



Implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice  
in the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina –  
Self-Assessment and Future Activities



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## PREAMBLE

The adoption of the European Statistics Code of Practice called for the development of an Action Plan of the Agency for Statistics of BIH and oversight over its implementation.

It is necessary to define, right in the beginning, the purpose of this document: the purpose is to explicate the concept of quality of the statistical process (ensured in the Agency, for the time being, in a certain form, at a certain pace) and the European Statistics Code of Practice, and to identify the weaknesses of the Agency on the basis of the analysis of that concept and to plan the future development of the total quality management in the Agency.

### 1 MISSION

Our mission is to provide credible and high quality statistical information, which meets the expectations of decision-makers, researchers and other users, on the situation and changes in the society, economy, and in the area of environment and natural resources. The target (mission) of the Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina is to provide to domestic and international data users reliable, understandable, quality, timely and internationally comparable statistical information on the situation and trends in economic, demographic and social areas, in the area of environment and natural resources, through optimal usage of resources and reduced burden on respondents.

### 2 VISION

With our vision we are trying to define a desired situation in the Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina until the end of the strategic period. The Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina will do everything it can, through further strengthening of its professional and infrastructure capacities, to become an active participant of the European Statistical System, thereby respecting the fundamental values such as professionalism, independence, impartiality and openness; using and adopting the best statistical practice; respecting fully the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice; the most important treasures of the statistical data in the country which will offer the information and services to the users, good quality, in an intelligible way, by ensuring equal opportunities of access to all and a reasonable burden on data providers.

### 3 VALUES

Our values are: professional independence, objectivity, user orientation, commitment to quality, statistical confidentiality, team work, continued education and training of the staff.

The values are the key guidance for the activities which have a long-term impact and serve the purpose of carrying out the mission. Mutual confidence among all participants in this process (data users, data providers and statistics producers) is becoming increasingly important. Independence of the institution and profession guarantees that confidentiality will be ensured and maintained. Knowledge, experience, team work, respect for privacy, quality and accessibility to users are the values which can significantly affect the level of satisfaction of users and employees. We are strengthening professional independence through continued education and training. The key words of our mission (statistical confidentiality, user confidence and professional independence) are used to describe the fundamental statistical principles and values, the respect of which ensures the quality of statistical data which meets the needs of users in the country and abroad.

### a. The quality aspect in the implementation of the current and planning of the future statistical activities

Taking into consideration the recommended conceptual quality framework, the Agency for Statistics of BIH will develop the area of quality in the implementation of the current and planning of the future statistical tasks, through the implementation of the following activities:

1. Meeting the needs of data users and data providers;
2. Development of human resources, and
3. Continued work on improving the quality of statistical products and services.

The management of these pillars of quality requires a modern approach to management at all levels, which must take the following into account:

- meeting the needs of various interest groups (data users and data providers, staff and the society as a whole) in a balanced way,
- the importance of the assessment of the current and planning of the future needs of users who are the most important quality assessors,
- the conduct of the management which has a significant impact on the overall management culture in the organisation,
- the full understanding and transparency of all processes and the manner of communication with the environment and among the staff,
- improvement of the quality of business operations, which is related to the culture of continuous learning, innovation and development,
- good relations with partners, and
- respect for statistical confidentiality and protection of data in accordance with the legislation, standards and good practices.

### b. Additional information and inputs

On 28 September, 2011 the *European Statistical System Committee* adopted a revised *European Statistics Code of Practice* the purpose of which is further systematic improvement of the quality of the European official statistics and in this regard, an increased confidence in the statistics by data users and providers. The fifteen principles that the Code is based on (which are put together within a working framework – institutional environment – structure quality, statistical production process – quality of the process and statistical output – product quality) resulted from the existing international standards and the Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System.

The Agency for Statistics of BIH is committed to implementing fully the European Statistics Code of Practice in the coming future, and has already included a good many of the recommendations in the legislation and documents. The Code encouraged the preparation of relevant documents the Agency for Statistics of BIH, which will support the activities defined in the programmes and plans for the implementation of statistical activities in the coming period. The implementation of these activities will certainly be supported by the activities undertaken by the European Statistical Office (Eurostat) which developed some documents (ESS Handbook for Quality Reports and Handbook on Data Quality and “ESS

Standard for Quality Reports –ESQR”) trying to identify in detail and elaborate on various components of the quality of statistical outputs.

The general aim of the “ESS Standard for Quality Reports (ESQR)” is to provide recommendations for the preparation of comprehensive quality reports for a full range of statistical processes and their outputs. A key objective of the Standard for Quality Reports is to promote harmonised quality reporting across statistical processes of Member States and hence to facilitate comparisons across processes and outputs. The quality of statistical processes, i.e. its structure, is organised in accordance with the principles of quality contained in the ESS Code of Practice, which include: relevance, accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, coherence and comparability, user needs assessment and perceptions, costs and burden on respondents and confidentiality, transparency and security.

### c. Main reference points in the quality management process

In compliance with the fifteen principles of the Code, five strategic goals, to be achieved in the coming period, are defined:

1. Professional independence of the Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and mandate to collect data.
2. Meeting the needs – of both data users and data providers – has to be balanced.
3. The quality of statistical products and services should be assessed and reported in a user friendly way for the majority of statistical surveys.
4. Improving statistical data processing procedures – with a view to achieving quality and effectiveness of the Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
5. Commitment of the entire staff to the values of quality, lifelong learning and self-development.

Each of the five planned goals presented below is broken into sub-goals that follow the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. An exception is the fifth goal which although not covered in the Code in terms of quality improvement, is important for us. Each sub-goal consists of: (i) indicators, which are important for monitoring the progress towards attaining a goal, and (ii) activities, which have been, or will be, undertaken in order to achieve a set goal.

