

Pursuant to Article 23.b of the National Statistics Act (Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 45/95 and 9/01) the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the

MEDIUM-TERM PROGRAMME of Statistical Surveys 2018–2022

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Foundations for the operation of the Slovene national statistics

The legal basis for the operation of the Slovene national statistics is the National Statistics Act. In line with the Act, national statistics is a professionally independent activity of implementing the programme of statistical surveys. The programme is implemented according to the principles of neutrality, objectivity, professional independence, rationality, statistical confidentiality and transparency.

Due to the integration of Slovenia in the European Union, the implementation of national statistics is closely related to the implementation of European statistics, so statistical legislation of the European Union is an inseparable element of the Slovene national statistics.

Institutions comprising the Slovene national statistics operate in line with professional standards stipulated in the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the European Statistics Code of Practice and the Public Commitment of the European System of Central Banks on European Statistics. In addition, other best international statistical standards are taken into account.

1.2 Institutions of the Slovene national statistics

The Slovene national statistics is comprised of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and authorised producers of national statistics. In the period covered by this medium-term programme (2018–2022) the authorised producers of national statistics are the Bank of Slovenia, which is authorised to produce national statistics in the area of economic relations with the rest of the world, financial intermediation and national accounts, and the National Institute of Public Health, which is authorised to produce health statistics. These institutions regulate mutual relations and specify tasks through mutual agreements and the annual programme of statistical surveys.

1.3 Bases of the medium-term programme

The preparation of the medium-term programme of statistical surveys is stipulated by the National Statistics Act, which stipulates that the draft programme is prepared by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia in cooperation with authorised producers and is adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

In preparing the programme the needs of national users, expressed particularly within the Statistical Council and statistical advisory committees, were taken into account as well as the needs of the European Union and other international organisations and the needs of data providers. The success of programme implementation will depend primarily on the availability of human and financial resources.

2 VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Vision

The vision of the Slovene national statistics is a society in which citizens, enterprises and the general government use credible information in making decisions.

Mission

The mission of the Slovene national statistics is to provide high-quality data on the situation and trends in the economic, demographic and social fields and in the field of the environment and natural resources.

Values

National statisticians operate and make decisions in line with their key values:

- Providing top quality services for their users
- Respecting data providers
- Protecting statistical confidentiality
- Considering the highest professional statistical standards
- Acting professionally independently and impartially
- Using available sources efficiently

3 CURRENT SITUATION

As regards the content, the period covered by the previous medium-term programme of statistical surveys (2013–2017) was very successful for national statistics, which provided to its users a wide variety of statistical data and services. In this period traditional ones were joined by data from improved environmental accounts and data on various aspects of the Slovene society (e.g. globalisation, health, sustainable development, green growth, well-being). National statistics was adjusting to changes in international statistical standards, improving and upgrading the methods of communicating with users (e.g. upgraded website, new web applications), continued to supplement data sources with administrative sources, improved the technology of data collection, processing and exchange, and studied the possibility of using big data.

As regards organisational and institutional aspects, the most important in this period was work done on assessing the content of the national statistics system. The system was established more than twenty years ago and reflected the situation and the needs of the society at that time. Since then it has practically not been changed, so it seemed appropriate to critically assess its adequacy. The main focus was on the delimitation of national statistics from the so-called sectoral statistics. National statistics is statistics produced in line with the National Statistics Act, while sectoral statistics is statistics that is produced in line with other acts imposing on or enabling the institutions the preparation and publication of statistics from their fields of work. After careful deliberation, those statistics that do not fulfil the standards of statistical legislation and other statistical standards were eliminated from national statistics, which reduced its extent.

The consolidation of operation was implemented and necessary due to serious reduction of resources available for implementing the activity. Processes, work and the organisation structure were further rationalised and optimised, and staff productivity was improved. This enabled the extent of the activity to not decline despite the deteriorating situation regarding financial and human resources. Although in recent years the situation has stabilised, human and financial resources are still insufficient and the main factor limiting the activity in its further development.

