

STATISTIČNI URAD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

THE SLOVENIAN NATIONAL STATISTICS

TRUSTWORTHY AND USER- ORIENTED

LJUBLJANA, 2002

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Like other similar, modern social and economic communities, Slovenia as a young state has two principal objectives: to have happy and satisfied citizens, and also to provide such economic and social conditions that shall bring about satisfaction. Therefore, the rights and obligations encountered on the way to satisfaction have to be properly distributed; phenomena and circumstances relating to individuals or their business and other associations in the society have to be measured; rules have to be determined – at least in a statistical way. And above all, the announced principal and operational objectives (perhaps even intermediate objectives) have to be determined and measured (not only in terms of contents), so that on the one hand the agreed policies that are linked to these objectives shall have solid foundations and shall be monitored by the domestic and the international democratic communities; and that on the other hand the required measures shall be sufficiently substantiated and timely as well.

Both stated objectives, however, lead to a third objective. Namely, to attain these two objectives, a democratic tool has to be set up. In real life, this task is performed by national statistics, which is not only independent and professionally consistent, but also continuously monitors and makes comparisons of both national statistics and methods with those in the international and supranational environments. It is national statistics that shall enable professionally correct and democratic decision-making in the country and that shall support development planning and actions made either by residents, by domestic or foreign investors or those business subjects that are interested in or concerned about the development of Slovenia. In fact, in the new conditions of globalisation and new social forms, the language and methods of global statistics shall facilitate business subjects and everybody else in understanding the great competitive world and in integrating into it economically and in other manners..

Similarly, the role of national statistics is determined in Slovenia as well. Its mission has been determined and concentrates on satisfying the needs of all users and on maintaining trust and confidence in the work of the producers of official statistics. The Statistical Office and all authorised producers are fully aware of their responsibilities. This is especially important in such dynamic times, when Slovenia is being incorporated into a new Community which has already accepted reasonable statistical arguments and uses them in its operation. It is not only required that statistical measurements be conducted in Slovenia, but that these national data be disseminated and that comparisons of these data be made with the data, valid within the EU, the United Nations and its institutions, etc. all over the world. We realize that almost each statistical calculation or indicator serves as the basis for concrete actions: for determining the rights and obligations at the level of a business subject or for a concrete person. Therefore, the Statistical Office and other producers of official statistics keep striving to improve the quality of their work, to improve the procedures they make use of and to shorten the data dissemination deadlines – all in accordance with the agreed international statistical principles.

The aim of this booklet is to help you understand our common mission. It can also serve as a basis upon which you can formulate your questions or as evidence, how our objectives are being met.

Ljubljana, October 2002

Tomaž Banovec
Director General of the Statistical Office
of the Republic of Slovenia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Banovec', written over a horizontal line.

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Abbreviations used in the text:

SORS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
ID	identification number
AJPES	Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public and Legal Records and Services
EU	European Union
CRP	Central Population Register
BR	Business Register
RTU	Register of Territorial Units
PIN	personal identification number
BIN	business identification number
IT	information technology
ICT	information and communication technology
B2G	business to government
C2G	citizen to government
R&D	research and development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
TACO	Technical Administration Co-operation
PUMA	Public Management
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
CANSTAT	statistical co-operation between Candidate Countries
LEG	leadership group

MILESTONES IN NATIONAL STATISTICS



Short history before 1991

The history of national statistics goes back to 1754 when the first census was implemented on the territory which today belongs to Slovenia. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1863 the first independent statistical service - the Royal Imperial Statistical Central Commission - was established in Vienna and covered most of the territory of Slovenia.

After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire Slovenia became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The central statistical service of this state was the General National Statistics in Belgrade. Within its framework a special Statistical Department was operating in the Slovenian part between 1919 and 1924.

In 1944 Slovenian National Liberation Council set up the Office for Statistics of Slovenia. In 1945 Slovenian Statistics become a part of the federal state authority. In 1956 the programme of statistical surveys for Slovenian purposes was for the first time defined by republican law. Statistical Office plays the leading role developing the Central Population Register

(1970), the Business Register (1976) and the Register of Territorial Units (1981) with the centroid for every post code in Slovenia. 1981 Social Information System Act in Slovenia opened the opportunity to start building registers with uniform identification numbers for administrative as well as for statistical purposes.