The Statistical System of Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing a huge task to accomplish, soonest possible, all things necessary for accepting fully all guidelines and recommendations presented herein, in the interest of the production of reliable, relevant and internationally comparable statistics. It is clear that all stakeholders involved in the production of statistics (in view of the current situation in the production of statistics in our country) carry a huge responsibility in making every effort to respond to the needs of statistical data users both domestically and internationally.

## 1 Professional independence of the Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and mandate to collect information

The sub-goals within this goal are:

- a. Professional independence
- b. Mandate to collect information

### a) Professional independence<sup>1</sup>

*Professional independence of statistical authorities from other, policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators ensures the credibility of the Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Statistics.*

Indicators	Activity
1. <i>The independence of the national Statistical Institutes and Eurostat from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating official statistics is specified in law and assured for other statistical authorities;</i>	<p><u>Article 20 (1) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>            “When implementing the Programme, the staff of the Agency and Entity Institutes shall not seek or take instructions from Governments, other State’s authorities, political parties or any other interest group notably in the selection of data sources, statistical methods and procedures, in the contents, form and time of dissemination, and in the application of statistical confidentiality”;</p> <p><u>Article 20 (2) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>            “The authorities and other groups mentioned in paragraph 1 hereof undertake to respect the principles therein set out and not to seek to influence the staff of the statistical authorities in the performance of their tasks”.</p>
2. <i>The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. They are of the highest professional calibre;</i>	<p><u>Article 9 (2) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>            “The Director represents the Agency and acts for it, organises and ensures the lawful and efficient performance of the tasks, issues regulations when authorised to do so by the applicable laws of BiH and issues other acts which he is authorised to issue, undertakes other measures within the jurisdiction of the Agency which are necessary for the fulfilment of the Agency’s mandate”;</p> <p><u>Article 20 (a) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>            “The Agency shall be informed in a timely manner of all legislative and other relevant activities pertaining to the Statistics of BiH. The BiH institutions shall inform the Agency in a timely fashion and involve the Agency, should it request so, in the activities referred to in paragraph 1 hereof.”</p>
3. <i>The Heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have responsibility for ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner;</i>	<p><u>Article 9 (2) of the Law on Statistics of BiH,</u>            “The Director represents the Agency and acts for it, protects professional independence of the Statistics of BiH from any unprofessional influence and ensures the lawful and efficient performance of the tasks, issues regulations when authorised to do so by the applicable laws of BiH and issues other acts which he is authorised to issue,</p>

<sup>1</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 1 of the Code**

	undertakes other measures within the jurisdiction of the Agency which are necessary for the fulfilment of the Agency's mandate".
4. <i>The Heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases;</i>	<u>Article 20 (1) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u> "When implementing the Programme, the staff of the Agency and Entity Institutes shall not seek or take instructions from Governments, other State's authorities, political parties or any other interest group notably in the selection of data sources, statistical methods and procedures, in the contents, form and time of dissemination, and in the application of statistical confidentiality";
5. <i>The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made;</i>	<u>Article 13 (5) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u> "The Programme shall be published in the Official Gazettes of BiH, the Entities and the Brcko District of BiH". <u>Article 22 of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u> "Within three months of the end of each calendar year, the Director of the Agency shall provide an Annual Report to the Council of Ministers. Amongst other matters, the Annual Report shall include details concerning (i) the extent to which the Programme and Work Plan have been implemented; (ii) the statistical results achieved; (iii) any constraints that have hindered achievements of the Programme and Work Plan; and (iv) the extent to which there has been compliance with the standards and methodology issued by the Agency. After consideration by the BiH Council of Ministers and in any case within six months of the end of the year, the Agency shall publish the report".
6. <i>Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements;</i>	The releases issued by the Agency are in substance only statistical in nature and contain no political statements. The evidence to prove this can be obtained from the press releases as well as through discussions with the users, and particularly with the media. The press releases of the Agency are drafted in close cooperation between the relevant statistical domain departments and the dissemination department, on the basis of defined internal procedures. One of the goals of the Agency's Strategy is to improve communication with the media.
7. <i>The heads of National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities comment publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of official statistics – as far as considered suitable;</i>	The Agency reacts publicly to misuses and false interpretation of official statistics by the media only in exceptional circumstances. The appropriate procedures undertaken in the event of false statements and interpretation and non-objective presentation of statistical information or ungrounded criticism are described in the document " <u>Issuing Denials – A Procedure</u> "- The Director of the Agency decides on whether it is necessary to react to a misuse, false interpretation or criticism by the media of any aspect of the Agency's performance.

	<p>The Agency does not react to an incorrect use of statistical information in political debates.</p> <p><u>Future activity:</u> It is necessary to authorise the Agency explicitly by law to react publicly to false interpretation of misuse of statistical information it produces. For this reason, the right of the Agency to react publicly to any misuse and false interpretation of statistical information will be explicitly set forth in the Law in the next period (the first time the Law on Statistics of BiH is amended).</p> <p>Proposal of a new Article: "The Director of the Agency may give a public reaction to a false interpretation or misuse of statistical information".</p>
<p>8. <i>The appointment of the heads of National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, of other statistical authorities, is based on professional competence only. The reasons on the basis of which the incumbency can be terminated are specified in the legal framework. These cannot include reasons compromising professional or scientific independence.</i></p>	<p>The present Law on Statistics of BiH does not contain provisions on the appointment and dismissal procedures or on the required qualifications of a Director of the Agency, although the Law refers to the Law on Civil Service in the Institutions of BiH regarding these procedures/required qualifications.</p> <p><u>Article 9 (3) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u> "All appointments and dismissals in the Agency (including the Director, Deputy Director and Head of the Branch) are done in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Civil Service in the Institutions of BiH". Under the Civil Service Law, the appointment, i.e. the selection of a Director and Deputy Director is based solely on professional merits.</p> <p><u>Article 9 (6) of the Law on Statistics of BiH specifies that the Director serves and is appointed for a fixed term.</u> "The term of office of the Director, his Deputy and Head of the Branch shall be four years, to the extent that this is not inconsistent with the Law on Civil Service in the Institutions of BiH".</p> <p><u>Future activity:</u> Although these provisions are contained in the Law governing civil servants, the amendment to the Law on Statistics (which would protect the Director from an unlawful dismissal) would further enhance the institutional protection of professional independence of the Agency. The appointment procedure and the required qualifications should also be specified in the law.</p>



