



# **QUALITY POLICY OF THE CZECH STATISTICAL OFFICE**

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## INTRODUCTION

The scope of authority of the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO) includes acquisition of data, production of statistical information on social, economic, demographic, and environmental developments of the Czech Republic and its respective administrative units, and providing and publishing of statistical information. The scope also encompasses the providing for comparability of pieces of statistical information and compliance with international commitments in statistics, which the Czech Republic is bound to.

The activities form a complete set of services financed by public resources, provided in the widest possible public interest, and serving purposes of support to decision-making processes, research, and discussion at every level in the national as well as international scale.

The State Statistical Service of the Czech Republic forms an integral part of the European Statistical System, which consists of the statistical office of the European Union – Eurostat, national statistical offices, and other national bodies responsible for development, production, and dissemination of European statistics. The System objective is to reach the required level of quality of European statistics by means of harmonisation of national statistical systems, coordination of concepts, methods, documentations, and common rules.

The Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European statistics is the fundamental document creating the legal framework for development, production, and dissemination of European statistics. It defines, inter alia, general principles of professional independence, impartiality, objectivity, and reliability of the State Statistical Service, keeping individual data confidential, and effectiveness of costs expended for the statistical service implementation. It contains descriptions of respective criteria for quality and determines which way requirements for quality monitoring and for quality reports will be defined in the EU legislation.

Providing for the necessary quality of the State Statistical Service concerning statistical outputs and related production activities form an integral part of all key and support processes of the Czech Statistical Office, which is clearly declared in the published CZSO Commitment to Quality. Principles, included in the aforementioned regulation, are further specified in the European Statistics Code of Practice adopted by the European Statistical System Committee. The Code and principles of the total quality management form a complete framework of quality management under the conditions of the Czech Statistical Office.

The presented Quality Policy of the Czech Statistical Office is based on and reflects in full respective principles of the total quality management and of the European Statistics Code of Practice and this way it is complementary to the hierarchical structure of documents of Mission and Vision, Strategy, Key Priorities, and Work Programme<sup>1</sup> of the Office, which define the direction of development, principles of implementation, and shape of the Office activities in long-, mid-, and short-run prospects.

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<sup>1</sup> The Work Programme consists of the Programme of Statistical Surveys, Catalogue of Products, Budget, and Priority Tasks for a given year.

# INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

## 1. Professional Independence

In its activities the CZSO unconditionally adheres to the principle of professional independence on other political or administrative institutes and institutions, as well as on entities of the private sector. This way the Office provides for trustworthiness of produced statistical outputs and for their high value for users.

Impartiality and apolitical stance of the President of the Office and high independence of the Office while defining and setting parameters of statistical outputs quality are among basic pillars of professional independence of the Czech Statistical Office anchored within the legislation of the Czech Republic. The aforementioned is also coupled with professional independence when choosing suitable methods and optimum procedures of statistical works and planning of the Work Programme and establishing deadlines for the statistical data publishing.

The CZSO introduces the principle of professional independence in an active manner within its own works on legislation and in measures of executive nature, always in accord with the up-to-date conditions of external environment and pursuing the need for continuous improvement of the State Statistical Service.

Professionalism, independence, impartiality, expertise, and objectivity belong to the shared key values of the CZSO employees. These values are in a complete way embedded into the system of internal rules, bylaws, processes, and procedures and are supported by the top management.

## 2. Mandate for Data Collection

The CZSO has a clear legal mandate and instruments for collecting data for the purpose of statistical outputs production in accordance with requirements of users. Reporting units may be legally bound, in justified cases, to provide data necessary for production of statistics. The CZSO is also entitled to use available administrative data sources, if they are compliant with requirements for quality, form, and timely availability of the data.

In the process of continuous improvement the CZSO permanently implements activities focused on more effective reporting duty. The need to implement a certain survey is regularly revised within the every-year planning process of the Work Programme of the Office. The Work Programme is a result of analyzing possibilities of optimisation of the number and extent of statistical surveys and reinforcing of the use of suitable administrative data sources. The aforementioned activities are supported in an active manner and coordinated by the CZSO top management.

The process of monitoring of compliance with the reporting duty is an integrated part of the data collection. The CZSO is entitled to impose sanctions for breaching this duty. Yet for the sake of beneficial



customer and supplier relations, the Office favours tools of motivation of respondents to fulfil their reporting duties mainly by means of urgencies, dialogs, and consultancies accentuating the importance of providing necessary data for the whole society.

### **3. Adequacy of Resources**

The CZSO has its own budget chapter in the State Budget. The budget planning process for the next fiscal year is interconnected to the planning process of the Work Programme. Doing so the CZSO takes into account needs for collection and production of statistical data of institutional users, especially in areas determined by requirements of international, and eventually, national commitments in statistics. The volume of financial resources allocated is subject to a every-year procedure of external approval within the budgetary process.

The CZSO strives to optimise financial demands to the State Budget related to the performance of key and support processes. For this purpose the Office search in active manner options to save resources and use them more effectively. The Office employs all available supplementary sources of financing as instruments of the grant policy of Eurostat and funds of the European Union, namely for purposes of development activities.

