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#### Implementing the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

## Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and their application in the Kyrgyz Republic

### Note by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

#### *Summary*

The paper analyses the role of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in the development of the statistical system of the Kyrgyz Republic and its adaptation to international standards. Their implementation is analysed against the European Code of Practice, which consists of fifteen principles. The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On State Statistics" recognizes the importance of the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality of the statistical service. Particular attention is also paid to keeping the burden of respondents non-excessive in the Government regulation "On the order of interaction of bodies of state statistics and state authorities".

## **I. Introduction**

1. In the process of reforms taking place in all spheres of society and at our country, there was a need for an information system that meets the requirements of the market economy, and would provide the state authorities and the public objective and reliable information and allow integration into the global economy.
2. The government, recognizing the importance of the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality of the statistical service and knowing their role in the structure of government, adopted a Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On State Statistics", which takes into account the accumulated experience of its own, the commission's recommendations of the European Communities on the independence, integrity and accountability of statistical offices and the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

## **II. Principle 1: professional independence**

3. The current legal framework provides professional independence for official statistics.
4. The law "On State Statistics" says that the intervention of public authorities and local authorities, associations of citizens, officials and other persons in state statistical activity is not permitted.
5. The legislation provides full independence in forming the state statistical bodies. According to the Law "On State Statistics" appointment and dismissal of heads of different regional bodies of state statistics is the duty of the Chairman of the National Statistical Committee (NSC) without consulting with the heads of local state administrations and local self-government (ministries and agencies). Other employees of the state statistics shall be employed only on the basis of competitive selection in accordance with the Law "On civil service".

## **III. Principle 2: mandate for data collection**

6. The state statistical bodies are given the appropriate authority needed for data collection. They have the right to:
  - (a) Take decisions within their competence in statistics, accounting and reporting regarding data collection mandatory for all entities that are covered by the legislation of the Law on state statistics;
  - (b) To receive, free of charge statistical data from all respondents, including central and local authorities, local governments, banks and individuals, including confidential information with restricted access.
7. Thus, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2011 supported the proposal NSC to hold the next agricultural census in 2014, which is in line with the regular program of the World Agricultural Census Round 2006 - 2015, as recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
8. It should be noted that the Law "On Agricultural Census" № 80 dated September 29, 2000 provides for conducting agricultural census every ten years. National Statistical Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation will carefully determine the contents of the forthcoming census, taking into account national needs and in accordance with the Programme of the World Census of Agriculture (WCA 2010).

#### **IV. Principle 3: adequacy of resources**

9. The government provides financial autonomy for statistical activities. All organs of state statistics are supported by the national budget. At the same time, involvement of other bodies (such as international organizations) is not prohibited by legislation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

#### **V. Principle 4: commitment to quality**

10. The components of quality are all reflected in the program for improvement and development of the state statistics of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2010-2014, including the quality of statistical information, planning of statistical work, user satisfaction, competency of staff and quality of statistical work.

#### **VI. Principle 5: statistical confidentiality**

11. One of the basic principles for the collection and dissemination of statistical data is the confidentiality of primary, individual level data received from businesses and individuals.

12. Currently, a draft Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Amendments and Additions to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic On State Statistics" includes an article on statistical confidentiality strengthened in terms of non-disclosure and guarantees of primary statistical data on the economic activities of specific businesses and individuals.

#### **VII. Principle 6: impartiality and objectivity**

13. Higher professional independence of national statistics suggests a higher responsibility to the users of statistical information, more effective communication between partners, including the public. In this regard, much attention is paid to the dissemination of the results of statistics. In 2008, a new policy of dissemination of official statistical information was adopted aiming at ensuring the openness of statistical production and free access to statistics. This also requires easy access to the methodology, further details and graphics published with statistical information. Disseminating statistical releases on the website of the NSC provides a systematic way of publishing information for the press and the mass media.

14. In February 2004, the Kyrgyz Republic became the 57th country to assign to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the International Monetary Fund, which implies strict adherence to the criteria regarding coverage, periodicity, timeliness, availability, reliability and quality of the disseminated data.

#### **VIII. Principle 7: sound methodology**

15. In accordance with the Law "On State Statistics" state agencies and local authorities engaged in official statistical production are required to ensure the application of professional statistical methodology that meets the requirements of international standards and principles of official statistics and the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

16. In order to create an effective and functioning statistical information system based on unified scientific methodology, the NSC Methodological Council regularly reviews

issues related to the development of general methodological foundations for statistical censuses and surveys. The purpose is to improve the methodology in accordance with international statistical regulations and standards and increase the use of international benchmarking in methodology.

17. In addition, in order to promote the existing methodological guidelines on statistics, as well as more consistent methodology for collecting, processing and compilation of statistics, the NSC published an updated version of "Methodological Guidelines on Statistics."

