

## Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic

### Improvement actions

#### Recommendation 1

The Law on State Statistics should use the term “official”, rather than “state”, statistics.

#### Recommendation 2

The scope of the Law on State Statistics (section 1) should be broadened from “the assessment of the socio-economic development [of the Republic and its parts]” to “to meet the needs of users in a democratic society”.

#### Recommendation 3

The Law on State Statistics should be amended to enhance the role, status and identity of the Statistics Council, broaden its membership, and appoint members for fixed terms.

#### Recommendation 20

The Law on State Statistics should stipulate that statistical information should be disseminated free-of-charge to all users.

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#### Situation

The Act No. 540/2001 Coll. on State Statistics has been amended several times during the last years with the aim to solve first of all application problems of statistics in the Slovak Republic. Since the recommendations aim at ensuring a more modern legislation for statistics in the Slovak Republic, this can be realised by elaboration of a new act and not by another amendment of the current act.

#### Improvement action (for 1-3 and 20)

Elaborate a new act on statistics covering, among others, issues recommended by peer review and submit it to the legislative process.

**T: 31.12.2017**

#### Status and comments

By reason of the appointment of the new SOSR´ management at the end of 2016 the work on the new legal act is being postponed (new T: 31.12.2019).

#### Recommendation 4

**The Law on State Statistics should be brought into line with latest European thinking about best practice in the appointment and dismissal procedures of the President**

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#### Situation

Process of dismissal and appointment of the President of the SOSR is based on the professional competence and independence. It is in line with broader legislative framework in force in the Slovak Republic for organisation of activities of government and organisations of the central state administration (Act no. 575/2001 Coll.). The Act No. 540/2001 Coll. on State Statistics only specifies provisions of the Act 575/2001 Coll. It is expected that the problem will be clarified by the Regulation of the EP and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European Statistics. After adoption of the Regulation the relevant provisions will be directly effective in the legal framework of the Slovak Republic.

### **Improvement action**

Support adoption of Regulation of the EP and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European Statistics by active participation in relevant CWPS ((EU Council Working Party Statistics) meetings.

**T: according to timetable of relevant meetings of CWPS.**

### **Status and comments**

The SOSR actively participated in the CWPS meetings relating to amendment of Regulation 223/2009; the alignment of the Law on State Statistics will follow (together with the improvement action for recommendation 1-3, 20)

### **Recommendation 5**

**Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic's responsibility for coordinating other producers of official statistics – including in relation to methodology, standards and classifications – should be strengthened and made more explicit in the Law on State Statistics.**

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#### **Situation**

The SOSR implements the recommendation by latest amendment of the Act No. 540/2001 Coll. on State Statistics (provisions 5, 8, and 11). At present the amendment proposal was submitted to the National Council of the Slovak Republic; after adoption it should enter into force on 1.1.2015.

#### **Improvement action**

None; recommendation met as explained above.

### **Recommendation 6**

**Consideration should be given to funding a post in the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic to lead on coordination across the National Statistical System (NSS)**

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#### **Situation**

The recommendation was fulfilled by funding a post to lead on coordination across the NSS (in force as of 1.7.2014). The tasks are defined in the Organisational Order of the SOSR and are performed by the unit General Methodology and Registers. Note: later the post was transferred to SOSR's President Office.

#### **Improvement action**

None; recommendation met as explained above.

### **Recommendation 7**

**The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SOSR) should enhance the system of permanent user groups and their remit to include: compiling information about the uses made of Slovakian statistics; documenting and prioritising unmet user needs; providing formal advice on the State Statistical Survey Programme (SSSP); and providing a user perspective on quality.**

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#### **Situation**

Within the action programme focussing on learning about the needs and expectations of key customers and on supporting a better interpretation and better use of statistical products (one of action programmes of the SOSR Development Strategy) the SOSR communicates by suitable forms (working meetings, presentations, consultation) within permanent groups with key users from bank

and financial sector, foreign trade a construction industry, as well as within ad-hoc groups with representatives from other areas. Evaluation of the activities is presented in a summary report discussed in the top management meeting and feasible and adopted requirements are reflected in statistical activities.

#### **Improvement action**

Based on the review of the structure of existing permanent user groups establish permanent user groups covering business sector and science, research, and universities. Focus remit of user groups on compiling information about the use of statistics in their environment, on documenting and prioritising unmet user needs, on formal advice on the SSSP and on providing a user perspective on quality of statistical products. Reflect this enlargement in the summary report of the action programme.

