Quality Management System based on procedural approach according to the standard STN EN ISO 9001:2000.

Implementation of the approach will lead to:

- Systematic definition of all necessary (key) activities to acquire desired results,
- Clearly specified responsibilities, competencies and duties in relation to the management of key activities,
- Measurement and analyse of capacity of key activities,
- Identification of interconnection of key activities with/or among individual components of organisation,
- Focus on factors like sources, methods and materials, which will improve key activities of organisation,
- Evaluation of risks, consequences and impacts of activities in relation with users, reporting units and with the other involved parties.

4. Quality planning

The management of the SOSR will ensure the elaboration of objectives and quality plans for relevant functions and for concrete organisational levels of the SOSR. The creation of plans and objectives will follow these principles:

- ? Objectives and plans must follow analyses of external environment and internal possibilities of the SOSR (analysis SWOT)
- ? Objectives and plans must follow the conception and policies of quality
- ? Objectives and plans must be clear, measurable and controllable
- ? Implementation of individual plans and objectives must match concrete responsibility
- ? Every employee of the SOSR must be familiar and identified with objectives and plans.

5. Quality and statistics users

Reasons for the existence of the SOSR are the statistics users. The management of the SOSR therefore appreciates the statistics users and co-operates with them closely to ensure all their specified and expected demands and needs. The management of the SOSR will promote the orientation towards the statistics users within all its organisational units. Moreover it will create preconditions for users to play much more important role in future in the process of development and planning of statistics.

6. Quality and management of human sources

The management of the SOSR is conscious, that employees are its key source and therefore they will create preconditions to recruit and maintain the high-qualified employees. The SOSR will pay key attention to increase the qualification level of employees through improvement of the continual education system not only in the professional and linguistic sphere, but also in the field of systems and methods of the quality management. The top management of the SOSR will provide personified, active and transparent management of employees that will lead to the promotion and support of quality in all units of its organisation. Systematic evaluations of priorities of individual activities and stimulation to self-reliant work and innovations will ensure the quality performance of individual work of employees and will stimulate their greater efforts relating to quality and self-perfection. The SOSR will promote mutual communication between the top management and employees in order to systematically improve the quality of work.

7. Other arrangements

Apart from the previous arrangements, the following measures for improvement of quality will be carried out:

- Introduction of the newest models of continual evaluation and improvement of overall quality of system organisation (e.g. model EFQM),
- Application of comparative methods (benchmarking) within individual departments and units, as well as between the SOSR and developed statistical organisations and institutions,
- Setting-up the bodies for implementation and improvement of the Quality Management System (e.g. Council of Quality),
- Supporting of projects focused on quality improvement,

- Performing of regular analyses of system documentation in the SOSR (description of processes, internal norms, technical and organisational directives, etc.),
- Application of e-government principles that will lead to the growth of quality and economic efficiency.

Conclusion

The above mentioned Declaration of the SOSR on Policy of Statistics Quality and the Quality Management System expresses the basic tasks of the SOSR management in the field of creation, management and improvement of quality. It also represents the first level of documentation according to the standard STN EN ISO 9001:2000. This basic document will be binding for further documentation relevant to definition of activities on the level of individual organisational units of the SOSR, working instructions as well as the other documentation relating to the assurance of quality of statistics.

/1/ Term statistics comprehends statistical activities organised and executed by the SOSR on the basis of the Programme of State Statistical Surveys.

Bratislava, 10th of April 2003

Peter Mach
President

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