**b) Mandate for data collection <sup>2</sup>**

*Statistical authorities must have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.*

Indicator	Activity
<p>1. <i>The mandate of the statistical authorities to collect information for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics is specified in law.</i></p>	<p><u>Article 8 (1) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>            “The Agency is the competent body to process, disseminate and endorse Statistics of BiH”.</p> <p><u>Article 8 (2) (e) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>            “The Agency shall collect, process and disseminate Statistics of BiH in accordance with internationally accepted standards based on data submitted by the Entity Institutes and/or data collected directly by the Agency. For these purposes the Agency may (i) where it considers necessary for the performance of its statutory functions provided herein collect statistical data from any Statistical Unit in the Entities; and (ii) collect data for its statutory functions provided herein from BIH Institutions; legal entities at the State level; international organisations operating within BIH borders and foreign owned and controlled companies.”</p>
<p>2. <i>The statistical authorities are allowed by law to use administrative data for statistical purposes;</i></p>	<p><u>Article 8 (2) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>            “For the purpose of performing the duties of Statistics, the Agency may, in accordance with its powers, have access to individual data (if necessary) from all administrative sources of data (maintained in an electronic form) and the data collected through the observation and monitoring method, and in this regard, the owners of administrative sources of data and of the data collected through the observation and monitoring method are obliged to submit the data to the Agency in accordance with the adopted Programme, the Work Plan and agreed manner of submission of data to the Agency.”</p> <p><u>Article 2 of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>            “For the purpose of performing the duties of Statistics, the Agency may, in accordance with its powers, have access to individual data (if necessary) from all administrative sources of data (maintained in an electronic form) and the data collected through the observation and monitoring method, and in this regard, the owners of administrative sources of data and of the data collected through the observation and monitoring method are obliged to submit the data to the Agency in accordance with the adopted Programme, the Work Plan and agreed manner of submission of data to the Agency”.</p> <p><u>Future activity:</u>            To modify (amend) the Article about administrative sources in the next proposal for the amendments</p>

<sup>2</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 2 of the Code**

	<p>to the Law on Statistics. The new proposal i.e. the amendment of this Article with new paragraphs should read as follows:</p> <p>Paragraph 2 “The Agency shall take part in all activities related to the establishment of new or changes to the existing administrative sources of data or in the activities related to the sources the data of which are based on permanent observation and monitoring and which are also relevant for Statistics”.</p> <p>Paragraph 3 “The Agency may modify the data obtained from statistical surveys and from administrative and other sources in order to harmonise them with official definitions, classifications and other standards applied in the Statistical System and international statistical practice”.</p>
<p>3. <i>On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authorities may compel response to statistical surveys.</i></p>	<p><u>Article 31 (1) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>  “A Statistical Unit (other than the Entity Institutes) that knowingly provides false or misleading information in response to written requests by the Agency to meet the needs of the Programme shall be guilty of an offence punishable on conviction by a fine not exceeding 5000 KM or imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or both”.</p> <p><u>Article 32 of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>  “A Statistical Unit (other than the Entity Institutes) that, without reasonable excuse, refuses or fails to answer questions or written requests by the Agency to meet the needs of the Programme , shall be guilty of an offence punishable by a fine not exceeding 1000 KM”.</p>

## 2 Meeting the needs of data users and providers should be balanced.

The sub-goals within this goal are:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Respect for statistical confidentiality in accordance with national legislation and international standards and practice</b></li> <li>b. <b>Ensuring impartiality and objectivity within the national statistical system</b></li> <li>c. <b>Non-excessive burden on respondents</b></li> <li>d. <b>Relevance of statistics in terms of the user needs</b></li> </ul> |
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### a) **Respect for statistical confidentiality in accordance with national legislation and international standards and practice.**<sup>3</sup>

*The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes are absolutely guaranteed.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law;</i>	The Law on Statistics of BiH defines the principle of confidentiality as one of the main principles.

<sup>3</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 5 of the Code**

	<p>A whole chapter of the Law (Chapter IX) is devoted to this issue – this Chapter contains the definition of confidential data, prescribes the use of confidential data only for statistical purposes, defines the obligations of the data producers to define precisely the measures and procedures for the protection of confidential data. The Law on Statistics of BiH is available on the Internet.</p> <p><u>Chapter XI - Articles 23-29 of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u></p>
2. <i>Staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment;</i>	<p><u>Article 28 of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>  “Persons having access to confidential data in the performance of their tasks shall be subject to compliance with the provisions of this law, even after the cessation of their functions”.</p> <p>-<u>Affidavit of Confidentiality</u> - (signed by the staff on appointment and taking assigned office, under the Rulebook on Internal Organisation of the Agency)</p>
3. <i>Penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality;</i>	<p><u>Article 30 (1) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u>  “Persons having access to confidential data in the performance of their tasks and who unlawfully and knowingly disclose a confidential datum shall be guilty of an offence punishable on conviction by a fine not exceeding 5000 KM or imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or both”.</p>
4. <i>Guidelines and instructions are provided to staff on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes; The confidentiality policy is made known to the public;</i>	<p>Documents are published (posted on the Internet and the Intranet pages of the Agency).</p> <p>The document with general guidelines treating statistical confidentiality and data protection.</p> <p><u>“Fundamental principles and guidelines for the statistical confidentiality and protection of data in Statistical Institutes and other authorised producers of statistics in Bosnia and Herzegovina”</u></p> <p>Another document/manual has also been developed: <u>The Rulebook on the Protection of Statistical Data in the Agency for Statistics of BiH</u>”.</p> <p>The intention of this document is to define in a greater detail the rules for the protection of statistical confidentiality, to emphasise the importance of confidentiality and to serve as guidance to the Agency staff in the processes of production and dissemination of statistical data. The obligation and responsibility of the Agency to protect confidential data is contained also in the Preamble to all statistical forms.</p>
5. <i>Physical, technological and organizational provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases;</i>	<p>See the document/manual: <u>Rulebook on the Protection of Statistical Data in the Agency for Statistics of BiH</u>”. This document provides a detailed description of physical, technological and organisational measures taken to protect security and integrity of statistical data.</p>
6. <i>Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.</i>	<p>The Agency has signed a protocol and carries out certain procedures which allow researchers access</p>

