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STRATEGY FOR INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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STRATEGY FOR INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

1. Introduction

The official statistics find their purpose in satisfying the information requirements of all categories of users which are continuously growing and diversifying. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and improve a system of dissemination to highlight the completeness and diversity of statistical information. Official statistics are common goods of the society and should be available to everyone.

Statistics will be presented in such a way that the main results can be understood without the need for expert knowledge of statistics. The statistics and analysis of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) must be accessible and understandable in order to enable users to obtain information on the Serbian society. SORS's statistics and analysis shall cover the requirements of the society for use in analysis and drawing its development policy, for general public and also be enough detailed for the business community and researchers' purposes.

"Statistics should be presented in a clear and understandable form, disseminated in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance." – Principle 15 Accessibility and clarity, European Statistics Code of Practice.

Dissemination represents the final process that rounds off the statistics production activity. Distribution of statistical information supports the right to information of all users' categories: policy makers, mass-media, economic operators, investors, international bodies, the citizens.

Without a well-defined dissemination strategy and without an adequate policy in the distribution of statistical information, the society cannot be properly and timely informed on changes and socio-economic processes and therefore cannot design policies and economic recovery measures necessary for the development of an economy.

Changes over time of the society's information needs and feedback from users come as a continuous challenge for SORS in finding new ways to develop the statistical system and adapting to new information requirements.

2. Components of the dissemination process

Analyse of the dissemination processes at SORS reveals the necessity to correlate its main components:

- The current legal framework, defined by the Law on Official Statistics, specifies the main goal of the official statistics and its basic functioning principles that entitle SORS to produce high quality official statistics and to disseminate them impartially, independently and timely, making them available simultaneously to all users.
- *The Development Strategy of the Official Statistics in the Republic of Serbia 2009-2012* is underlying that the most important task of the official statistics is to offer an objective picture of social and economic changes in the country;

- SORS has to function with respect for the principles 5 - Statistical Confidentiality, 6 - Impartiality and accessibility, 13 - Timeliness and punctuality, 15 - Accessibility and clarity of “European statistics Code of Practices” issued by European Commission and as well as for “Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics” defined by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations;
- Confidentiality issues are specified by the provisions of the Law on Official Statistics and other laws on individual data protection on technical and organisational measures for personal statistical data disclosure control;
- The organizational structure and the organizational and functioning rules enable the Division for Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations to manage the distribution activities;
- The annual editorial plan for hard-copy and electronic publications;
- The online dissemination via the Internet - considered from the content, structure and presentation of statistics and metadata viewpoints and under IT possibilities for developing the appropriate tools;
- Periodical analysis of reports based on the examination of various demands for data coming from beneficiaries with respect to their typology and interests;
- Periodical analysis of reports on online dissemination;
- Feedback analysis of specialised statistical data users (domestics and foreigners) and the general public regarding the statistical information disseminated by SORS.

3. Dissemination objectives

The main objective of Statistical Office is to inform the society by providing high quality, timely and impartial statistical information.

A first objective of the dissemination strategy is setting the conditions for improved and enhanced work of spreading the statistical information in order to better meet and satisfy the users’ demands and market’s real needs for statistical information.

The statistical information plays a *key role* on the information’s market: it is used by the policy makers, domestic and foreign businessmen, analysts, academic world etc.

Alignment with the European statistical standards and methodologies and also the inclusion of statistics among others areas of interest - that must include the European Community legislation - are obvious on the importance of statistics in the real description of the processes of economic and social development of society. Main preoccupations should be directed towards building up new online tools that offer the possibility to disseminate faster, easier and an increased amount of data.

The production of high quality statistics, the assuring of the correctness of statistical data and their scientific accuracy lead to increased credibility in official statistics and in the Office, as the main producer of official statistics.

The second objective is increased credibility concerning statistical figures and it drives to award a mark of statistics recognition or to give statistics a brand.

Moreover, ensuring and respecting the transparency of statistical data as mainstay of statistical activity and assuring a large public access to the basic statistical information, correctly, timely and

Improving the image of official statistics and of the Office is the third objective of the dissemination strategy.

periodically information of the mass-media on the core statistical indicators that illustrates the economic and

social situation of the country and in addition, supplying metadata on how these statistics are produced contribute to the public image of the Statistical Office. Information that is not credible is useless. Users cannot test the accuracy of statistical information, i.e. they must trust the institution that issued the information. The intrinsic value and usefulness of statistical information depend on the users' trust in official statistics and is judged by the quality of applied methodologies and by political objectiveness.

Intensifying the statistical marketing and the promotional activities of SORS products contribute to improved image of the Statistical Office, more active presence on the market for statistical information and increased trustiness in the public statistics for all domestic and external customers. The online and offline satisfaction users' surveys, analysing the users' feedback, then further implementation of appropriate measures in order to respond to users' expectations will contribute to build up products tailored by their real needs.

4. Improving the dissemination strategy and ways for its implementation

Defining of the dissemination strategy influences improvement of each dissemination sub-activities (design, editing and presentation of publications on paper and electronic supports, publications at national and local level, dissemination of statistical information on the website, products' promotion and statistical marketing and the actual release), as well as focusing on target segments of users.