### **4. Commitment to Quality**

The CZSO implements and in an active manner provides for necessary characteristics of the institutional environment, key and support processes of production of statistics and statistical outputs as specified in the respective principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The principles are completely taken into account in the published documents of the Mission, Vision, and Strategy, Mid-Term Key Priorities, and the following annual Priority Tasks and Work Programmes of the Office.

The CZSO top management supports total quality management processes, including their continuous improvement. The commitment to quality is taken into account in making concepts of and implementing processes and procedures, internal regulations, rules and bylaws, and organisation structures of the Office and is implemented by a combination of activities at the headquarters level and at the levels of respective statistical and support units.

The key parameters of quality of the CZSO processes and outputs are set in accordance with requirements of external as well as internal users. There are formalised processes for collection, evaluation, and preparation of reports on quality, respecting specifics of respective statistics and based on requirements of relevant legal regulations, established in the Office.

### **5. Statistical Confidentiality**

The CZSO provides for a strict protection of individual data. In the Office there is a system of rules, documentation, and relevant organisation structure, which ensure security and integrity of confidential data. Processes, in which individual data are treated, are secured by

instruments of physical protection, devices of information and computer technology, usage of progressive encrypting methods and devices, systems of logic protection, and sound procedures of logistics administration of data. The methods of confidential data protection are revised and continuously improved.

The procedure statistical data, which were produced by aggregation of individual data, are published, is in terms of methodology controlled the way individual persons, which are concerned in the aggregated data of multiple legal or natural persons, may not be identified without exerting inappropriate efforts. When making decisions on publication of potentially confidential data the protection of confidentiality of the data provided is always preferred to publication thereof.

Confidential statistical data may not be used for other than statistical or scientific purposes. All employees of the Office are obliged to keep confidential statistical data, which they have acquired knowledge of, in secrecy. Confidentiality duty lasts even after the employment contract has expired or appropriate works have been finished.

## **6. Impartiality and Objectivity**

The CZSO permanently and thoroughly adheres to requirements of legislation and other standards for official statistics in accord with principles of independence, impartiality, expertise, objectivity, and transparency. When creating methodologies the CZSO employs the most modern findings of statistical science and best practices in applied statistics. The methodological procedures developed are strictly complied with and are revised in light of needs of users and taking into account potential for improvements.

The CZSO publishes binding dates and times of output releases for the next year greatly in advance always with no respect to political or social conditions, which may arise in time of their releases. Adhering to the calendar of publications is continuously checked within the relevant organisation structure. The CZSO Data Revision Policy is also a public document.

All users have equal and free of charge access to the standard data of the CZSO. The CZSO favours the Internet as a generally accessible communication channel. Procedures applied for the document publishing are automated. The data are equipped with the necessary comments on methodology as a standard.

The statistics produced within the preparations of summary publications, analytical outputs, or for discussions of outputs of social importance across statistical units are systematically confronted with outputs of other statistical tasks or available administrative data sources. Outputs and findings related to the aforementioned activities serve as inputs for processes of continuous improvement.



# STATISTICAL PROCESSES PROCESY

## 7. Sound Methodology

In the CZSO there are an appropriate organisation structure and a system of creation, development, and implementation of sound methodological principles worked out within statistical processes. The methodological system applied in the CZSO is based on international standards, regulations, guidelines, and manuals implemented into the national environment. The CZSO has been participating in an active manner in international and national work structures focused on the development of common methodologies and instruments, including standardization and harmonisation.

In the CZSO there are processes and procedures of internal revision of methodology for preparation, collection, processing, and dissemination of statistical data. The outputs are permanently subject to continuous evaluation and following confrontation with available data sources. The CZSO top management in an active manner supports implementation of external audits of methodologies and involvement of users.

Progress in competencies of the CZSO employees is perceived as a key prerequisite for quality outputs and continuous improvement of processes, in which the outputs are created. The educational system is flexible and enables to respond in a suitable way to concrete needs of statistical units. Quality of training and education is permanently monitored. Internal employees are getting involved in knowledge sharing processes.

## 8. Appropriate Statistical Procedures

In the CZSO there are the organisation structure, processes, and procedures and a system of documentation ensuring methodology is established and preparation, collection, and processing of data are implemented. Methodology is revised and improved with the objective to optimise sources, reduce administrative burden on respondents, and attain the required quality characteristics of outputs in accord with users' requirements.

The CZSO in an active manner gets representatives of important groups of respondents, internal as well as external experts, and interviewers involved in preparations of statistical surveys. In relevant cases designs and drafts of new questionnaires are subject to pilot verification. Respondents are given the necessary methodological support by means of a wide spectrum of available communication channels when surveys are implemented.

The CZSO implements active steps to modify content of and make administrative data sources accessible. Objective of these activities is continuous improvement of effectiveness of the State Statistical Service performance, higher quality of production, and reduction of the burden on

respondents. These processes are under priority regime and are supported by the Office top management.

The administrative data processing is separated from the processing of statistical outputs. The CZSO has both standardised and respective administrative data source specific procedures for validation, correction, and quality control. Available administrative data sources are furthermore continuously assessed how they meet necessary parameters of quality.