	<p>to data, and they are specified in Chapters VII and X of the "<a href="#">Rulebook on the Protection of Statistical Data in the Agency for Statistics of BiH</a>".</p> <p>There is a standard form for accessing statistically protected microdata. Researchers sign a contract with the Agency which defines conditions and responsibilities regarding access to confidential data.</p> <p>The existing supporting documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access to Statistically Protected Microdata Request Form;</li> <li>2. Contract on Access to Protected Statistical Microdata for Scientific Research Purposes;</li> <li>3. Instruction for Preparation and Provision of Microdata</li> </ol>
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### b) Ensuring impartiality and objectivity within the Statistical System <sup>4</sup>

*Statistical authorities develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent way in which all users are treated equitably.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations;</i>	<p>Objectivity in the production and dissemination of official statistics is defined in the Law on Statistics of BiH.</p> <p><u>Article 19 (2) of the Law on Statistics of BiH</u></p> <p>"The Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall aim to mirror as faithfully as possible the real situations, disseminate the results to the users in a neutral and impartial way, focus on the phenomena which are essential for decision-makers..."</p> <p><u>Future activity:</u></p> <p>To establish a TV/Radio and print press clippings file with reports criticising the level of objectivity of the Statistics of the BiH Agency for Statistics (print media and broadcasters) - during 2012.</p>
2. <i>Choices of sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are informed by statistical considerations;</i>	<p>The Law on Statistics of BiH (Article 8 (2) (c) defines that statisticians are responsible for making decisions regarding definitions and statistical techniques of collecting, processing and disseminating the statistics. The way in which the Agency operates shows that it is making a strong effort to achieve the full conformity between its own Statistics and international norms and standards and that the selection of sources and statistical methods is done and a decision on dissemination of statistics made in compliance with the statistical rules.</p>
3. <i>Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised;</i>	<p>The error correction procedures undertaken when errors have been discovered are described in a clear and transparent way and the error correction</p>

<sup>4</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 6 of the Code**

	<p>form prescribed in the <a href="#">“Instruction on Correction of Errors in Published Statistics”</a>;</p> <p>See the “Error Memorandum Form” used to notify and rectify the erroneous statistical data and information published in the statistical releases of the Agency.</p>
<p>4. <i>Information on the methods and procedures used is publicly available;</i></p>	<p>Under the <a href="#">Law on Statistics of BiH (Article 8 (2) (h))</a>, the Agency is obliged to provide professional interpretation and assessment of the data it produces and disseminates and to release to the public all information on the sources and methods used. One of the strategic goals of the Institute is to apply a standardized system of metadata.</p> <p>The methodologies and established procedures are posted on the Agency’s website <a href="http://www.bhas.ba">www.bhas.ba</a> when compiling statistics – they are also made publicly available in published releases, thematic bulletins relating to a statistical survey, although the available metadata are not in compliance with international standards.</p> <p><u>Future activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2012, to prepare a standardized manner and procedures for publishing statistical survey methodologies;</li> <li>- Continued work on the establishment of a statistical metadata system.</li> </ul>
<p>5. <i>Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced;</i></p>	<p>Under the present Law on Statistics of BiH, the Agency is not obliged to announce (prior to the end of the current year) a detailed statistical release calendar or the dissemination form.</p> <p>The Agency announces in advance the calendar of its releases for the next year, it includes the name of a statistical survey to be released, a reference period, release date and time.</p> <p>The 2011 Statistical Release Calendar is available on the Agency’s website. If the release date has to be postponed due to some unforeseen reasons, the Institute will, in accordance with its Dissemination Strategy, announce clearly a new release date in the press release calendar on its website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An Annual Release Calendar is defined and publicised in the Work Plan of the Agency for the current year.</li> </ul> <p><u>Future activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new Article stipulating a Release Calendar, including a dissemination form, should be included in the next proposal for amendments to the Law on Statistics. The proposed text of the new Article: “The BiH Agency for Statistics shall develop and maintain publicly available Statistical Release Calendar at least three months prior to the period covered by the Work Plan”.</li> <li>- Establishment of a protocol which will clearly define any changes to the release calendar and the</li> </ul>

	procedures to be undertaken in the event of any deviations– in 2012.
6. <i>Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies;</i>	<p><u>Future activities:</u> Development of the final text of the document (draft already exists): “<a href="#">Instruction on the Procedure for Validation and Approval of Statistical Survey Methodologies and the Procedure for Cancelling Statistical Surveys.</a>” The above Instruction defines: new statistical surveys and developmental/pilot surveys from the annual plan for statistical surveys which become regular surveys; statistical surveys which are subject of major revision of methodological or technological nature; statistical surveys run on a multi-annual basis; statistical surveys which are subject of revision with a view to eliminating administrative obstacles and statistical surveys proposed to be cancelled.</p>
7. <i>All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicized. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality;</i>	<p>The principle that all users have equal access to statistical data in an impartial way is stipulated in <a href="#">Article 8 (2) (h)</a> and <a href="#">Article 19 (2)</a> of the <a href="#">Law on Statistics of BIH</a> and the Agency implements this principle in a consistent manner. <u>Future activities:</u> To prepare the procedure which will prevent any leak of information from the BIH Agency for Statistics prior to the statistical release – in 2012.</p>
8. <i>Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.</i>	<p>Continuation of the existing good practice. Close cooperation between the staff of the relevant departments/sections and the Dissemination Department guarantees that statistical releases and statements are objective. <u>Future activities:</u> -To develop procedures for preparation of press releases and press conferences – in 2012.</p>