Like other national statistical institutes, it is necessary also that Serbian statistics use the concept of dissemination of **customer-oriented products**. This new concept is based on the idea of tailoring the line of products and services to user demands. The concept in itself requires:

- both, knowledge and understanding the information needs of user groups
- developing appropriate technology so as to provide timely statistical information
- flexibility of response routes
- SORS's services and products offered in a flexible manner
- permanent enhancement the actual capacity of innovation and development of an intrinsic system
- necessary training of the staff involved in dissemination and marketing releasing.

The great diversity of user groups requires a differentiated approach in terms of statistical data dissemination, i.e. to identify the requirements on one side and the statistical supply and pricing policy on the other. Requests for information varies so much from one user group to another, regarding area, coverage, level of detail, way and frequency of use. It is therefore necessary to adjust the channels of dissemination in accordance with the variety of applications, both at the national and the local level, but also the ability to respond with an adequate supply.

In a dynamic approach, it requires:

- knowledge of the users' information needs
- adjusting the supply of information at the same pace with the needs and
- adapting to information society' priority changes.

a. Dissemination products

The main products in use when disseminating statistical data are hard-copy and electronic publications and statistical information organised in databases accessible on the website, internal or production DBs at the statisticians' disposal.

There is a general tendency in actual development of electronic publishing and the Internet. SORS has preoccupations to design new types of publications in line with EU and international practices and standards.

a.1 Publications, conception and publishing

Current status

The SORS renders an annual plan for publishing according to the annual plan of statistical surveys. The structure of the publishing plan comprises yearbooks, periodicals and ad-hoc publications. In 2009, around 60 types of publications of which 48 are yearly, 1 quarterly, 1 monthly were edited and 10 of them were issued ad-hoc.

General publications include yearbooks, panorama of municipalities, monthly review, trends, pocketbooks and so on, i.e. the publications with many statistical areas.

Communications treat only one specific statistical area and are issued with certain periodicity. There are 77 titles of Communications issued per year of which 31 are annual, 6 semi-annual, 18 quarterly, 20 monthly, 1 bimonthly and 1 each second year. In 2009, a total number of 380 Communications were released.

Bulletins are published since 1955 and contain comprehensive statistical data on one or more surveys from the same field.

Studies and analyses are publications of analytical and methodological character and include reviews of some phenomena and trends, particularly regarding the field of national accounts.

Working documents comprise analytical and methodological papers from particular areas and have internal, author character.

Methodologies and standards present the edition in which applied methodologies, classifications and nomenclatures are published, regarding statistical surveys conducting, also including additional information on methods and elements of statistical surveys.

Special publications are used for occasional publishing of statistics on different areas such as living standards, usage of ICT, gender and demography statistics.

Most of the statistical data are made available to users through publications, hard-copy and electronic formats. Improving their content and structure involves:

- a.1.1 Developing and implementing an Editorial policy of SORS
- a.1.2 Improving the design of statistical publications
- a.1.3 Establishing a specific structure for a publications' system

a.1.1 Developing and implementing of SORS Editorial policy is performed under the guidance of an Editorial committee composed by one representative for each statistical section, also including the publishing and dissemination section that is responsible for its implementation. The role of the Editorial committee will be to advise on the title, content, structure, presentation and size of each paper publication or its electronic version.

The editorial policy must respond with rigor on key issues such as:

- identifying categories/groups of current and potential users
- determining the types of information requested by users in order to build up targeted products by group of customers;

- tailoring and adapting the types of publications as are required by user groups
- analysing users' preference for paper or electronic publications, data provided through the Internet or that replies to specific data demands;
- developing of "Standards for publications' editing ", in order to uniform the system of hard-copy publications binding for publications author divisions.

Actions aimed at achieving the Editorial policy:

- improving existing publications by structural changes of content, title and the architecture of statistical publications and abandoning of non-viable products;
- dynamic editing work by adapting annual publication system to the beneficiaries requirements;
- expansion of electronic publishing;
- designing an editorial plan with deadlines for certain phases realization;
- implementation of a flow for editing the statistical publications in close cooperation between all implied actors,
- improving the public image by increasing the quality of publications' content
- achieving publications aligned towards European standards in line with EUROSTAT's stated policy.

a.1.2 Improving the design of statistical publications

Actions aimed at improving the publications in terms of content and layout:

- Reviewing of the existing publications, taking into account:
 - **qualitative aspects:** statistical analysis, graphs and thematic maps, synthetic or analytical tables, technical notes, consistency of methodologies, and,
 - **quantitative aspects:** limiting the number of pages for publications which are very big by designing hard-copy version accompanied by CD-ROMS with more detailed data, eliminating duplication of information in several publications, choosing a suitable format.
- enriching the content of publications by expanding the time series over several years, suitable for electronic versions of publications;
- continuous updating of technical explanatory notes covering definitions, methods of sampling and calculation methodologies used in the processing of statistical indicators, taking care that they should be written in a such accessible manner as to facilitate understanding by users of statistical information contained in the respective publication;
- graphic improvements (covers design, text, tables and graphs editing etc.).

a.1.3 Establishing a specific structure for publications' system

Actions designed to enable users' easier way of dealing with statistical data in the publication system:

- breakdown of publications by statistical divisions and themes: economic statistics, social statistics, synthesis publications, regional statistics, methodologies, etc.).
- guiding users to orient themselves among the publications that contain data from different statistical areas by assigning a specific colour and/or logotype for each area to facilitate visual recognition or to create a visual identity; these could be included on the cover and/or header of pages and graphs:

- synthesis statistics and macroeconomic statistics- **orange**
 - demography and social statistics (with sub-areas: population, employment, quality of life, consumer prices of the population, education, judiciary, health, culture and environment) - **red**
 - business statistics - **blue**
 - agricultural statistics - **green**
 - trade, tourism, transport and telecommunications statistics – **yellow**
 - other activities of the national economy - **brown**
- compliance with these colours in synthesis publications which comprise data from many statistical areas, such as yearbooks, pocketbooks, etc.
 - carrying out of publications on regional level.

