

New Direction of the Korea National Statistical Office (2006~2010)

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1. Summary

Korea has developed and implemented its 5-year strategical plan for National Statistical Development since December of 2005. The plan was initiated by the Korea National Statistical Office (KNSO), and prepared with the collaboration between KNSO and participating governmental organizations for a one-year process. The details for processes and contents are as follows:

The improvement and enhancement of statistics for a basis for policy related decision-making:

- To newly develop or improve existing statistics for a total of 126 items for the next 5 years.
- To support statistical development among state, municipal, and local governments and governmental organizations.
- To set up the Statistical Research Institute as a professional organization with expertise in statistical development and research.

The promotion of the quality of national statistical products and services:

- To examine and enhance the quality of products and services of national statistics.
- To share administrative information, such as national tax data and emphasize and strengthen the protection of private and personal information.

The promotion of statistical data and information services:

- To enlarge spans of services and recipients through one-stop-services based on constructing Data Base systems for the national statistics and micro data until 2008.

The institutional development of policies for strategical plans:

- To revise statistical laws, including the requirement of testing qualities and sharing administrative information.

2. Background for the development of mid-term and long-term reforms for the national statistics

Korea has adopted a diversified system for the institution of statistical policies.

This means each governmental organization produces its own statistical data and data analyses necessary for developing policies. As of February 2007, a total of 159 governments and governmental organizations produce a variety of 736 statistical data.

The whole body of statistics developed and produced by various governmental organizations are adjusted by the Amendment of the Statistical Laws passed in the Congress in the fiscal year of 1962. Since its establishment in 1990, the Korea National Statistical Office (KNSO) has had the authority and power to reconcile and control the whole body of government-produced national statistics as the central statistical institute.

Despite the ongoing process in the development of national statistics, the customers, service users, and the media have criticized the current system of national statistics in terms of usefulness, reliability, and user-friendliness.

The president of Korea instructed the Korea National Statistical Office to establish a plan for reforming the nation's statistical systems after consultation with several governmental authorities. As a consequence, a task force among governments and governmental organizations was created for the purpose of establishing and promoting the 5-year mid-term and long-term strategic plan for reforming the national statistical system through a one-year process.

The taskforce has made it clear that the following problems are urgent:

1. Users lack statistics and therefore national statistics does not support the important establishment of national policies.
2. Problems regarding reliability of some statistics are leading to reliability issues of policies. Measures of increases in statistics survey rejection rates are needed.
3. The statistical information service has been improved due to the development of information, such as advancement of the Internet.

However, demands for service of basic documents for in-depth analysis of statistical documents are increasing.

3. The main contents of the mid-term and long-term reform plan of national statistical systems

Development and enhancement of national statistics, and building systems

To support policy establishment, development and enhancement of statistics is a priority. Through interviews with staff in charge at 101 institutions, we found 126 problems for development and enhancement.

-Economic statistics will continue to be developed and enhanced, focusing on expansion and enhancement of statistics for higher accuracy of economy examination, subdivision of existing industrial structure statistics for the support of delicate establishment of economic policies, and statistical development of every field.

-Development of social statistics focuses on statistical development related to energy, the environment, sports, performance, science, and the quality of life.

-Korea National Statistical Office technically supports the development of regional statistics by regional self-governing bodies for regional self-governing administration.

For the support of statistical development and enhancement and implementation of research, the Statistical Research Institute is set up as a professional research center for national statistics.

Enhancement of reliability of national statistics

The whole of national statistics will be examined for 3 years from 2006 to 2008 and problems will be solved. From 2009, the quality of all national statistics will be checked. Along with quality checkup of national statistics, quality management manuals will be written and distributed.

Facing the trend of low answer rates for field surveys, statistics purpose application of administrative information created from implementing processes of each department for the enhancement of reliability of statistical research will be done.

Sharing administrative documents will be implemented for the statistical purpose of national tax documents, insurance documents, and identification documents.

Enhancement of application of statistical information

For users to easily search and use statistical information they want, statistical information systems will be strengthened.

National statistical DB link systems operated until now will be enhanced to allow for one-stop searching of statistical information and the whole national statistics will be integrated by 2008.

Statistical information will be provided through portal websites for users to easily search statistical information through those sites.

The system providing main statistics related to policies for the users to easily search will be created and the system will offer numerical values, graphs, and analysis.

To support the use of statistical documents for the purpose of research, statistical micro data will be provided within the range of protecting privacy of individuals and incorporates, and legal grounds are prepared for that.

To raise interests in statistics for citizens and companies and increase application of statistics, efforts for finding and promoting examples of citizens' and companies' using statistics in daily lives and at the workplace will be strengthened.

Alignment achieved with legislation and regulation

The grounds for the establishment of such statistical development plans will be prepared , and revision of statistical laws will be made for a smooth transition.

We promoted the revision of statistical laws for imposition on quality examination of statistics producing institutes, allowance of authority for quality examination, and preparation for the grounds for sharing administrative information. We introduced it in March 2006, and currently is under consideration.

4. Conclusion

If the statistical development plan is implemented as planned, it is expected that the Korean statistical systems will be upgraded.

However, the current development plan was a solution for problems related to national statistics until 2005. Therefore that plan would not be effective for Korean statistical systems.

Since the development strategy of statistical systems is a continuous process, we need to promote it in the following ways:

Continuous searching for necessary statistics

The efforts to adapt to structural changes in society through new statistics are continuously needed .

Propelling efficiency of statistical research

Korea tends to use interview research, which costs a lot of money, more than other ways, such as mail. Efforts are necessary to cut down the scale of research through various advanced statistical techniques and sharing administrative information, and to standardize and computerize the process from statistics research and analysis.