### c) Non-excessive burden on respondents <sup>5</sup>

*The reporting burden is proportionate to the needs of the users and is not excessive for respondents. The statistical authorities monitor the response burden and set targets for its reduction over time.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>The range and detail of European Statistics demands is limited to what is absolutely necessary;</i>	<p><u>Future activities:</u> To carry out regular analyses of the scope of the reporting burden on respondents (on an annual basis) and to release results publicly on the basis of the data from the <a href="#">Quality Report for Statistical Surveys.</a></p>
2. <i>The reporting burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations; ;</i>	<p><u>Future activities:</u> - To develop the possibility of coordinated sampling in the next period. Survey of households (where no special sample selection procedures are required) to be organised in such a way that the</p>

<sup>5</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 9 of the Code**

	<p>burden is spread fairly over reporting units;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To establish the system for reporting on the use of resources (financial and human) and on the burden on data providers for the purposes of statistical surveys;</li> <li>- To calculate the indicators of the burden on reporting units (e.g. with the question for the reporting units on the time spent completing the questionnaire).</li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>The information sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used, where possible, to facilitate its return;</i></p>	<p><u>Future activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To work on ensuring the introduction of infrastructure necessary for electronic reporting – where possible;</li> <li>- To work on standardisation of the forms and try to harmonise questionnaires used in business surveys to the accounting system in the companies as much as possible.</li> </ul>
<p>4. <i>Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information;</i></p>	<p>Continuation of activities related to ensuring the possibility to use administrative sources as much as possible and prior to that it is necessary to explore the possibility of using administrative sources and records at the entity and cantonal levels.</p>
<p>5. <i>Data sharing within statistical authorities is generalised in order to avoid multiplication of surveys;</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To undertake the activity toward sharing the data collected by different statistical authorities with a view to preventing separate surveys.</li> </ul>
<p>6. <i>Statistical authorities promote measures that enable the linking of data sources in order to reduce reporting burden.</i></p>	<p>The Agency will publish and promote measures that enable the reduction of costs and burden on the reporting units, such as: reduction of the size of a sample, reduction of frequency of data collection, reduction of the number of requested data in a survey, reduction of the number of contacts with a reporting unit, encouragement of the use of administrative data (or a part thereof), testing the questionnaire with reporting units with a view to achieving a better understanding and completion of the questionnaire, and mentioning a request for data in the Survey Calendar available to the reporting unit.</p>

#### d) Relevance of statistics in terms of the user needs<sup>6</sup>

*The Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Statistics meet the needs of users.*

Indicator	Activity
<p>1. <i>Process are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and consider their emerging needs and priorities;</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To establish the procedures for identification and profiling of our users per statistical sections/departments as well as formal procedures for advising the users on their statistical needs.</li> <li>- To use the available information (provided by the users through the Agency on the user satisfaction) in order to define their needs.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 11 of the Code**

2. <i>Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme;</i>	Priority needs of users are met and reflected in the BIH Statistical Programme and the Agency's annual Work Plan.
3. <i>User satisfaction is monitored on a regular basis and is systematically followed up.</i>	The User Satisfaction Survey in the Agency began in the last quarter of 2011 – the results of the survey will be released in the first half of 2012.

### 3 The quality of statistical products and services should be assessed and reported in a user friendly way for the majority of statistical surveys.

The sub-goals within this goal:

- a. **Commitment to quality**
- b. **Accuracy and reliability**
- c. **Timeliness and punctuality**
- d. **Coherence and comparability**
- e. **Accessibility and clarity**

#### a) **Commitment to quality**<sup>7</sup>

*Statistical authorities are committed to quality. They systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>Quality policy is defined and made available to the public. An organizational structure and tools are in place to deal with quality management;</i>	<p>-In 2012, to define and publish (post on the Internet and Intranet site of the Agency) the following document: "<a href="#">Guidelines for the Statistical Business Process Quality Management in the Statistical System of BIH.</a>"</p> <p>-Organisational structure (by reason of understaffing) in some departments and sections is ineffective and non-flexible to fulfil new requirements. For this reason it will be necessary to introduce some changes during the course of 2012 and 2013.</p> <p>-Within the activity envisaged by EFQM (the business excellence model of the European Foundation for Quality Management) we plan to introduce a standardized monitoring of the process quality, with the appropriate documentation, which, in fact, will be a combination of different models, such as self-assessment, quality reports with selected quality indicators to be used for internal and external presentation of the data quality (e.g. selected quality indicators for the data users).</p>
2. <i>Procedures are in place to plan and monitor the quality of the statistical production process;</i>	- Over the past years a certain progress has been made in the collection methods (the use of administrative sources, computer data processing and dissemination methods) but the quality of these processes has not been systematically

<sup>7</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 4 of the Code**



	<p>prepared for all processes. In the next period it will be necessary to ensure systematically quality for the entire statistical process, in accordance with the CoP standard.</p> <p>-Procedures for planning and monitoring of the quality of the statistical production process will be defined in the <u>“Guidelines for the Statistical Business Process Quality Management in the Statistical System of BIH”</u>.</p>
<p>3. <i>Product quality is regularly monitored, assessed with regard to possible trade-offs, and reported according to the quality criteria for European Statistics;</i></p>	<p>The document which will serve as a methodological foundation for developing quality reports for statistical surveys has been prepared: <u>“Report on the Statistical Survey Quality – Methodological Guidelines for Report Writing”</u>. On the basis of this document, the development of individual reports on the statistical survey quality and reporting according to the quality criteria for European Statistics (review of the key outputs with the development of prescribed quality indicators) start as from 2012.</p>
<p>4. <i>There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using also external experts where appropriate.</i></p>	<p>The review of statistical production was conducted by international organisations (e.g. the IMF), usually through engagement of international consultants. The submission of data to Eurostat and communication with various units within Eurostat are also considered as part of this process. In this context, reporting on quality in accordance with the EU recommendations will also play an important role in the process of improving the performance of the Agency. Also, cooperation with other statistical institutions and participation in various projects represent a source of new information and experience, as well as a form of benchmarking with external partners and experts.</p>