✓ **The necessity for designing the regional /local publications**

Local publications are indispensable means by which the local public can access the results of surveys and statistical studies. These publications should be tailored to the local public' interest for information.

It is necessary to define what the general public or and local users' needs are for the purpose of developing appropriate publications meeting these needs. Local publications represent an instrument in data communications service policy between territorial public services and users of statistical information.

✓ **Local public can be found in:**

- local administration bodies,
- agencies involved in regional/local development
- private companies, foreign and/or mixed
- local mass-media
- local bodies with responsibilities in health care, education, culture, environment protection (social area, in general).

✓ **Local statistical publications can be:**

- monthly statistical bulletin at region/district level that can presents core statistical indicators at local level
- regional/district yearbook
- region or district illustrated in figures
- works comprising figures and statistical analyses dedicated to a specific statistical theme such as: population and demography; economy; labour force; education, health, social welfare and culture; agriculture; environment protection.

a.2 Electronic publications

Current status

The electronic version of the statistical publications are stored on CD-ROMS and designed in Adobe Acrobat and MS Excel. They are published for free on the website before being printed on hard-copy. All Communications are also published on the web.

Comparing the cost for producing paper publications with electronic publications and/or creating web pages it is obvious that the latter measure is less costly because it eliminates printing and mailing costs and the process is less time-consuming.

Actions for the development and the expansion of electronic publishing in terms of diversification and efficient dissemination release measures:

- improve content and diversification of statistical products with releases on CD-ROMS and the Internet;
- introduce modern methods and techniques to facilitate direct access to statistical databases for users via web technology;
- diversifying of electronic publications on CD-ROMS in .pdf, .html, .xls or PC-Axis software applications;
- substantial enrichment of publications on CD-ROMS with additional information compared to the paper version, namely:
 - extended time series
 - statistical information associated with maps
 - metadata.
- making CDs with databases on specific areas (foreign trade, regional data, collection of monthly statistical bulletins, etc.);
- security measures against unauthorized duplication or alteration of user information specified in clear copyright terms.

**a.3 Internet site
Current status**

The main dissemination channel for official statistics is SORS's website on which all official statistics published are available for free. Feeding of the website with statistical tables, press releases, statistical publications and other information is automatically enabled. Other statistical information is presented too, but not in an easy and friendly manner for the users; there are functionalities that should be improved: an important one is the possibility for the visitors to find in an easy way the statistical figures; the statistical information is not organized, i.e. structured in a uniformed system for retrieving; statistics can be found either in databases or in statistical areas; users need to make many queries and spend too much time to reach what they are searching for; there are methodological notes associated to some statistical fields in the section Statistical areas on the website and there is an online DevInfo application developed mainly for social statistics and used by other institutions which contains statistical information and roughly metadata such as: short definitions and methods of computation and data sources; many web pages are only in the Serbian language. Currently there are no well-defined roles or attributions on website developing and upgrading with data.

The Internet is the fastest storage medium that allows access to any information in unlimited volume. Statistical information plays a well-defined and recognized place on the market for information. Continuous development of the Internet, techniques and technologies underlying the functioning of this network, its wide geographical spread and speed in transferring information through the network offer new opportunities for a more active presence of SORS at the national and the international level.

Today, the number of Internet users is continuous growing. **"Electronic customers"** have to make a simple **<log on >** to the Internet and may have in a few seconds the information that they need or they can automatically receive via the **"distribution lists"** for statistics for which they subscribe through the automatic subscription called **"Newsletters"**.

Through the web, the information is at only at a "one-click-distance" from the users!

In this context, we emphasize the importance of developing and maintaining SORS's website through which we can communicate with the electronic customers everywhere in the world. Information is circulating in a two-way traffic manner:

- from SORS → users - through the published statistical information flow and

- from users → SORS, by expressed requirements, required topics, ways to purchase and by collecting statistical data through electronic forms.

The World Wide Web (www) technology offers an opportunity to disseminate information: **quicker, more, better and cheaper.**

To ensure full and equal access for all users categories, Serbian and foreigners, to basic statistical information, SORS should set up a website that is publishing a large and various amount of information. The website becomes the main channel for dissemination of SORS statistical information and metadata. SORS has continuously a high preoccupation and put in more effort into designing and improving this electronic tool.