Basic characteristics of the Slovene national statistics remain unchanged: it is independent in making professional decisions, focused on users, trusted by data providers, has wide access to data sources and exploits all advantages of a register-based country. The emphasis is on the quality of statistical data and services in all its dimensions. The staff is highly competent and it is strongly integrated in the international environment. Compared to other statistical systems, the Slovene statistical system is one of the smallest. On the one hand this makes the exploitation of the economies of scale more difficult, reduces the impact on international decision-making and the possibility of taking over large projects. However, on the other hand, it facilitates flexibility, rapid responsiveness and better efficiency, easier internal communication and coordination, setting up and maintaining contacts with stakeholders, etc.

4 FUTURE POTENTIALS

Key potentials for further development of national statistics are new social phenomena, particularly digitalisation, greater “market” orientation and new forms of cooperation in the international statistical community.

The Slovene society is constantly changing. In line with that the services of national statistics are constantly adjusting, since national statistics wishes to meet the needs of the society. Some of the new phenomena that national statistics will provide data for in the future are population ageing, labour market changes, migration, environmental protection, internationalisation of business, recovery after the economic and crisis, a new vision of Slovenia’s development, realisation of sustainable development goals, and digitalisation of society.

Digitalisation of society brings two opportunities for national statistics. The first one is classical and related to statistical measurement of phenomena brought by this social process (e.g. sharing economy, its definition, monitoring, the changing role of households and business entities, the changing forms of production, etc.). The second issue is much more exciting, i.e. what changes will be brought by digitalisation to the method of work of national statistics. Digital footprint left behind by people using smart devices and social networks, interacting with the business world and elsewhere is a major potential data source for national statistics bringing about large methodological challenges and the need for new knowledge and skills. It is expected that big data will have a strong impact on data collection methods and approaches. They will join direct collection of data from business entities and individuals and data from administrative data collections and thus become the third large group of sources for producing statistical data. The main opportunities are in the development of new statistical data, better timeliness and reliability of existing statistical data, and lower burden of data providers.

At the same time the status of national statistics in the society is also changing. Its dominant position is declining, since statistical data are provided by an increasing number of providers. An increasing amount of data is in the hands of private companies, which opens up the questions of ownership of and access to such data. This requires reflection about comparative advantages of national statistics for the society. The main advantage is quality

in the widest sense: institutional elements (particularly professional independence, impartiality and objectivity), process elements and the quality of statistical data and services (relevance, timeliness and punctuality, accuracy and reliability, coherence and comparability, and accessibility and clarity). National statistics will continue to closely monitor these challenges, since it sees them as an opportunity to improve the services it offers to the Slovene society.

Closely related to that is the challenge of active intervention in the statistical market. Data and services produced by national statistics are in demand and the demand is constantly growing. There are many users and they are diverse. For a long time the Slovene national statistics no longer understands its role in the narrow sense, i.e. providing data and services to government bodies, business entities, population, researchers, journalists, etc. Nevertheless, the production element of its work is still much stronger than the marketing element. Opportunities in this area are in even wider and more diverse promotion of data and services produced by national statistics and thus strengthening the “market” orientation, which should not be understood in financial sense but as active search for new users and providing data and services they really need.

The third key potential for the future is cooperation in the international statistical community. Cooperation traditionally focused on common methodological work, i.e. the development of methodologies that led to internationally comparable data. Recently, cooperation has focused more on other areas, particularly standardisation of processes, IT solutions, applications, etc. Production technology is very similar if not the same in all statistical systems around the world. With common solutions the economy of scale could be generated in which not every statistical institution would develop its own solutions but could use what is already available. The development of broadly applicable building blocks is still in its early stages but potentially savings generated by using common building blocks for implementing the statistical process can be expected.

5 PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES IN THE 2018–2022 PERIOD

In the 2018–2022 period the Slovene national statistics will focus on four priorities:

- Statistical data and services
- Data sources
- Capacity
- Cooperation

The most important priority is statistical data and services. They are the value added of national statistics for the society, covering data on the population and business entities, their characteristics and actions, and economic, social, demographic and environmental phenomena in the Slovene society.