National statistics in independent Slovenia

In 1991 Slovenian Statistical Office was placed under the Ministry for Planning. In 1992 Slovenian Statistical Office became a member of the Conference of European Statisticians where in the same year the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics were adopted. Both contributed very much to the process of preparing new legislation in the field of national statistics in Slovenia. In 1994 the Common Declaration of Statistical Co-operation between SORS and Eurostat was signed and that enabled official participation of Slovenes in European statistical work. 1995 National Statistics Act was laid down by Parliament. It brought the important elements of

national statistics (e.g. mission, Statistical Council and statistical advisory committees, independence, confidentiality provisions, dissemination, obligation for reporting units, access to administrative sources at micro level with ID numbers, and the rules for budgeting).

National statistics entering European Union

In 1996 Association Agreement between the Republic of Slovenia and the European Union was signed. In 1998 Accession Partnership Agreement and Screening of statistical acquis communautaire Slovenian National Statistics committed itself to achieve full compliance with the Statistical legislation in EU by 2002 at the latest. As a part of that process, Amendments to the National Statistics Act were adopted in 2001 in order to make the preparation and adoption of the programmes of statistical surveys more flexible, improve the statistical confidentiality, deepen the independence of the institution (SORS) and clearly define the role of authorised producers of statistics.

THE SLOVENIAN NATIONAL STATISTICS

In the Slovenian statistical system SORS is the main producer and co-ordinator.

The important role has also been played by the following institutions:

- Bank of Slovenia (balance of payments, financial and monetary statistics),
- Ministry of Finance (debt, deficit, government financial statistics),
- Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public and Legal Records and Services – AJPES (partly economic statistics),
- Institute of Public Health (health statistics),
- Pension and Disability Insurance Institute (pensions),
- Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia (social security), and
- Employment Service of Slovenia (partly employment).



The last amendments of the National Statistics Act require from the authorised producers to separately organise statistical activities from other activities and fully respect the statistical principles, especially statistical confidentiality.

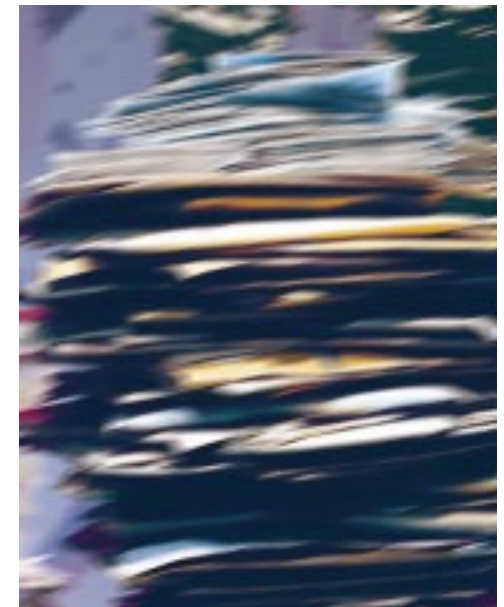
THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF SLOVENIAN NATIONAL STATISTICS



It is one of the most modern and was developed studying the best practices in world statistics, especially in Nordic countries where similar register-based statistics has been developed. The shrinking resources and increasing nonresponse require flexibility of response to users as well as timeliness.

The principal legislation

- National Statistics Act (1995, 2001)
- Annual Programme of Statistical Surveys for 2001 and 2002
- Medium-term Programme of Statistical Surveys 2001-2002
- Medium-term Programme of Statistical Surveys 2003-2007 as well as Annual Programme for 2003 are in the final phase of preparation and will be adopted before the end of 2002.





Censuses

The National Statistics Act stipulates the special acts in case of very large surveys like censuses.