### b) Accuracy and reliability<sup>8</sup>

*The Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Statistics accurately and reliably portray reality.*

Indicator	Activity
<p>1. <i>Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated;</i></p>	<p>To review the document <u>“Report on the Statistical Survey Quality – Methodological Guidelines for Report Writing”</u> in which quality assessment indicators for the key statistics and key variables and the total statistical product are clearly stated.</p>
<p>2. <i>Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented according to the European standards;</i></p>	<p>See <u>“Report on the Statistical Survey Quality – Methodological Guidelines for Report Writing”</u>.</p>
<p>3. <i>Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve statistical processes.</i></p>	<p>To establish a system on the Agency’s Intranet site for reporting on good practices and exchange of views on methodologies.</p>

<sup>8</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 12 of the Code**

**c) Timeliness and punctuality<sup>9</sup>**

*Bosnia-Herzegovina and European Statistics are released in a timely manner and disseminated in a punctual manner.*

Indicator	Activity
<p>1. <i>Timeliness meets European and other international release standards;</i></p>	<p>- Defined in the Multi-Annual Programme of the BIH Statistics and in the annual Work Plan of the Agency;  <u>Future activities:</u>            - To present timeliness of release through indicators for timeliness of the first and final results and give reasons for major delays and measures for improving timeliness of release for certain domain statistics in the <u>Quality Reports on Statistical Surveys</u>”;            - To adopt and implement the ESMS Reference Metadata Structure in the Agency;</p>
<p>2. <i>A standard daily time for the release of statistics is made public;</i></p>	<p>– The publication of the Calendar that prepares and publishes BHAS fixed date of publication of statistical results.  <u>Future activities:</u>            Determine the standard time for the daily statistics and incorporate the same in the Regulation on Disclosure of publications BHAS (for internal use) and calendar publishing, publicly available on the Web site.</p>
<p>3. <i>The periodicity of statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible;</i></p>	<p>- Defined in the multi-annual Statistical Programme and annual Work Plan of the Agency, prepared in consultation with the users;  <u>Future activities:</u>            - To consult users regularly on the release calendar – in continuity;            - To respect to the maximum the recommendations of the European law on the periodicity of statistical surveys – in continuity.</p>
<p>4. <i>Divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set;</i></p>	<p>- Divergence from the dissemination time schedule (usual/announced time schedule) is publicised in advance, although reasons are not explained.  <u>Future activities:</u>            Establishment of a protocol which will clearly define the possible changes and divergence from the dissemination calendar and the procedures taken in case of any divergence – in the course of 2012.</p>
<p>5. <i>Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate accuracy can be released when considered useful,</i></p>	<p>- For a number of statistical surveys preliminary results are released and their quality is satisfactory;</p>

<sup>9</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 13 of the Code**

**d) Coherence and comparability<sup>10</sup>**

*European Statistics are consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it is possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (i.e. arithmetic and accounting identities observed)</i>	<u>Future activities:</u> Systematic documenting an analysis of comparison of annual and short-term statistics and comparison with national accounts – 2012-2014.
2. <i>Statistics are comparable over a reasonable period of time;</i>	<u>Future activities:</u> Systematic documenting and analysis of breaks in time series – 2012-2014.
3. <i>Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources;</i>	- Continuation of the current practice of accepting and implementing recommended European standards, definitions, concepts and classifications in various statistical surveys and sources. <u>Future activities:</u> The full implementation of recommended standards and for statistical surveys which are based on administrative sources - in continuity.
4. <i>Statistics from the different sources and of different periodicity are compared and reconciled;</i>	<u>Future activities:</u> Recording the existing problems and divergences and development of instructions for reconciliation of noticed differences – 2012-2014.
5. <i>Cross-national comparability of the data is ensured within the European Statistical System through periodical exchanges between the European Statistical System and other statistical systems. Methodological studies are carried out in close co-operation between the Member States and Eurostat.</i>	<u>Future activities:</u> Comparison and harmonisation of the statistics of international trends (e.g. foreign trade statistics) with the statistics of other states and development of instructions for reconciliation of noticed differences – 2012-2014.

**e) Accessibility and clarity<sup>11</sup>**

*The Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>Statistics and the corresponding metadata are presented, and archived, in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons;</i>	The web site of the Agency offers the latest press releases and short news, access to the database (for the industry statistics and the statistics of the consumer prices), the release time schedule, methodological documents for individual surveys (in the languages in use in BIH and in English), information about the Agency etc. In 2011, a new web site was launched in order to improve content, design and technical support to the web site.