All other priorities support the development, preparation and dissemination of statistical data and services. Data sources are the input into the statistical process and thus necessary for preparing statistical data and services. The Slovene national statistics obtains them directly from people and business entities and indirectly from existing records and data collections. Capacity covers individual infrastructural elements such as human and financial resources, processes, organisation and IT infrastructure. Cooperation is multidimensional, with many stakeholders and is essential for the development and progress, which would not be possible in isolation.

Further on objectives of the Slovene national statistics in the medium-term period 2018–2022 are stated for each of the four priorities.

5.1 Statistical data and services

In connection with statistical data and services the objectives of national statistics are:

- Preserving the current extent and content of statistical data in economic, demographic and social fields and in the field of the environment and natural resources:
- Developing new statistical data and upgrading the existing ones, e.g.:
 - Environmental accounts will be supplemented in the area of forest accounts, water accounts and resource management expenditure accounts, and satellite accounts for culture will be developed. Estimates of the total national wealth, economic value of unpaid housekeeping work, voluntary service activities and human capital will be prepared and comprehensive measurement of the productivity of the Slovenian economy will be developed.
 - Statistical data for monitoring the well-being of the society and individuals in view of income distribution, consumption and wealth will be upgraded. Statistical monitoring of the quality of employment, transition of young people to the labour market, characteristics of migrants, mobility of population, personal security and time use will be developed. Data on the health care system (labour force, capacity, etc.) and data on morbidity due to various diseases will be upgraded.
 - The set of data on service activities will be expanded, globalisation indicators will be upgraded, quarterly and regional enterprise demography, services production index and construction producer price index will be developed, the possibility of preparing the commercial property price index and for further integration of external trade data with other statistical data will be studied. The definition of enterprise will be adjusted to the existing business practices. The development of databases on securities and credits and the database and register of financial entities will continue, and the coverage of financial intermediaries will be improved with the emphasis on monitoring changed financial flows and services.
 - Green growth indicators will be expanded and upgraded with the presentation at regional level, the agriculture census will be conducted and statistics of food waste generation will be developed.
- Timeliness, compliance and comparability of statistical data:
 - Timeliness of statistical data will be improved, e.g. the deadline for publishing data on export and import of goods by enterprise characteristics will be shortened, and the possibility of more rapid first release of quarterly gross domestic product and other short-term indicators of economic activity will be studied.
 - Compliance and comparability of statistical data will be improved, e.g. differences between financial national accounts, non-financial national accounts and the balance of payments will be reduced as well as asymmetries in data on export and import of goods. Also, differences in statistical data on the same concepts shown in line with different definitions will be more transparent.
- Accessibility and clarity of statistical data:
 - Publication of statistical data will be adjusted to the needs, knowledge, skills, life/business situations and other characteristics of users. The main dissemination and communication channel will be informationally rich but navigationally simple web pages with national statistics data. Detailed data will be available in a user-friendly database with as little information loss due to statistical protection as possible. For less demanding users statistical data will be presented with informative, easy-to-use and understand tables and text, in charts and on maps, with greater emphasis on visualisation, interactive tools and exploitation of various communication channels. For more demanding users or at individual events statistical data will be upgraded with analyses and comprehensive presentation of the topic discussed.
 - For research work it will be possible to use microdata. Accessibility to open data will be improved, which will facilitate re-dissemination of national statistics data. Data on

- statistical data (descriptions of methodology, quality assessment, questionnaires, etc.) will be understandable, clear, easily accessible and up-to-date.
- Cooperation with users:
 - National statistics will preserve well-functioning mechanisms via which it cooperates with users and obtains information on their needs for statistical data and services and upgrade them with new elements such as the system for monitoring satisfaction with individual statistical data and services and usability analyses and tests. It will analyse the proposals for introducing new statistical data or for changing the existing ones, which it receives via the Statistical Council, statistical advisory committees and other forms of communication with users, and respond to them.