Actions aimed at improving the architecture, content, access and design of SORS's website:

It is necessary to establish the IT platform and to start website redesigning. The new website needs a new architecture and an enhanced content;

- it is necessary to redesign the statistical database with a new architecture or to restructure the existing one by statistical themes/sub-themes/indicators;
- another possibility is to join and restructure the sections "Statistical areas" with "Databases" or to create a section dedicated for "Statistics" and this section should contain certain tools that can lead the users to statistical figures;
- free registration should be required to allow SORS to receive important feedback from the users;
- each statistical theme and sub-theme should be indicated through links such as "News", "Publications", "Statistics", "Methodology" and "Other issue";
- each data set should have a 'last updated' date clearly indicated and similar information published in other statistical products;
- it is recommended to create a simple way to reach the desired information – this should be done in a few steps to avoid browsing too many steps before reaching the information;
- besides statistical database, a metadata database should be created;
- easy and friendly interfaces for querying both databases have to guide users step by step in retrieving the desired information;
- implementation of a Content Management System (CMS) could save a lot of energy in designing specific applications; there are CMS as open source that can be adapted to SORS's needs;
- all important information have to be published on the web in English, such as all statistical figures, press releases and publications' calendar, catalogue of statistical publications and services;
- website testing and collecting feedback from users for improving web performances with specialized web testing tools;
- designing a website for each statistical region with statistics, publications and studies and contacts at the regional levels and its coordinated districts;
- special attention has to be paid to copyright terms: on each webpage, well-defined copyright terms should be added to avoid illegal reproduction of the content and to inform users that it is compulsory to always cite SORS as the source of the data. It should state that incorrect quoting of SORS as the data source, in cases when the data are re-disseminated or made commercial is subject to legal action as stipulated in the Copyright Law.

(SORS shall be quoted as follows: *Source: Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia*)

a.4 Production databases managed by statisticians

Current status

The big part of the data requests are solved by the statisticians because they are not online or to be found in statistical publications. The used sources are the databases with monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual data managed by the statisticians.

This work should be redirected to the data dissemination and public relation division. This would save time for the statisticians who instead could devote the time for serving users towards the production of statistics.

Actions to be taken:

- improving and expanding the existing database on the website with new statistical indicators;
- designing querying interfaces for copies of the production databases and enable access to the databases for the dissemination section.

a5. Press releases

Current status

SORS is issuing 18 press releases to various mass-media channels, in monthly and quarterly periodicity, mainly for Gross Domestic Product, Consumer Price Index, Retail Price Index, Industrial Production Index, External Trade, Households' Incomes, Expenditures and Consumption, Earnings and Salaries and Unemployment; the press releases are synthetic but extended data being presented in publications entitled "Communications"; since august this year from a total number of 77 statistical themes, 18 press releases and edition "Communications" were published on the website simultaneously, in Serbian and in English, in .pdf and .xls formats. Regarding other titles, only Communications are issued. First, press releases are published on the web and then they are issued to the mass-media channels, ministers and other institutions or subscribers.

Actions to be taken to improve the relationship with the mass-media:

- the first priority is to design the Calendar of Press Releases and to translate it into English and publish it in advance on the web; printing and distribution of the calendar together with the next issues of monthly bulletins; distribution in electronic version to mass-media channels via email and notifying them of its existence on the web and indicating the link;
- the content and structure of the Press Releases need to be reviewed or improved;
- the title of the Press Releases needs to reflect the main idea of the context or the trend that emerges from the statistical analysis; the title must also have a good impact on the readers to make them attractive; the content of the press releases should not exceed one text-page. Additional data can be annexed, for example tables;
- in the footnote of the Press Releases it should say when the next release on the subject is due;
- Press Releases should be published on the date and time announced; however, if unforeseen circumstances were to appear and the release date has to postponed, SORS shall clearly indicate the new issuing date in the web-based press release calendar;
- Press Releases and Communications issued on the same subject and published on the web shall be crossed linked;
- to avoid confusions between "press releases" and "communications", it is recommended to keep the series of Press Releases and the Communications to be transformed in real publications under the name "Fresh statistics".

b. Dissemination of statistical information – ways

SORS provides direct marketing, free distribution and selling of all statistical publications (in paper and electronic form) and of existing information in databases organized by statistical areas as soon as the data are available. At the local level, the same activity is carried out by Regional Offices of SORS.

The Data Dissemination and Public Relations Unit should assume all dissemination tasks and should be considered as **the single entry point** for data requests and **the single exit point** in answering to the customers' requests.

Statistical data produced through statistical surveys are considered as "**public goods**" and their dissemination to the users is mandatory.

b.1 Free dissemination

Free dissemination of publications and statistical information from SORS databases is accomplished by the dissemination section and in many cases, when they do not have the data at their disposal, by the experts from the statistical units of SORS.

The free distribution of publications and statistical work is conducted in line with SORS's policy for distribution of statistics to beneficiaries for free. The list of beneficiaries is constantly updated and approved by SORS's leadership:

The main beneficiaries of statistical publications distributed free of charge are:

1. Presidency, Parliament, Government, ministries and other institutions of central and local administrative bodies,
2. Trade-unions and professional associations,
3. The mass-media,
4. Scientific research institutes,
5. Universities and libraries,
6. International organizations (Eurostat, UN, IMF, World Bank, BERD, OECD etc.),
7. Students,
8. National Statistical Institutes,
9. The citizens.

Free distribution of ad-hoc required information by different internal and external customers is achieved by selecting data already published in publications and statistical works, by querying the statistical databases and monthly databases managed by various divisions at SORS.