We mention here two latest acts:

- 2000 Census of Agricultural Holdings Act
- Census of Population, Households and Housing in the Republic of Slovenia in 2001 Act



General classifications

Statistical legislation gives SORS the authority to propose to the Government the general classifications. The use of general classifications in administrations is obligatory and it supports the idea of good quality administrative records also for statistical purposes. We list here decrees governing the most important classifications:



- Decree on the Standard Classification of Territorial Units
- Decree on the Introduction and Use of the Standard Classification of Institutional Sectors
- Decree on the Introduction and Use of the Classification of Products by Activity
- Decree on the Introduction and Use of the Standard Classification of Activities
- Decree on the Introduction and Use of the Standard Classification of Occupations

For better transparency and usage of classifications, SORS has developed the technical solution in the classification server named KLASJE, which is available via the Internet.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN NATIONAL STATISTICS

**Relation SORS
– authorised
institutions**

National Statistics Act defines clearly the role and co-operation of SORS and authorised institutions concerning the organisation, preparation, execution and reporting activities on statistical programmes, respect of the fundamental principles, data dissemination and international co-operation.

**Statistical Council
and statistical advisory
committees**

Statistical Council is the highest representative of the user community. Even though its role is of advisory nature, it has to be very much respected due to the high authority of the members of the council. The president of the council is currently a member of the Slovenian Parliament.

Director General of SORS can not be the president of the Statistical Council. Statistical advisory committees have been working for many years, even before the National Statistics Act legalised them.



Currently there are 24 advisory committees for different fields of statistics with around 340 outside members and 78 SORS members.

The president of a statistical advisory committee is always the person from other institution, but the secretary is a member from SORS.

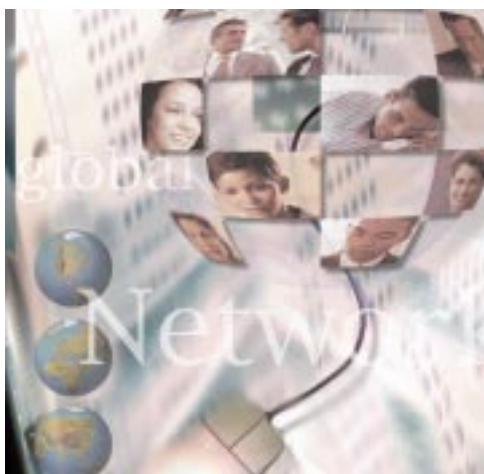
Participation of SORS in the work of Slovenian Government

SORS's Director General is a regular member of the Government Economic Committee. The main purpose is to discuss and estimate the future user needs coming from the state legislation which is not always available for SORS in draft form before the governmental procedure officially starts.



Integration of national and international needs through statistical programmes

In defining the Medium-term Statistical Programme for 2001-2002, SORS developed together with other partners the methodology of programming where the link between national and international needs as well as policy relevance have been taken into account. It should be mentioned that the EU compliance, which is almost full, is also a very important Slovenian priority at country level.



Reporting for the entire statistical system for 2001

In 2002 the reporting on Execution of the Programme 2001 was done for the first time for the entire statistical system and was linked to the programme in a very transparent and user-friendly way.



Register-based statistics

In close co-operation with Nordic countries, for the past 25 years SORS has been working on developing register-based statistical environment, especially on building infrastructural administrative registers (CRP, BR, RTU) and uniform identification numbers (PIN, BIN, centroid). SORS has played a leading role in development projects in the field of administrative records as well. Influence on the classifications, identifications, methodology used, access to all administrative records at micro level and with ID numbers still remain among the primary long-term objectives of Slovenian National Statistics in general and SORS in particular.

As already mentioned, SORS developed basic administrative registers and transferred them to administrative authorities.

The latest one – the Business Register – was transferred to AJ PES in July 2002.

The Business Register of Slovenia Act as a legal framework is also under the procedure to change.



Fundamental principles

In the National Statistics Act the following fundamental principles are written down:

- Professional and institutional independence
- Statistical confidentiality
- Availability, accessibility and clarity of information
- International comparability
- Transparency of methodology
- Rationality

Several other principles should also be mentioned, such as:

- Relevance of statistical concepts
- Accuracy of estimates
- Timeliness and punctuality in disseminating results
- Coherence
- Completeness



Mission

The mission of Slovenian National Statistics is defined by the National Statistics Act. In order to associate users, data providers and employees of SORS with the mission of our work, the mission statement was developed. The mission statement has also been put in the Medium-term Programme of Statistical Surveys in order to show to the users and data respondents as well as people working in Slovenian National Statistics what is the main purpose of statistical activities.