**T: 31.12.2016**

#### **Status and comments**

Completed. In 2015 another working group (in addition to existing ones) was established consisting of eight representatives of science, research, universities and business. During the new permanent user group meeting the direction, scope of work and mandate were approved. Then the group was also provided with information on the SOSR marketing activities, priorities of social, demography and business statistics. The SOSR database, as well as user's feedback, was also presented.

#### **Recommendation 8**

**The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should strengthen the existing working level arrangements to enable data suppliers to engage more effectively with the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.**

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#### **Situation**

Cooperation with business suppliers in order, among others, to eliminate possible problems in data collection is a regulated process (meetings with key data suppliers, specialised seminars, etc.) and is supported by the action programme "Activities focussing on learning about expectations of key data suppliers as well as on improvement of their readiness to provide data of required quality" (one of the action programmes of the SOSR Development Strategy).

#### **Improvement action**

In order to strengthen and improve the systematic and regular cooperation with business sector (in the role of data suppliers) extend the SOSR Statistical Council by including representatives of business to ensure broad contacts with businesses.

**T: 31.12.2015**

#### **Status and comments**

Based on decision of the new SOSR President, the special working group will review suggestions concerning the Council and elaborate final suggestions for improvement of the Council functioning incl. a membership. New rules/mandate will be subsequently implemented (new T: 31.12.2017).

#### **Recommendation 9**

**The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should be given immediate access for statistical purposes to data held on the population register**

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## **Situation**

Population register was used by the SOSR for population census 2011 – namely within preparation and imputation. At present the negotiations with the register owner are continuing with the aim to use the register regularly as administrative data source first of all for the needs of demographic statistics. The intention is reflected in the SOSR conception of administrative data sources adopted in June 2014 and supported by the latest amendment to the Act No. 540/2001 on State Statistics.

## **Improvement action**

1. Within implementation of the adopted SOSR conception on administrative data sources ensure official access for statistical purposes to data held on the population register.

**T: 31.12.2015**

## **Status and comments**

Completed. The task was completed by gaining access to the Register of Natural Persons (as reference register). The access is granted via agreement on the regular data provision signed between the SOSR and Ministry of Interior of the SR.

2. Within the working group on census create and introduce questionnaire in order to evaluate in regular intervals changes and status of the population register having in mind its potential use in population census 2021. Use the results to make decision on the way of conducting census in the Slovak Republic.

**T: 31.12.2014** (questionnaire); **31.12.2017** (preliminary decision on the way of conducting census)

## **Status and comments**

The working group on population census 2021 was established in 12/2014. The group elaborated and distributed the questionnaire on administrative data and evaluated responses. Subsequently the agreement on the provision of data from the Register of Natural Persons was signed between the SOSR and Ministry of Interior of the SR. The data is available to and analysed by the SOSR.

Population census 2021 will be an integrated census using data from administrative sources, registers and from the field. During 2016, transmissions from the Register of Natural Persons were realised, the files analysed, processing module created and the resulting Register was used for integration with other administrative data sources. The analysis of administrative data sources continues. The SOSR was also working on National Action Plan on population census 2021 for the years 2017-2020 to be send for stakeholder consultation. The Plan was elaborated in cooperation with representatives of selected ministries, other central bodies of state administration, organisations within their area of competence and local authorities. The Plan covers areas that require cooperation.

## **Recommendation 10**

**The State Statistical Survey Programme should indicate clearly those surveys and administrative sources that are used for (i) European purposes, (ii) European and national purposes, and (iii) for national purposes only.**

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## **Situation**

Within elaboration of the State Statistical Survey Programme the SOSR annually identifies emerging new user needs (taking into account limited resources for the production of statistics) and surveys that should be stopped (suspended), reduced or simplified.

The Programme for each survey describes, among others, purpose of the survey; how the survey results will be used and cites related legal acts. The information is used in negotiations on financial resources from the state budget as well as in reviewing user requirements for statistics.