Responses to ad-hoc data requests are compiled by the dissemination section based on the following rules:

- ensuring and respecting the principles of transparency and statistical confidentiality;
- checking and ensuring accuracy of information provided;
- non-preferential processing of requests and non-preferential access to information;
- ensuring effectiveness of dissemination activities by linking:
quality - completeness - response time;
- timeliness in providing answers (first response to the users - on the receipt of their request the answering time shall not exceed 1-5 working days after the request's registration and the final answer shall be submitted within 15 working days);

- assist the public for easier access to information and meta-information and resolve the inherent difficulties arose in using or interpretation of statistical information;
- inform the public on different possibilities of access to information: the library, the Internet, applications addressed to SORS, the possibilities for purchasing publications, subscriptions to publications or to repeated requests for data.

b.2 Chargeable dissemination

The charged distribution of statistical information from statistical databases, hard-copy and electronic publications is carried out with respect for data protection and confidentiality.

For responses to ad-hoc data requests, SORS directs users to the tariff system, based on legal act approved by the Director of SORS.

These statistics are disseminated against payment:

1. statistical information required by the internal and external business environment (economic, financial and banking institutions, consulting companies, etc.);
2. statistical information that require further processing of already published or stored formats in SORS databases.

Responses to chargeable requests for information are carried out with respect to the following rules:

- ensuring and respecting the principles of transparency and statistical confidentiality;
- checking and ensuring accuracy of information provided;
- non-preferential processing of requests and non-preferential access to information;
- ensuring the effectiveness of dissemination activities by linking:
quality - completeness - price - response time;
- stimulate the interest of beneficiaries in the use of statistical data by:
 - regressive pricing policy in correlation to the amount of provided information
 - providing reduced rates for monthly or yearly subscriptions
 - discounts or free services for students or the academic world
- timeliness in providing answers (since the receipt of a request the response time shall not exceed 1-5 working days after the request's registration and the final answer shall be submitted within 15 working days);
- assists the public for easier access to information and meta-information and resolve the inherent difficulties arose in using statistical information;
- inform the public on the different possibilities of access to information: the library, the Internet, applications addressed to SORS, the possibilities for purchasing publications, subscriptions to publications or to repeated requests for data.

b.3 Data dissemination from internal statistical databases

This section could be subject for free or for chargeable dissemination, depending on the type of customers who request the data.

Where the information requested are not found in the edited statistical publications or issued in press releases, beneficiaries usually submit specific requests.

The response time is depending on:

- the complexity of the request,
- the amount of data requested,
- availability of statistical data.

The responses at this requests' type can imply specific IT data processing that are done by the IT unit or by the producers.

If the request is of a general nature, then the user:

- will receive the answer immediately,

- is guided to the information in the published publications or on the website,
- is redirected to other institutions that have the requested data.

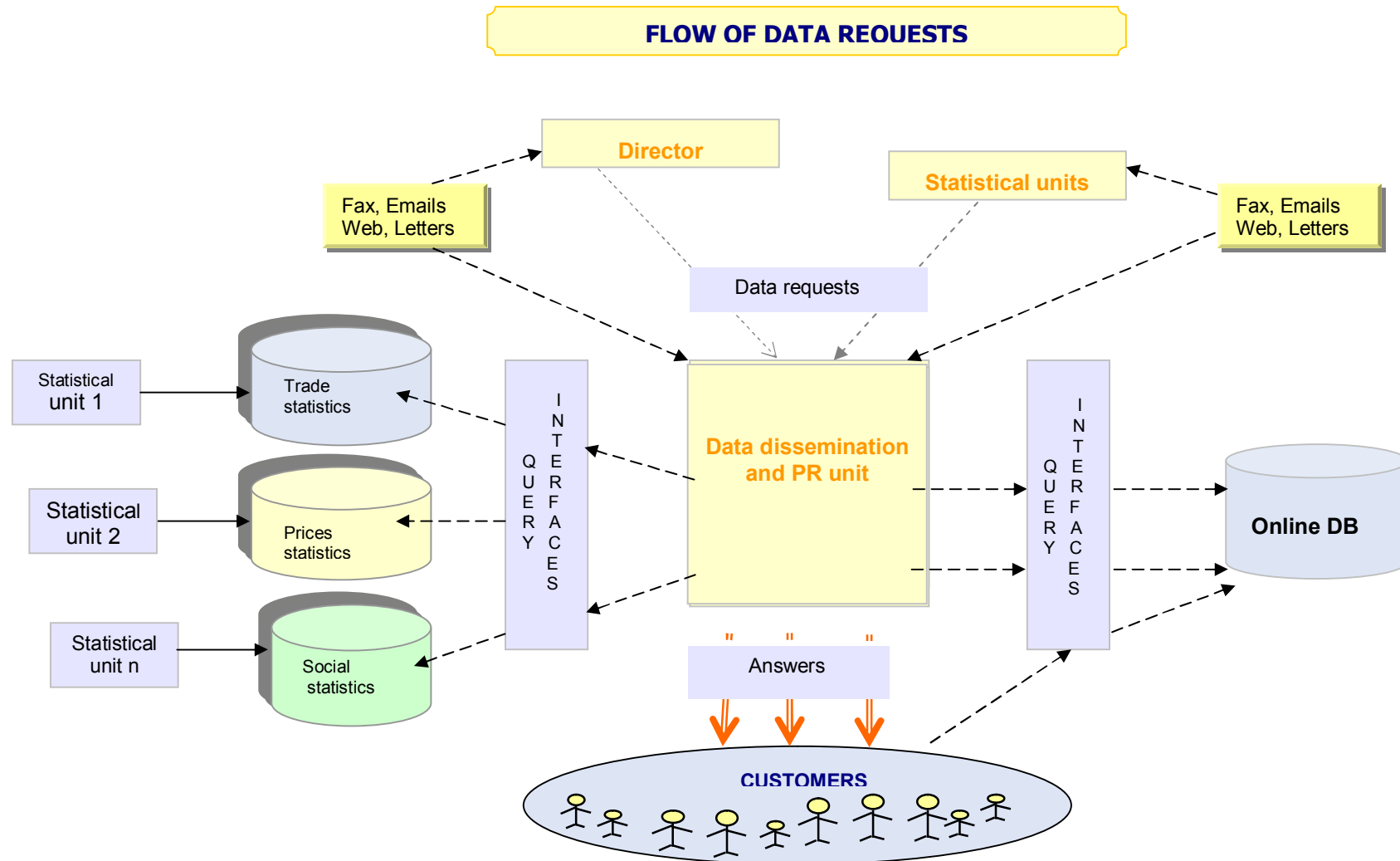
Current monthly and annual statistics are under a specialized unit's management. To resolve data requests on such topics the dissemination division has to readdress them to this unit.