The statement reads: “The mission of the statistical office is the provision of good quality statistics and services for national and international requirements at minimal costs. By respecting statistical confidentiality, the national statistics strengthens the trust of data users and data providers and deepens its professional independence.”

There are several key words that contain fundamental statistical principles, however, good quality statistics for domestic as well as for international users is the main objective.



Vision

Mastering of quality, competency of the staff, up-to-date harmonization with the international environment, user-orientation, and modernisation of processes and improvement of working conditions are the most important activities which can enable Slovenian statistical system to complete the mission successfully and also taking into account the moving targets in the future.



Values

Values of SORS as well as the statistical system have been developed in the atmosphere of the growing importance of the official statistical data, especially for the purpose of the EU enlargement. The importance of users, especially key users in the EU - such as the European Central Bank, the EU Commission - national authorities - such as Government, the National Bank, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry - key enterprises, research community and general public has been growing last year.

Trust gained on the part of all participants (users, data providers and producers of statistics) became essential. Independence of the institution and profession is a guaranty to keep the trust. Knowledge, experience and team work, respect for privacy, quality and user-friendly environment are values also of internal organisational importance to make users as well as staff satisfied and motivated.

Building of trust and confidence of users and respondents

Trust and confidence have been built through the strict application of data confidentiality rules. Statistical confidentiality is a one way street. Data collected shall be used for statistical purposes only (aggregates). Micro data with identification obtained from respondents or from administrative sources can only be used for statistical purposes. Anonimised micro data can be used for research purposes. The registered researchers can also be given name, address and year of birth for the purpose of surveying. Personal Data Protection Act in Slovenia (1999, 2001) very strictly defines the conditions for the treatment of personal data. Rules on technical, organisational as well as IT matters in handling the data were put in the internal rules of procedure.

Transparency of data requirements is done through the statistical programmes which are published in the Official Journal. Reduction of response burden can also be considered as building a bridge to data respondents. Also the dissemination of data to respondents at the same time when collecting the data proved to be a useful tool in building confidence. Modern ICT offers integrated approach to data collection (B2G and C2G). All statistical surveys in the programme are not obligatory. SORS defined the criteria when the reporting can be voluntary.



Authority to collect data

SORS and authorised institutions have access to administrative records at micro level and with ID numbers. All data from public and private respondents are free of charge. Institutions within the Slovenian statistical system have the right to link the data from administrative records and surveys to statistical registers and use them for statistical and research purposes.

STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA



SORS is organisationally centralised and functionally decentralised office, located in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia. Currently there are 383 employees with the average age of 42 years. 13.9% of employees are under 30 years old. Women represent 68% of staff. Almost two thirds of employees have university degree.



In 2001 labour costs represented 63% of total expenditure. The state budget represented 87% of income, EU funds 12% and revenue from selling data and publications 1%. SORS is production process oriented organisation with the input division, four subject matter divisions (national accounts, business statistics, social and demographic statistics, environmental and natural resources statistics).

Dissemination division is taking care of disseminating of statistical production and keeping good relations with users. General methodological division, statistical programmes and international co-operation unit as well as statistical business register are of similar infrastructural nature as dissemination. ICT division and general matters are supportive units.



Independence of SORS and authority of Director General

One of the most important provisions in the National Statistics Act concerns instructions on scientific decisions from ministers. This kind of instructions are explicitly forbidden by law.

In the organisational framework, SORS is directly responsible to the Prime Minister. Director General and Deputy Director General are elected for the period of five years with no limitation for re-election. SORS has to be consulted in budgetary discussions as an independent entity within the Government.

Responsibility of SORS

Coordination of the statistical system, international co-operation, standards setting (methodological, classifications, administrative records), anticipation of users needs and collection of user requirements and satisfactions with output, collection, processing and dissemination of statistical data, R&D in the field of official statistics and last but not least very strong care for data confidentiality are the most important tasks defined by law and applied through statistical programmes.