### **Improvement action**

In the draft decree on State Statistical Survey Programme for the years 2015-2017 revise the characteristics of surveys and of used administrative data sources by adding in each characteristic in Annex 1 of the Programme the text indicating whether the survey results are used:

- I. for national purposes
- II. for European purposes
- III. for both European and national purposes

**T: 31. 10. 2014**

### **Status and comments**

Completed. In the decree "The Programme of State Statistical Surveys 2015 - 2017", no 291/2014, within characteristics of each survey, the purpose and use is stated. If the survey is used for the European purposes, there is directly stated in the decree, that the survey is used for the ESS needs. There is also the reference to the European legal act or to other relevant document.

### **Recommendation 11**

**Consideration should be given to the transfer of responsibility (and associated resources) for the production of European statistics from small organisations to the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic**

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#### **Situation**

Within the ESO programme<sup>1</sup> in the Slovak Republic the SOSR initiated discussions about transfers of responsibility and resources for the production of European statistics from small organisations to the SOSR, but it has not yet received a response.

#### **Improvement action**

Based on feasibility analysis submit proposal to the government of the Slovak Republic that the SOSR will become the only producer of the European Statistics supported, however, by adequate financial and human resources.

**T: 31.12.2015**

#### **Status and comments**

Completed. Within the Operational Programme - Effective Public Administration (OP EPA) the SOSR submitted to the Ministry of Interior of the SR, unit of European Programmes, the project proposal "Reform of the statistical data collection and processing in the public administration" . After implementation of the comments the project proposal was submitted to the evaluation commission of the OP EPA.

### **Recommendation 12**

**The possibility of further centralising the responsibilities of the Regional Offices should be explored.**

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#### **Situation**

Within optimisation of the division of labour between the SOSR Regional Offices and Headquarters many statistical activities have been centralised (statistical registers, field-work, dissemination). In the past (before the centralisation of statistical activities) majority of the supporting processes concerning managing human resources and economical activities in Regional Offices were centralised too.

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<sup>1</sup> Efektívna, Spoľahlivá a Otvorená verejná správa (Effective, reliable and open public administration)

### **Improvement action**

Explore the possibility of further centralisation of responsibilities and of conduct of some processes allocated in the SOSR Regional Offices to Headquarters.

**T: 31.12.2015** (exploration)

### **Status and comments**

Completed. Regarding the possibility to further centralise the responsibilities of the Regional Offices, centralisation of HR management was conducted. The analysis conducted did not identify other activities which would benefit from centralisation in terms of their effectiveness

### **Recommendation 13**

**The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should review whether the work it commissions from the Institute for Informatics and Statistics (INFOSTAT) in support of the production of European statistics should be brought into the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.**

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#### **Situation**

Within optimisation of the SOSR processes and after establishment of the new department of mathematical-statistical methods the transfer of tasks conducted by INFOSTAT to the SOSR has started. The transferred tasks prevailing concerned preparation of new statistical surveys, design or implementation of new methodological approaches in seasonal adjustment of time series, etc. The process continues systematically with the aim to transfer step-by-step tasks related to production of statistics to the SOSR.

#### **Improvement action**

Identify other parts of the remaining tasks performed by INFOSTAT that are directly related to statistical production and could be brought to the SOSR; after creating suitable conditions (resources) for their successful transfer ensure realisation of the transferred tasks by the SOSR.

**T: annually by 31.12.2017** (within preparation of the contract with INFOSTAT)

#### **Status and comments**

Completed. Tasks of a production nature, if ensured by the necessary SOSR capacity, were transferred to the SOSR. Other tasks conducted by INFOSTAT are of scientific nature.

### **Recommendation 14**

**Work on the implementation of the Integrated Statistical Information System should continue.**

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#### **Situation**

In the time the recommendation was formulated the new Integrated Statistical Information System (ISIS) was developed and set up and step-by-step implementation for particular statistical domains has started. The process continues at present together with step-by-step migration of historical data and integration with other information systems of public administration of the Slovak Republic (registers, administrative data sources). The process will continue in the future with parallel further development of the system to fulfil new needs.

### **Improvement actions**

1. Bring all statistical surveys into ISIS environment

**T: 31.12.2015**

### **Status and comments**

Completed. In 2014 and the year after, all planned statistical surveys were transferred into the new Integrated Statistical Information System (ISIS).