<sup>10</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 14 of the Code**

<sup>11</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 15 of the Code**

	<p>It is planned to continue this practice in a two-year periodicity, in order to get the feedback for further improvement of the presentation of the data and communication with the users. In this regard, a user satisfaction survey has been introduced. The scope and content of the appropriate metadata, including methodological explanations, are different for each area. Methodological notes and explanations are included in the publication.</p> <p><u>Future activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is planned to introduce a new system of standardized metadata in accordance with international standards.</li> <li>- Selected quality indicators which are part of the Quality Report on Statistical Surveys will contribute to a better understanding of statistics by users.</li> </ul>
<p>2. <i>Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy;</i></p>	<p>The Agency is extensively using the Internet as a rational means of communication in statistics. The use of printed publications remains very frequent; however, the interest in the data in electronic form is growing and represents a trend which is supported by a new generation of users of statistics. The introduction of the user-friendly tools, such as Excel, in the databases enables a more flexible use of disseminated data.</p> <p><u>Future activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work toward improving and further developing dissemination techniques – 2012 and 2013;</li> <li>- Further development of the user-friendly tools for a flexible use of disseminated data, on the website of the Agency – 2012-2014;</li> <li>- Development of a new visual identity and standardisation of the design of all products - 2012-2014.</li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and the public is informed;</i></p>	<p>The Agency carries out, on request, some special analyses for the users. The products and services provided on special requests are paid by the users under a price list set by the Agency.</p>
<p>4. <i>Access to microdata is allowed for research purposes and is subject to specific rules or protocols;</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to microdata is allowed in accordance with explanations provided in Principle 5 of the Code, i.e. Indicator 6, Chapter 2 herein;</li> <li>- Access to microdata is allowed for academic research purposes (under Article 24 (a) of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Statistics of BiH); however, the interest on the part of users in microdata for research purposes in our country is very low. The Director of the Agency makes a final decision on the requests submitted in writing.</li> </ul> <p><u>Future activities:</u></p> <p>The Agency is planning to post on its website the full key information and all documents pertaining to the manner and conditions for obtaining access to microdata for research purposes in order for the academic community to gain a better understanding of a new, useful source of data which can be helpful for their work. The posting of</p>

	information will also contribute to an increased transparency and clarity of the procedures used in this particular area.
5. <i>Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems;</i>	Standardization of metadata represents (on the basis of the Agency's Work Plan) one of the most important priorities of the Agency in the coming period. It is considered that the fundamental elements of development in this area include the implementation of international standards for metadata and creation of a metadata base, including quality indicators.  <i>Future activities:</i> In 2011 the work on the establishment of a metadata system and its sub-system (classification server, a variable base, etc.).
6. <i>Users are kept informed about the methodology of statistical processes including the use of administrative data;</i>	The Agency includes in its statistical publications and other products the information on procedures used for the production of statistics. A special part of the website of the Agency is devoted to statistical methodologies of some of our surveys. Usually those are definitions and explanations of statistical indicators, the description of statistical units and used classifications. Releases, as well as publications include this type of information. Standardization of metadata, the use of selected quality indicators and establishment of a direct link between the data and metadata in the statistical database on the website of the Agency will be used for presentation of statistics to the public at large. This approach will contribute to achieving an increased transparency of the work of the Agency and, generally, to a better understanding of statistics.
7. <i>Users are kept informed about the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the quality criteria for European Statistics.</i>	The quality reports for statistical survey outputs will be posted by the Agency on its Internet website. The quality reports will contain fully the ESS recommendations regarding the statistical output quality assessment.

#### 4 Improving statistical data processing procedures – with a view to achieving quality and effectiveness of the Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The sub-goals within this goal are:

- a. Adequacy of resources
- b. Sound methodology
- c. Appropriate statistical procedures
- d. Cost effectiveness

##### a. Adequacy of resources<sup>12</sup>

*The resources available to statistical authorities are sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.*

<sup>12</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 3 of the Code**

Indicator	Activity
<p>1. <i>Staff, financial and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current statistical needs;</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The organisational structure (by reason of understaffing) in some sections and departments is ineffective and inflexible to meet new requirements.</li> <li>- Taking into consideration the ambitions for harmonisation with the European requirements, the existing resources are insufficient to ensure the full implementation of the EU legislation on statistics, especially in view of the strong dependence on donor funding at present.</li> <li>- Continuation of implementation of the joint training activities within three statistical institutions would help harmonise the system and improve efficiency. The development of the use of video content and e-learning could be a way of facilitating cooperation among the three institutions, as well as of improving their joint activities.</li> <li>- Full implementation (taking into consideration the latest developments) of the joint IT strategy.</li> <li>- Implementation of the activities on the establishment of the WAN/VPN network among the statistical institutions as soon as possible. This will provide a foundation for a better data exchange and an improved communication and cooperation in general. This will ensure a more efficient use of scarce IT resources and will contribute to a better harmonisation of control, editing and release of statistical data.</li> </ul>
<p>2. <i>The scope, detail and cost of statistics are commensurate with needs;</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Agency has a limited ability to monitor the quality of data coming from the statistical institutes in the entities, partly due to limited resources, and partly due to the lack of information.</li> <li>- Providing of the budget at the state level for the fundamental EU surveys and statistical activities (e.g. LFS, HBS, SILC, National Accounts, structural business statistics, short-term statistics) can be a way forward in order to ensure consistent implementation throughout BIH.</li> </ul>
<p>3. <i>Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new statistics against their cost;</i></p>	<p>To follow developed procedures in accordance with the rolling reviews within Eurostat.</p>
<p>4. <i>Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.</i></p>	<p>Introduction (under the Eurostat methodology) of the system of monitoring of negative priorities.</p>

**b. Sound methodology<sup>13</sup>**

*Sound methodology underpins quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>The overall methodological framework used for European Statistics follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices;</i>	Continuation and improvement of the present practice, i.e. to continue to follow the European good practice, guidelines and standards.
2. <i>Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority;</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To continue to employ new staff and develop the staff in the <i>Department for Statistical Methodologies, Standards and Quality</i>– 2012-2015;</li> <li>- To establish the register of methodological workshops and conferences available to all employees via Intranet - 2012;</li> </ul>
3. <i>The business register and the frame for population surveys are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to ensure high quality;</i>	To plan the preparation of the Quality Report for the Business Register as well as for the sampling frames.
4. <i>Detailed concordance exists between national classifications systems and the corresponding European systems;</i>	<p>There is a high and detailed concordance between the Bosnia-Herzegovina and recommended European classifications systems.</p> <p><u>Future activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is necessary to introduce new classifications and nomenclatures into the national classifications system, which are primarily:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The nomenclature of territorial statistical units in accordance with the NUTS regulation;</li> <li>b) There is an urgent need for BHAS to begin, in cooperation with the Institute for Statistics of the Federation/the Institute for Statistics of the RS and other relevant authorities the process of defining a register of territorial units;</li> <li>c) Classification of institutional sectors.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5. <i>Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited;</i>	In new employments, it is necessary to take strict care of the adequacy of academic disciplines and to give priority to the candidates with knowledge in the fields of mathematics, statistics and information science.
6. <i>Statistical authorities implement a policy of continuous vocational training for their staff;</i>	Continuation and improvement of the present good practice.
7. <i>Co-operation with the scientific community is organised to improve methodology, the effectiveness of the methods implemented and to promote better tools when feasible.</i>	The level of cooperation with the scientific community so far has not been sufficient. It is necessary to improve and develop continued cooperation with researchers and universities.