Planning and reporting

Medium-term (5 years) and Annual Programmes of Statistical Surveys are followed by detailed work plans for each activity in SORS. All employees are obliged to prepare a monthly report on their tasks. Yearly report on the execution of the annual programme to the Statistical Council and midterm reporting to the Statistical Council and Slovenian Government are important documents for the users and data providers as well as management tools of the whole system.



Setting priorities

To set priorities, very intensive and wide discussions on the medium-term and annual statistical programmes take place at least once a year. Slovenian statistics has also been subject to several subject matter evaluations and also general assessment of the whole system. The evaluations help us to define the areas where further development is needed and also to define the so called negative priorities, i.e. what we can stop doing without too much harm for our users.



Dissemination policy

SORS has developed the main strategic objectives: equal access to statistical results, professionalism and transparency, user friendliness, especially availability of the statistical information on the Internet. Following the users' needs, almost all SORS's publications are prepared in Slovene and English. International dissemination is one of the basic tasks of SORS.

But there are also other authorities which have been asked for data by different bodies within EU Commission as well as by other international organisations. SORS plays a role of co-ordination and it is not always successful in this task.

Demands for timeliness in short-term statistics have been growing in economic statistics as well as in other fields. Timely response from reporting units, use of secondary sources and improvement of the processes within the office are some preconditions to meet those requirements. At the moment SORS prepares the advance release calendar for some users, like IMF standards, but it is planning to do that for all results.



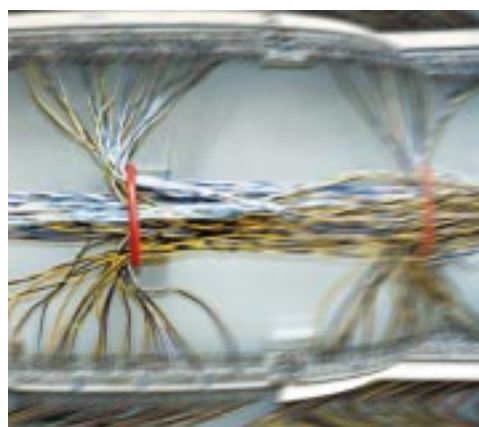
Currently the users are divided into four groups: enterprises, public sector, general public and researchers and academia. More detailed division of users, more training for users and measuring their satisfaction with the quality of data and services are some important tasks for the future.



Relations with the media

In order to meet the needs of the general public and build the trust and confidence in the statistical system, SORS has developed the policy on relations with the media. Monthly press conferences and press conferences for special occasions are organised and well visited by the journalists as well as by some users from ministries.

Besides the other media, the first results of statistics are also regularly published in daily newspapers. Press conferences are also used as training of journalists when the statistical results are also complemented by the methodological explanations.



International co-operation

International co-operation started unofficially at the end of the 1960s when Slovenia took part in the international project TACO (Technical Administration Co-operation) and later PUMA (Public Management) sponsored by OECD. At the time being all international relations were under the responsibility of the Federal Statistical Office in Belgrade.

Participation in the project presented the opportunity for SORS to start co-operation with Nordic countries and Germany.

After Slovenia won independence, SORS was for the first time officially included in the international statistical community in the Conference of European Statisticians in 1992.

Currently the co-operation is going on with UN Statistical Commission, CANSTAT, OECD, IMF, in regional co-operation (cross-border and Western Balkans), bilateral co-operation (Nordic countries, The Netherlands, Germany) and in the European Statistical System where most of the co-operation has been organised by Eurostat and the European Central Bank.