2. Ensure step-by-step integration of ISIS with relevant IS of administrative data sources owners.

**T: 2014 and continuously further**

### **Status and comments**

Completed. The SOSR has continued the integration of administrative data sources into the Integrated Statistical Information System (ISIS). The integration has been incorporated into normal business practices. In 2016 the import of files from Financial Administration into ISIS was defined, tested and stored. Storing of administrative data from DataCentre and the State Treasury was prepared and tested. Selected data from Social Insurance Agency are continuously stored in the System.

### **Recommendation 15**

**Work on the implementation of Quality Management System should continue, and Quality Reports should be produced for all statistical domains.**

### **Recommendation 17**

**The Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic should prioritise the production of user-oriented Quality Reports.**

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### **Situation**

The SOSR elaborates producer oriented quality reports for statistical domains on the basis of sectoral EU legislation or requirements of Eurostat. At present the quality reports structure is not harmonised among statistical domains (by Eurostat), the structure of each quality report is identical with the structure required by Eurostat for particular domain.

### **Improvement actions (for recommendation 15 and 17)**

1. Map coverage of statistical domains by quality reports.

**T: 31.12.2014**

### **Status and comments**

Completed. Existing quality reports were mapped. The map creates the basis for elaborating ESMS reports in domains not yet covered by a quality report.

2. Ensure elaboration of user oriented quality reports for all domains in line with ESMS (Euro SDMX Metadata Structure) and in relevant cases (required by Eurostat) elaboration of producer oriented quality reports in line with ESQRS (The ESS Standard Quality Report Structure) by incorporating the elaboration of reports into annual plans of statistical activities; publish the user oriented reports on the SOSR internet site.

**T: 31.12.2017**

### **Status and comments**

The SOSR's methodology directorate elaborated the structure for user oriented quality reports based on the recommended ESMS form and prepared a detailed explanatory description concerning content of the report. This approach should ensure a standardised design and content of the report. The informatics directorate is working on the document control system assuming that the reports will be displayed on the SOSR's Portal and linked with statistical products. Currently the design of metadata that will accompany each report and make the report cataloguing possible is being prepared.

### **Recommendation 16**

**Consideration should be given to enhancing the Quality Management System to enable more transparency about trade-offs between different dimensions of quality.**

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#### **Situation**

The SOSR is a customer oriented institution. In line with its QMS documentation within the first phase of the statistical process, it identifies in communication with users the purpose and intended use of the required statistics. At present the communication implicitly covers issues regarding quality dimensions preferences, however it is not explicitly stated in the documentation regarding production and related monitoring and analysis (process, product, internal audits) incl. impact on other (not preferred) quality dimensions.

#### **Improvement action**

Modify the QMS documentation by adding explicitly the obligation to identify preferences regarding quality dimensions related to intended use of statistics within the first phase of the statistical process (GSBPM, specification of user needs) in detailed communication with users (user groups). Take into account the resulting trade-offs between different dimensions of quality as well as priorities resulting from importance of the intended use of statistics in subsequent phases of the process. Adapt the system for monitoring and analysis accordingly; reflect it in the QMS documentation.

**T: 30.9.2016**

### **Status and comments**

Completed. The requirements of the task were integrated into the SOSR internal directive "The value added process of the production of statistical outputs" in force from 15.9.2015. The directive is based on the GSBPM model.

### **Recommendation 17**

Please see above.

### **Recommendation 18**

**Systematic input from external experts in quality and methodology should be sought.**

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#### **Situation**

The SOSR integrated into its existing quality management system selfassessments of statistical surveys and methodological audits. In contrary to already conducted system audits the methodological audits are performed by internal auditors only.

#### **Improvement actions**

Involve external experts preferably from academic field into conduction of methodological audits.



**T: 31.7.2015**

**Status and comments**

Completed. An external expert from academia was involved in SORS internal methodological audits. The participation is approved within the Annual Programme of the SORS QMS internal audits (system and methodological).

**Recommendation 19**

**Response burdens (on data suppliers) should be reported upon in terms of the time taken to provide statistical data.**

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**Situation**

The SORS has been measuring and evaluating respondent time burden since 2008. In surveys in enterprises „the time needed for filling out statistical form based on accounting or on keeping on statistical files“ has to be recorded by respondent. In case of household surveys, the time of interviewing is recorded. In contrary to household surveys, considerable differences are found out in particular reporting units in enterprise surveys. Modification of the question should help achieve more reliable results.