## **9. Non-Excessive Burden on Respondents**

The CZSO monitors and optimises administrative burden on respondents always taking into account users' needs and required quality of outputs. In the CZSO there are an internal organisation structure, procedures, and processes providing for these activities within the development of the Work Programme. Monitoring and optimisation of administrative burden on respondents has been set as a priority for a long time.

Preparations of the Work Programme relate to the recurrent revision of the need for collection of concrete data by analyzing potential application of alternative data sources, including administrative data. The process of the Programme preparations is also subject to public review and comments to its proposal in various stages of the legislative process.

In case alternative data sources are absent the CZSO uses modern methods of practical statistics which include, for instance, creation and reduction of samples, rotation of respondents, cross-sectional coordination of surveys, and analyses of potential duplicities, or elimination of insignificant variables. The CZSO top management supports processes of integration, standardization, computerisation, and maximum sharing and use of available data.

The CZSO seeks feedback from its respondents. The information is evaluated and used to improve processes of preparation of surveys, production, and dissemination of statistics.

## **10. Cost Effectiveness**

The CZSO internal processes of financial and human resources management are set in accordance with requirements of usefulness, efficiency, and effectiveness as defined in relevant legal regulations. Efficiency is permanently assessed in relation to user required quality of outputs and burden on respondents providing the data.

Efficiency of financial resources spending is regularly assessed by internal and external parties within the processes of the development of budget proposal, continuous drawing of resources, and the following process of preparation of the State Final Account. Related procedures of approval and then a following check by means of responsible bodies form an integrated part of these processes.





Within the continuous improvement process, the Office top management supports and implements processes of continuous revision of efficiency of financial resources spending, retendering of current contracts, and formation of saving and optimising measures, including activities of standardisation and automation. The activities concern both key and support processed of the Office. Processes of economy optimisation are furthermore connected to continuous improvement of human resources competencies and complete adherence to principles of transparency in preparations and implementation of public tenders.

## **STATISTICAL OUTPUT**

### **11. Relevance**

The CZSO strives to fulfil requirements of users, the Office is open to suggestions, proposals, remarks, and comments. The CZSO learns on current and potential needs of users. For doing so the Office employs a wide spectrum of channels of active as well as passive communication. Information obtained is analysed, presented at various levels of management and used within the continuous improvement processes.

Users' requirements are evaluated every year and taken into account in the preparations of the Work Programme, which is negotiated both at advisory bodies to the President of the CZSO and within a wide spectrum of institutional users.

### **12. Accuracy and Reliability**

When acquiring data a processing and evaluating statistical information the CZSO proceeds the way the data published are not restricted or distorted, strives to produce an image of reality as faithful as possible while meeting required timeliness and punctuality of the data. Using professional competencies of employees the Office ensures the statistical production process is set at the required level of accuracy and reliability, subject to available resources and needs to reduce administrative burden on respondents.

Methodological aspects of production of statistics are assessed both internally and externally. Important quality aspects are provided to users both for ensuring of their needs and in response to requirements of the current standards.

### **13. Timeliness and Punctuality**

In accordance with the CZSO Dissemination Policy statistical data are published as soon as possible after the reference period has expired, yet always once qualitative parameters have been achieved in accord with the requirements of national and international standards and key users' needs.

There are processes and procedures of planning and strict meeting of dates and times for releases of outputs set in the CZSO. Possibilities to shorten and modify release dates and times are regularly analysed within continuous improvement process.

The CZSO publishes the CZSO Data Revision Policy, which ensures the processes of adjustment and update of released data are transparent and consistent. Dates of important extraordinary revisions are always announced in advance.

#### **14. Coherence and Comparability**

The CZSO monitors mutual comparability of pieces of statistical information both nationally and internationally. Doing so, the Office takes into account requirements for internal, time, and space consistency and comparability of data, across the State Statistical Service of the Czech Republic and the European Statistical System.

Requirements for ensured comparability of data over a given time period are met within the processes of preparation, collection, processing, production, and dissemination of statistical outputs. The Office strives to apply common standards, including estimation methods and data processing concerning the extent, definitions, units, and classifications of various surveys and sources. Statistical data from different sources with different periodicity are compared and harmonised.

#### **15. Accessibility and Clarity**

In the dissemination the CZSO accentuates standardization, computerisation, and use of modern and generally accessible communication channels. The manners pieces of information are presented, including methodological explanations, comments, and analyses, are continuously improved the way outputs are understandable to the widest circle of data users as possible. The CZSO strives to meet the required standards for data publishing, including so-called open data.

The CZSO provides adequate pieces of information on methodology taking into account needs of the target categories of users. Metadata are stored into a unified metadata system. There are processes evaluating accessibility, understandability, and the level the outputs are user friendly, set. Results of the evaluations are analysed, discussed at different levels of management, and used within the continuous improvement.

The CZSO cooperates in an active manner with media and regularly performs and evaluates analyses of media impacts of communication activities. Projects of popularisation of official statistics are supported by the Office top management.