5.2 Data sources

- In the area of data sources the objectives of national statistics are:
- Data collection that is friendly to data providers and effective:
 - The method of data collection will be adjusted to modern IT capabilities as well as the needs and characteristics of the observed population. For obtaining data from business entities, the main method will be electronic data collection. For obtaining data from individuals, in most surveys web surveying will be implemented.
 - A large reduction of the burden of business entities could be achieved by the adoption of the EU regulation that would enable the statistical offices to exchange the data on export of goods to other EU Member States. In designing the legislation the Slovene national statistics will strive for a solution that will provide the appropriate relationship between the request for high-quality statistical data and the possibility to reduce the burden of statistical reporting.
 - Activities to preserve the high level of participation of business entities in statistical surveys and to prevent further decline in individuals participating in them will be strengthened. Questionnaires and other measuring instruments will be clear, tested and published before the start of data collection. The reporting calendar for an individual year will be released at the beginning of the year at the latest. Data providers will be informed about the applicability of statistical data, including by providing information they need in making their business and private decisions. The measurement and active management of burdens will be upgraded, including by optimising the temporal and subject-matter implementation of data collection and by optimising the inclusion into samples. The positive approach to data collection will be more than before supplemented by using authorisation stipulated by the National Statistics Act.
 - Co-designing of data collections:
 - The use of data available in administrative data collections will always have priority over direct data collection if appropriate in terms of quality requirements. Cooperation with managers of administrative data collections will focus on co-designing existing and emerging collections in order to make them applicable for statistical purposes and on preserving the conditions for extensive use of administrative data sources. New opportunities show particularly in tourism statistics (register of accommodation establishments and the single point for reporting data on overnight stays), energy statistics (upgrade of the system of e-reporting by energy providers) and environment statistics (modernisation and upgrade of the administrative source for data on waste and water). New possibilities of using data from administrative data collections will be studied, e.g. in preparing statistical data on education, industrial production and trade.
 - Exploitation of opportunities provided by big data:
 - Experience gained in working with big data in the previous medium-term period will be upgraded by new knowledge and methodological development. Big data will be introduced as a data source for producing statistical data where appropriate;

possible fields for which these data could be used as a data source are the consumer price index, purchasing power parities, job vacancies, consumer opinion, mobility, household consumption expenditure, etc. Open issues regarding access, permissible use, information security and ethics will be solved in close cooperation with owners of big data, decision-makers and other authorised institutions. In view of the business needs, innovative IT solutions will be developed and implemented. Methodologies for processing big data will be improved and the quality framework will be developed. By actively cooperating in the international and national statistical and research environment dealing with big data, the Slovene national statistics will contribute to the development of this area of official statistics.

5.3 Capacity

As regards capacity, the objectives of national statistics are:

- Optimised and modern statistical processes:
 - Standardisation and optimisation of statistical processes will be the main focus in implementing the statistical process, i.e. in collecting data sources, statistical processing and dissemination of statistical data. Priority will be given to generic solutions (once for many purposes) and solutions enabling the operation according to the principle of so-called lean production. Procedures will be supported by metadata, transparent, traceable and to the largest possible extent automated. Harmonised concepts, classifications and definitions of variables, and modern methodological solutions will be used. By using the latest technology and by developing innovative IT solutions, information and communication infrastructure and technology will enable a highly functional, capable and responsive information system for implementing the statistical process.
 - In line with general guidelines the processes of preparing individual statistical data will be modernised and comprehensive process upgrades of individual statistical areas (e.g. integration of population statistics, modernisation of agriculture statistics and enterprise statistics, including the introduction of the statistical business register as the basis for all enterprise statistics) will be implemented.
- Commitment to quality and information security:
 - Quality management will be expanded with new elements. The existing system of describing quality will be upgraded with the system of quality assessment and the system of introducing improvements. Target values for the phases of the statistical process and target values for quality dimensions will be determined.
 - The information security system will provide the highest levels of data protection in the national statistics system.
- Professional staff:
 - The activity of national statistics is based on knowledge, so staff is key to achieving objectives stated in this program. The Slovene national statisticians will continue to be efficient, creative, flexible, focused on finding solutions, working in collegial spirit and contribute to the operation and development of national statistics. As regards human resources, special attention will be focused on providing knowledge and skills required for work in a modern statistical institution, appropriate organisation and leadership. Solutions to the emerging problem of ageing and the resulting decline in the availability of properly trained human resources will be sought in the management of all age groups and in the cooperation with educational institutions, so that institutions of national statistics will be recognised by the future generations as respectable and desirable employers.
- Economically efficient implementation of the activity:
 - Sufficient financial resources are the necessary condition for professionally independent operation of national statistics. Calculations of financial resources spent for implementing the activity in the entire system will be prepared. The