**Improvement action**

Modify the question regarding time needed to fill in statistical form so that it is in line with the Quality Assurance Framework (indicator 9.2, method 6). In statistical surveys stated in the State Statistical Survey Programme for 2015 modify the question in the following way: “time needed for keeping files of statistical data in addition to accounting system, for retrieving the required information, for consultations with internal or external experts when filling in the form”.

**T: 31.12.2014**

**Status and comments**

Completed. The new wording of the module 2 (the question concerning the time spent) of the survey forms was modified as follows:

“Time needed for keeping files concerning statistical records, for retrieving the required information from accounting or statistical records, for consultations with internal or external experts when filling in the form and for filling in the statistical form itself”.

**Recommendation 21**

**The results of custom-designed (bespoke) analyses (or a list of such analyses to help others to access the analyses) should be published on the website.**

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**Situation**

The SORS elaborates non-standard (custom-designed, bespoke) statistical outputs; they are recorded centrally in the SORS. In line with the Principles for publishing and providing statistical data of the SORS, the outputs are charged according to a pricelist. Neither the non-standard outputs nor the list of them are made public.

**Improvement action**

Publish and up-date quarterly the list of non-standard (custom-designed, bespoke) outputs on the SORS internet site.

**T: from 2015, quarterly**

### **Status and comments**

Completed. The [list of the non-standard outputs](#) was published on the SOSR Portal - first time in April 20, 2014, since then quarterly.

### **Recommendation 22**

**The explanation of statistical messages, in bulletins and reports, should be improved.**

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#### **Situation**

Within the action programme "Submission of suggestions for elaboration of value added products and their realisation", the SOSR creates products including knowledge interpretation and visualisation of data for some selected areas. Evaluation of the programme is presented in a summary report discussed in the top management meeting.

#### **Improvement action**

Broaden creation of the value added products to other areas; improve information value by improving (deepening) knowledge interpretation.

**T: 2015 – 31.12.2017**

### **Status and comments**

Completed. The elaboration of statistical products with added value (more analytical and explanatory text, visualization) is being conducted according to the annual plan of the elaboration of value added products as well as to the SOSR annual catalogue of publications. The plan is elaborated every year. Note: in 2016 - 14 such products will be published (with e.g. housing construction as the new area).

### **Recommendation 23**

**The results of User Satisfaction Surveys should be published alongside SOSR's plans to address the issues raised.**

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#### **Situation**

In line with its strategic goals the SOSR conducts biannually „Survey on the customer satisfaction with the SOSR statistical products and services“. The survey results are published on the SOSR internet site. Detailed evaluation is discussed in the top management meeting and the realisation of feasible and adopted recommendations resulting from the survey is integrated into the SOSR plans of statistical activities.

#### **Improvement action**

Publish detailed evaluation of the user satisfaction survey (by question) on the SOSR internet site; use references to link feasible and adopted recommendations of users with plans of statistical activities published on the SOSR internet.

**T: 31.12.2015 (then biannually)**

### **Status and comments**

Completed. The detailed evaluation of the latest survey on customer satisfaction with statistical products and services of the SOSR was submitted to the management board meeting in September 2015 and subsequently published on the SOSR Portal (About us – Marketing activities – in Slovak). The relevant and feasible suggestions / requirements were linked to the annual plans of statistical activities 2016. The approach will be repeated in all continue user satisfaction surveys.

**Recommendation 24**

**The ways in which confidentiality protection is assured in relation to microdata analysed both in the Safe Centre and in off-site facilities should be documented on the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic's website.**

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**Situation**

Based on agreement, the SOSR provides universities and scientific research institutions with confidential microdata by sending protected file or by allowing access to data via the SOSR safe centre. In the first case in the file provided the methods of protection of confidential statistical data are applied so that the risk of indirect identification is minimised. In the second case only the risk of direct identification is eliminated since the confidential data do not leave the SOSR area. A brief description of the protection methods of confidential data is published on the SOSR internet site, however not in the part where researchers apply for microdata.

**Improvement action**

Document the statistical disclosure control methods applied in both on-site and off-site access including the impact on information value of data; publish the methods on the SOSR internet site in the part where researchers apply for microdata.

**T: 31.12.2014**

**Status and comments**

Completed. The most frequently used methods in on-site and off-site approaches, incl. impact on the information loss, were published in the way understandable for users on the SOSR Portal (part: Information service - Conditions for granting access to confidential statistical data for scientific purposes)

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