Difficulties encountered:

- they do not always know what information is available,
- they do not know how they are organized,
- treating the users' requests is time-consuming for statistical units.



b.4 Flow for treating data requests



5. Pricing policy

5.1 Pricing policy and tariffs for statistical services

SORS is concerned to develop a proactive pricing policy that would adapt to changed user needs and new dissemination techniques.

To achieve the annual programme of statistical surveys, SORS is funded by the state budget.

Therefore publication prices and tariffs for providing statistical data resulting from such surveys are covering only the costs for printing and dissemination, not expenses for carrying out the surveys themselves.

- For **statistical publications**, SORS publishes an annual catalogue of publications and statistical products. The price for these publications covers the actual material cost for printing and distribution.
- **Data requests** solved by querying the databases, through special processing that require additional time - spending expressed as man-hours-computer are subject to the **Tariff of statistical products and services**.

5.2 Principles and rules for tariff

The cost of collecting and processing data resulted from the approved annual Program and Plan of statistical surveys, funded by the state budget, is not taken into calculation of the price for the services.

At users' requests, the SORS can conduct specific data processing, not included in the Plan and Program of the official statistics and such demands are charged. Providing their results is charged, and any other data requested in particular forms at users' needs is also charged, because such requests require additional statistical work. The price is defined according to the additional efforts needed to answer to specific users' requests and it is in accordance with the Rulebook (accepted standards) related to costs calculation.

For all stages of processing these specific data requests: analysis, consulting, validation, translation, designing and performing of IT processing, the pricing should be established in accordance with the efforts of statisticians and IT personnel.

The pricing policy for the main statistical services provided to the users is reviewed annually. For each data request, an estimated cost could be defined.

Printed publications are free of charge for the most significant users and regarding the charged publications, the prices involve only the printing costs and the costs of publications delivery.

Shipping costs to beneficiaries are valued at normal costs for postal taxes and in accordance with the weight of documents sent and postal rate changes.

6. Promotion and marketing

The SORS has preoccupations in enhancing the promotion and marketing activities in the field of dissemination of statistical information.

6.1 Promotion of statistical products

6.1.1 The objective of promoting statistical products consists in generating the relationship between information required (known through the analysis of the market demand) and a statistical product or service produced for customers

This can be done by:

- better knowledge of potential users of statistical information (through the study of information concerning market demand)
- creating appropriate products that respond to public expectations;

- enhancing the promotional activities to acknowledge the users about the existence of statistical products.

The goal of promotion is to increase the users' confidence in using the statistical information.

A complete promotional strategy should include:

- promoting the image of the institution,
- promoting products and services (especially free services: library, the Internet),
- promoting the means of dissemination,
- promoting existing disseminated products,
- practicing affordable prices, etc.

6.1.2 Techniques for promoting

Adequate promotion of a product assures a successful reception by the public. A good product which is not promoted enough will not be well received by potential users.

Actions for the promotion of publications are directed to informing the customers of the supply of publications, statistical services and the release of new products:

- Statistical Office website;
- making flyers and posters;
- mailing subscribers leaflets or first issuing of a new publication – could be offered free of charge;
- promotion of statistical products through various events (trade fairs, exhibitions, seminars)
- insertion of advertising in the periodically works of SORS;
- insertion of advertising in magazines of other institutions with which SORS cooperates (in agreement with the allocated space);
- advertising in the press and special press (economic profile newspaper or publications);
- demonstrating the utility of products at seminars, etc.;
- organizing press conferences and preparation of press files for journalists;
- organizing seminars with experts on a particular statistical theme.

Organizing promotional activities is grouped around two main lines:

- a) promotion of SORS - its image and communication with other central and local administrative bodies and international bodies;
- b) maintaining the relationship with the mass-media through which the public is informed about economic and social aspects of Serbia.