## **IX. Principle 8: appropriate statistical procedures**

18. The statistical legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic requires applying sound statistical procedures, in accordance with scientific statistical methodology, and in accordance with the requirements of international standards and the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in order to produce high-quality statistical information.

## **X. Principle 9: non-excessive burden on respondents**

19. Parts of the annual statistical programme of work deal with reduction of response burden through using administrative sources, improving statistical forms and developing sampling methodology.

20. In order to streamline and optimize the statistical work, avoid duplication and reduce the response burden of economic entities, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic approved regulations "On the order of interaction of bodies of state statistics and state authorities."

21. In order to implement this regulation, NSC developed an action plan for joint action in interagency cooperation, inventory of administrative forms useful for statistical production, optimization of current data collection procedures and developing common approaches to the formation of list of indicators to be derived from administrative reporting.

## **XI. Principle 10: cost effectiveness**

22. Effective use of information and communication technologies in the collection, processing and dissemination of statistical data allows statistical agencies to improve the flow of information. By means of automated processing, the primary data are transmitted from the district and municipal level to the NSC in an electronic format. This applies on average to about 99 per cent of all statistics collected regionally.

23. With the support of grant funds and several donors, almost completely computerized system of state statistics has been developed.

24. In order to avoid costly direct surveys NSC aims at maximum utilization of administrative data.

25. In 2011, in order to provide automated entry and transmission of statistical data, NSC embarked on the task of making use of integrated electronic system of statistical reports via the Internet.

26. In 2012, NSC is working to implement unified communications and modernization by new network technology based on VPN (Virtual Private Network) which will be

equipped with advanced software and information technology for all organs of state statistics.

## **XII. Principle 11: relevance**

27. In order to study the supply and quality of the statistical information provided to users, due consideration is given to the respondents, and partnerships are established to motivate reporting and minimize the reporting burden while maintaining relevance of statistics.

28. Part of the annual statistical programme of work deals with the reduction of response burden through the use of administrative sources, improvement of statistical forms and sample surveys. Articles are published in journals to address user needs for statistical information.

29. The annual catalogue of statistical publications contains over 130 publications and their dates of issuance. The total annual volume of publications by the Kyrgyz statistical system amounts to more than 500 issues.

## **XIII. Principle 12: accuracy and reliability**

30. National statistics should reflect reality accurately and reliably. For these purposes, periodical quality assessments of statistical information are carried out in order to determine causes of errors and their characteristics. As a result of this work, as a rule, the data collection procedure improves, logical automatic controls of the primary data can be introduced, and the errors are analysed at the end of the year during briefing seminars.

31. In order to achieve the required level of quality of official statistics NSC has developed a system for monitoring the operational quality of the statistical reports of the subordinate bodies of state statistics, and also performs comparison of the results of different economic statistics to monitor consistency.

## **XIV. Principle 13: timeliness and punctuality**

32. To ensure timeliness of statistical information to the public, NSC maintains on its website a tentative schedule of publications with exact dates of data dissemination. This is also needed to satisfy the requirements of the SDDS. In addition, the annual publication of "Socio-economic Developments" contains a schedule of releases and thematic publications.

## **XV. Principle 14: coherence and comparability**

33. Statistics are to be compiled on the basis of common methodology, common standards in scope, definitions, units and classifications used in different surveys and sources.

34. To date, NSC has established an effective system of statistical indicators that reflects adequately the implementation and the effectiveness of the reforms being carried out, as well as the significant improvement of the methodology in line with international statistical norms and standards, best practices and making use of international comparisons.

35. Successful implementation of measures to improve the statistics to a large extent depends on the level and quality of international cooperation. National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic is ready for the broadest integration in international

statistical cooperation programs in cooperation with international organizations and national statistical offices of other countries.

## **XVI. Principle 15: accessibility and clarity**

36. To ensure accessibility, transparency and timeliness of statistical information to the public and enhance information exchange between internal and external users, NSC regularly updated its website and keeps it up-to-date.

37. Official statistical metadata is available and published together with the annual, quarterly, monthly and special publications of statistical information.

38. NSC has significantly increased the amount of statistical information available in electronic form. Official statistics are published at the official site of NSC.

39. In the section "Methodology" NSC disseminates methodological information for all branches of statistics, classifications and data collection forms of the current calendar year. The site also includes statistical information for reporting units as well as the dates of submission of data collection forms to statistical agencies.

40. NSC organizes seminars and open days concerning a wide range of statistical topics and invites representatives of ministries, government departments as well as scientific and educational institutions.

41. Statistical data for the requests of students and graduates are available through the library, with significant amount of statistical literature. The library provides an opportunity to work in the reading room, get the statistical information available on the website of the NSC, to find information using the Internet or borrow books and use advisory services free of charge.

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