Quality policy in SORS

Following the recommendations of LEG on quality, SORS reinforces the efforts to develop the quality framework with the four basic pillars connected with the quality management:

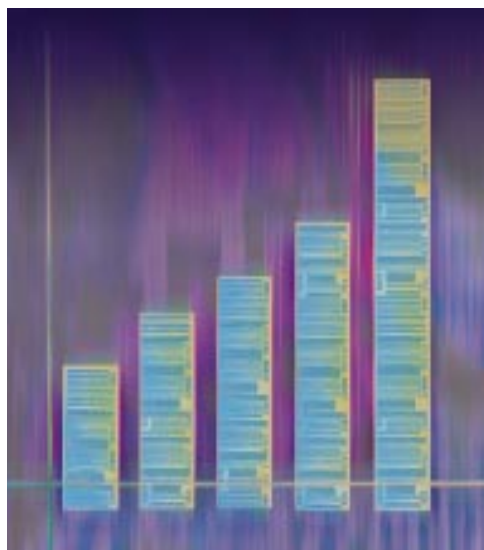
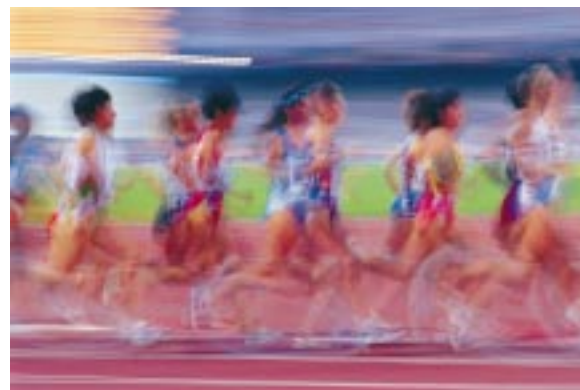
- Users and data providers
- Staff
- Quality of statistical outputs and services
- Process-orientation

THE SLOVENIAN NATIONAL STATISTICS FROM 2003 TO 2007

Context

The development of Slovenian National Statistics in 2003-2007 has been planned under the following assumptions:

- EU membership and the removal of economic borders
- New regionalisation in Slovenia
- Euro
- Monetary Union
- New financial framework for statistics after accession



Priority tasks

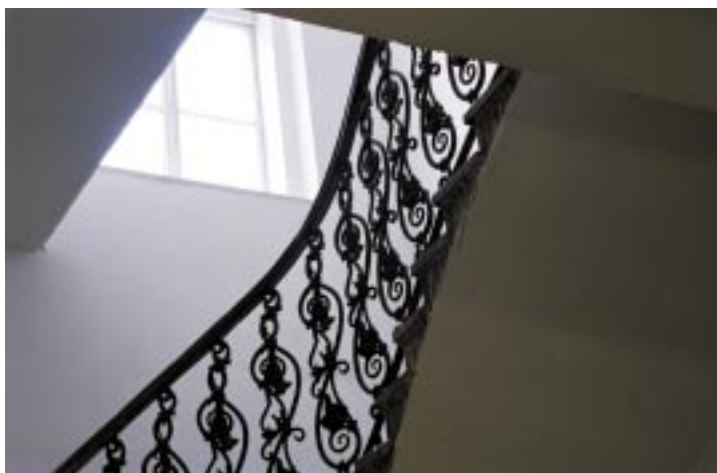
In order to meet the users' needs mainly connected with the enlargement process in the EU and producing national statistics as an EU Member State, the following main priorities have been proposed in the Draft Medium-term Programme of Statistical Surveys 2003-2007.

The main priorities are:

- Structural indicators and other indicators (e.g. short-term, sustainable development indicators, Laeken indicators)
- Quality and transparency of national accounts
- Structural business statistics
- Intrastat - trade between EU Member States
- Dissemination of Census data
- Environmental statistics
- Agricultural statistics
- Statistics of governmental services
- Information society statistics
- Life-long learning statistics
- Health statistics
- Institutional strengthening

Long-term strategic objectives

Following the policy requirements and anticipating the users' needs in the long run, Slovenian National Statistics has developed the main strategic elements in line with the good statistical practices in EU Member States.



- To improve the quality (statistical data and services, staff, processes, management)
- EU and international compliance
- Sustain independence of the institution as well as the system
- Alliance with users and data providers
- Development of the methods, knowledge and tools for utilising very large but “imperfect” data sets
- Better knowledge of data sources
- Further improvement of general methodology and statistical production processes (i.e. statistical registers, macro editing, rules of procedure)
- Enlarged use and certification of non-official statistical sources
- Co-operation and exploring the e-government opportunities