methodology for estimating the cost of preparing statistical data and services will be developed and estimates will be produced. The adequacy of financing by types of users and by types of statistical data and services will be studied. Possibilities for optimum provision of financial resources for implementing (usually more expensive) multiannual data collections will be studied.

5.4 Cooperation

Cooperation covers common activities with various stakeholders. The objectives of cooperation are partly covered at items 5.1 (Data users) and 5.2 (Data providers). Only those objectives that are not stated before are included here:

- Active membership in the international statistical community:
 - Institutions comprising national statistics are part of the international statistical community within various organisations. By cooperating in the international environment the Slovene national statistics will be an equal partner in developing statistics at the European and global level. It will strive for a larger impact on making decisions that are of key importance for the future of global, European and Slovene statistics. It will focus its activities on the development of new knowledge and methods and on the exchange of good practice. It will be included in as many international activities as possible, since this is an opportunity to obtain experience in international cooperation, strengthening the capacity of teamwork and project work, learning about the challenges of multiculturalism, expanding the views outside the local environment, and obtaining in-depth and new knowledge. It will be implementing good solutions into its systems, and transferring its knowledge and experience to statistical institutions in other countries.
- Cooperation with the scientific research community:
 - Cooperation with the scientific research community will be strengthened as regards the development of methods for implementing the statistical process. Opportunities brought by such cooperation show in the use of alternative methods of preparing statistical data, e.g. modelling. Cooperation with institutes and researchers will be close also in developing methods and IT solutions regarding the use of big data and other issues where the research community can contribute to upgrading the existing knowledge.
- Community of national statisticians:
 - National statisticians will cooperate at all levels of common interest, particularly in activities connected with implementing statistical codes of practice, in developing and introducing common methodological, process and IT solutions in all phases of the statistical process, in staff training and in strengthening the national statistics brand.

6 RISKS FOR THE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

This section states the main risks for the implantation of the medium-term programme of statistical surveys in the 2018–2022 period. The managers of risks are institutions comprising the national statistics system.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Measures
1. Deterioration of the legislative framework	low	high	Monitoring proposals of legislative changes; communication with decision-makers
2. Insufficient financial and human resources	medium	high	Communication with decision-makers; adjusting the processes; introduction of advanced methodologies

3. Insufficient staff knowledge and skills	medium	medium	Employment of graduates of appropriate sciences; cooperation with faculties; training; cooperation in international activities
4. Inappropriate IT infrastructure	medium	high	Communication with decision-makers; cooperation with internal and external users
5. Disclosure of confidential statistical data	low	high	Implementation and adjustment of the security policy; training of human resources
6. New and changed needs of the society are not identified	low	low	Monitoring the needs of existing users; identification of potential new users and their needs
7. Loss of user trust	low	medium	Providing high-quality data and services; customer satisfaction surveys; increasing customer awareness
8. Reduced responsiveness of data providers	high	high	Enabling modern methods of reporting; burden management; increasing the appropriateness of statistical data and services for data providers
9. Abolition or reduction of the extent of administrative data collections	low	high	Monitoring proposals of legislative changes; communication with managers of administrative data collections

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