6.2 Statistical marketing activity

6.2.1 Objective - defining and implementing marketing activities:

- identify the typology of customers;
- identify the typology of requests;
- adaptation of statistical products to user requests;
- diversification of the statistical supply;
- identify the market segments with its specific requirements for statistics and defining marketing plans for each segment.

6.2.2 Techniques for marketing

Actions to achieve these objectives:

- research the need for statistical information on the market and obtain knowledge about public opinion by conducting surveys among clients through different ways: direct interviewing, completing the questionnaire either at SORS's headquarters or by postal mailing or electronic forms published on the website;
- knowledge of client motivation to turn to statistical information;
- user market segmentation to develop customer-oriented dissemination;
- analysis of user opinions concerning used products and services;
- staff training for marketing activities.

To achieve an effective marketing policy, a **customers' database** should be designed that will record daily information about customers:

- recording information about customers and the type of requested data;
- highlighting customers' types and break down them by kind of demands;
- using the records of the database for marketing and promotional actions;
- creating a file of potential customers and submit promotional materials to them;
- undertake surveys to find out what changes occur concerning user needs.

6.2.3 Evaluation of dissemination

The purpose of marketing is to assess:

- if disseminated products were designed properly and according to public expectations for which the products were created;
- whether and how the products can be improved;

7. Promoting statistical literacy

A right understanding and usage of statistical figures, standards and methodologies and their correct interpretation are important for all users regardless of their field of business, no matter whether they are public institutions, mass-media, students or citizens. To improve the relevance and public confidence in official statistics, the Statistical Office should continuously be working on promoting statistical literacy.

Actions to be carried out in promoting statistical literacy:

- organizing press conferences, seminars and public discussions on selected statistical topics of major interest in order to provide deep explanations on subject areas and statistical outputs;
- introducing training programs to cover use of official statistics data dedicated for students/mass-media/ business world and underlying the importance of official statistics in the society;
- editing leaflets and flyers on selected statistical themes and distribute them for free to inform the public on products and services;
- editing publications or publishing on the website information on used statistical methodologies for sampling and compilation, definitions, standards and information on used data sources;
- granting interviews on radio and television channels programmes in order to promote national public activities such as censuses or a new statistical survey for obtaining good results in data collection and increasing the public's awareness;
- give deep explanations on the correct use and interpretation of official statistics in the cases of misuse or misunderstanding of standards and methodologies used by journalists or other users.

8. Confidentiality

Chapter IX Confidentiality of SORS' statistical Law clearly states the rules behind individual data protection, restriction of access to confidential data and their dissemination. These confidentiality rules are also extended to data that are collected from administrative sources and to which SORS is granted access.

SORS pays rigorous attention to this and has designed an internal *Rulebook on free access to data and statistical data protection* that regulates also data protection.

All measures and actions on assuring data confidentiality for any institution are also contained in the Serbian Law on Individual Data Protection issued by Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection.

SORS assures that all necessary measures against any direct or indirect identification of respondents to statistical surveys and that any deviation from the above-mentioned legal acts is subject to penalties.

All confidentiality rules are mandatory for all statistical staff during all stages of statistical survey conducting, from data collection, processing through dissemination.

SORS is collecting and processing confidential data only for statistical purposes and in doing so follows its legal tasks to inform those who directly provide personal data of the intended use of the data.

SORS gives to society and for public information only aggregated data and to the accredited research community anonymous micro-data.

Eurostat, through its working group on data confidentiality established the following two definitions for *confidential data* and for *micro data*:

a. Confidential data are individual data which are containing identification data and that are used only for statistical purposes and cannot be disseminated to any external body or person.

Confidential data held for statistical purposes may not be used for other purposes except for what is expressly permitted by the legislation or where prior permission of the data providers has been obtained. SORS does not allow access to confidential data in its possession to any body or person outside the office.

In conformity with the Law on Official Statistics, the following information is not considered as confidential:

- the number and structure of all employees (excluding their personal data);
- production range, i.e. products manufactured, processed, forwarded, stored, purchased and sold by an entrepreneur, enterprise, organization or institution, as well as all services rendered to public or other enterprises, organizations or institution;
- Data on damage or pollution caused by activities of enterprise, unincorporated enterprise, i.e. other organizations or institutions, and
- Data published according to the written consent of involved physical person or legal entity.

b. Micro-data are anonymous individual data obtained through depersonalization of individual data by different techniques for anonymisation.

Access to micro-data

The national statistical institutes allow dissemination of micro-data sets of different statistical surveys only for scientific purposes and only for accredited research institutes, universities, international organizations that have to prove that their demand for micro-data is for a scientific research project. Students, independent non-accredited researchers or private companies on social or economic subjects are not eligible to obtain micro-data (in conformity with EC Regulation No. 831/2001).

Access to aggregated data

Aggregated statistical information can be disseminated only if the following three major rules are respected:

- number of individual or legal respondents is more or equal then three ($n \geq 3$);
- number of individual or legal respondents is more or equal then three and the respondents' weight is less than 80% of the total in the economic activity or segment of product production – the dominance rule is depending on “n” and “p” ($n \geq 3$ and $p < 80\%$); for some statistical fields, the European Commission has issued specific EU Regulations, for example concerning Structural Business Statistics, the weight cannot be more than 70%;
- the individual data can be released only by the written agreement of the respondent.

Access to micro-data

The national statistical institutes allow dissemination of micro-data sets of different statistical surveys only for scientific purposes and only for accredited research institutes, universities, international organizations that have to prove that their demand for micro-data is for a scientific research project. Students, independent non-accredited researchers or private companies on social or economic subjects are not eligible to obtain micro-data.

Future actions recommended for protection the confidential data and micro- data protection:

- all SORS personnel are required to make a confidentiality statement and to sign a confidentiality declaration at the moment of their assignment in the office;
- each set of confidential data must be checked by the heads of the statistical units who is in charge of confidentiality protection;
- the access to confidential data for personnel must be authorised by the appropriate head of unit;
- it is mandatory that the appropriate personnel should be trained in IT security matters, standards and guidelines to help them in ensuring the data confidentiality. Statistical units should not release details of IT systems and security measures that might compromise confidentiality or security of the data they keep.
- the access to micro-data sets for scientific purposes should be allowed through a contract signed by SORS and the beneficiary with very clear conditions, obligations and responsibilities for both sides;
- the access to micro-data sets can be for free or can be charged in accordance with the type of customer;
- a set of special Norms for security should be designed for assuring against divulgation or damage of the confidential data and micro- data sets.

9. Mass-media

9.1 SORS – mass-media relationship

SORS has to look to mass-media as its main partner in re-dissemination of statistical information. In fact, mass-media is doing a free service for statistical offices: they spread statistical information or gives a socio-economic interpretation and then issues a message to the public. The mass-media has the potential to raise a high degree of public awareness and interest; for this reason, they are invaluable partners for the statistical office that seek to build confidence and trust in the information released. In the light of this, SORS seeks to abide to the following principles:

- all journalists are allowed easy access to relevant and correct statistics that have been compiled according to transparent and international accepted methodologies;
- all accredited journalists or newspaper are provided for free with all statistical publications (hard-copy or CDs);

- supplementary data are also free of charge to the mass-media if they are already available;
- in the case of individual service products, the mass-media may be charged for cost recovery at the same prices as other SORS customers;
- information is disseminated to the mass-media in a comprehensible manner through press releases – media channels are fully responsible for clarity and coherency of the message released; they have the obligation to not misinterpret statistical figures, but to render them faithfully;
- the dissemination division of SORS is in charge to cooperate with the mass-media in statistical matters regarding their particular subject-area. In its relations with the media, SORS empowers the heads of the various statistical divisions or any other employee designated by the Director to comment on or to clarify aspects of the statistics for which they are responsible.

A good opportunity to find out the journalists' demands is to organize specific meetings (called "round-tables" for no more than one hour) to which a few journalists (7-8 people) can be invited to discuss a common theme, for example inflation or population aspects or international trade. The purpose would be to let them express their points of view on the information or what their expectations are. Cases of misinterpretation and how these problems can be solved can also be discussed on the occasion.

Invitations to SORS's conferences, seminars and workshops are regularly sent out to members of the mass-media. Press conferences announcing new projects or changes in methodologies are normally held on the SORS's premises.

9.2 Press releases

Press releases should be published in the morning at 10:00 or 11:00 am to allow time for the journalists to prepare articles for the same day. They should be issued simultaneously and be available to everyone via e-mail, fax and the Internet.

Concerning the content of press releases, SORS must ensure that the design and layout are appropriate and comprises useful news. The information presented shall be clear and concise with the most important news items presented on the top of the release.

The initiative to issue a new press release may come from the Director or statistical units; the text, graphs and tables should be provided by the statistical units; the final editing of the text and tuning regarding the content and layout should be carried out by the dissemination division's press officer in dialogue with the statistical unit producing the press release.

10. Risks

10.1 Treating errors in statistical publications

In the case errors are found in publications, in printed or in electronic format, immediate action shall be taken to correct them.

In the case of printed publications, an Errata shall be edited indicating all the corrections made in the publication with the page number of the publication clearly indicated. The Errata is then inserted in all publication copies.

10.2 Treating errors in online databases

An error in the online databases shall be corrected and a note shall tell that the data was revised and at which date.

10.3 Handling of errors in Press Releases

An error in released web-based news releases stored in .pdf and .xls files shall be corrected as soon as possible.

An Errata must be written and sent to all receivers and published on the dedicated web pages of the press release, indicating the new released data or the revised version which reflect the changes that were made.

An e-mail shall be sent to all who received the concerned news via email, indicating the changes made and providing a link to the dedicated web pages for the news released.

10.4 Mass-media relationship

SORS may respond to any misunderstanding or error regarding its statistics as reported in the news channels. Likewise, it may react to criticism based on an error;

If an error is detected in the text or statistics released to the mass-media this has to be promptly rectified through the submission of an updated press release;

The initiative to respond or to rectify mistakes should belong to the statistical units or the Director of the Office; the rectification has to be issued by the press office of the data dissemination division;

The Director decides whether to respond or not to criticism on behalf of the mass-media concerning any aspect of the work carried out by the Statistical Office. The Director is deciding also for the manner in which to respond, by verbal or written means or by providing more detailed statistical figures on the concerned subject.

SORS reserves the right to revise this strategy at any time in accordance with changes in its legislation and its needs in order to improve the services for public information.