<sup>13</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 7 of the Code**

**c. Appropriate statistical procedures<sup>14</sup>**

*Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, underpin quality statistics.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>When European Statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for administrative purposes are a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes;</i>	See the <a href="#">„Instruction on the Procedure for Taking Over Data from Administrative Sources“</a> . <i>Future activities:</i> – To modify (amend) the article in the proposed amendment to the Law on Statistics which refers to administrative sources. A new proposal, i.e. the amendment to this Article, should read as follows: “The Agency shall take part in all activities regarding the establishment of the new or changing the present administrative sources of data or in the activities regarding the sources whose data are based on permanent monitoring and observation and which are also relevant for the official statistics.” Then, “the Agency may modify the data obtained through statistical surveys and from administrative and other sources in order to harmonise them with official definitions, classifications and other standards which are applied in the official statistical system and in international statistical practice”.
2. <i>In the case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection;</i>	Continuation and improvement of the present good practice.
3. <i>Survey designs, sample selections and estimation methods are well based and regularly reviewed and revised as required;</i>	Continuation and improvement of the present good practice.
4. <i>Data collection, data entry, and coding are routinely monitored and revised as required;</i>	Continuation and improvement of the present good practice.
5. <i>Appropriate editing and imputation methods are used and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required</i>	Establishment of clear procedures for computer editing and imputation – 2012.
6. <i>Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures;</i>	Development of the <a href="#">“Guidelines for Data Revisions in the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina”</a> which will regulate the procedures to be implemented in the event of planned and unplanned data revisions. The goal of the Guidelines is to define the principles and rules of data revisions in the Agency.
7. <i>Statistical authorities are involved in the design of administrative data in order to make administrative data more suitable for statistical purposes;</i>	See activity under 4c1.
8. <i>Agreements are made with owners of statistical data which set out their shared commitment to the use of these data for statistical purposes;</i>	The Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding signed with the owners of administrative data clearly emphasize and confirm the joint commitment to the use of these data for statistical purposes.
9. <i>Statistical authorities co-operate with owners of administrative data in assuring data quality.</i>	See activity under 4c1.

<sup>14</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 8 of the Code**



**d. Cost-effectiveness<sup>15</sup>**

*Resources are used effectively.*

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>Internal and independent external measures monitor the statistical authority's use of resources;</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The procedure for deployment and use of human and financial resources clearly defined in internal and external measures for control (revisions);</li> <li>- The Agency monitors regularly, via monthly business reports, the performance of individual statistical services and at least once a year also the performance of each employee.</li> </ul> <p><u>Future activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of a joint system of the use of resources (financial and human) and burden on respondents (data providers) per statistical surveys, i.e. to conduct a cost-benefit analysis based on the EU methodology – 2012-2014.</li> </ul>
2. <i>The productivity potential of information and communications technology is being optimised for data collection, processing and dissemination;</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To improve the currently weak links within the statistical system and to conduct the appropriate training of the staff.</li> <li>- To work on automation of the processes and data coding, editing and validation techniques - 2012-2014.</li> </ul>
3. <i>Proactive efforts are made to improve the statistical potential of administrative data and to limit recourse to direct surveys;</i>	Investing additional efforts in order to impact on the statistical potential of administrative records (i.e. on the form and content of information collected for administrative purposes, as well as the use of classifications in the administrative collections of data and records).
4. <i>Statistical authorities promote and implement standardised solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency.</i>	See activity under 4d1.

## 5 Commitment of the entire staff to the values of quality, lifelong learning and self-development

The sub-goals within this goal are:

- a. Promotion of the quality concept and of the importance of the Code of Practice covers the entire staff**
- b. The staff are systematically trained for their field of work or for a possible new workplace with the intention to provide better quality of all aspects of the process of statistical surveys**
- c. Monitoring the development in statistical methodology and exchange of good practice is enabled for the entire staff in a simple way**

### a) Promotion of the quality concept and of the importance of the Code covers the entire staff

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>The staff know the basic quality concepts according to the European definition.</i>	Informing, via the Intranet site and posting periodic lectures on the quality concept in ESS, as well as publication of Quality Reports for Statistical Surveys.

<sup>15</sup> N.B. – in accordance with **Principle 10 of the Code**

2. <i>The staff are aware of the importance of the Code of Conduct in their everyday work.</i>	Activities toward attaining this goal imply continued training of the staff on the quality concept of the Code of Practice and the importance of the Code in their everyday work.
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**b) The staff are systematically trained for their field of work or for a possible new workplace with the intention to provide better quality of all aspects of the process of statistical surveys.**

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>The staff participate in relevant international courses and consultations and communicate with colleagues at international level with the intention to learn from the best and to improve their expertise and knowledge.</i>	Continuation of current activities – presence at various seminars, workshops and exchange of experiences with colleagues from statistical offices in other countries.
2. <i>Systematic self-learning for the field of statistics is enabled at the workplace and is stimulated.</i>	To request and stimulate continued professional development of the staff.

**c) Monitoring the development in statistical methodology and exchange of good practices is enabled for the entire staff in a simple way.**

Indicator	Activity
1. <i>Introduction of the best practices within the statistical offices is enabled in a simple way.</i>	Establishment of the appropriate Intranet site of the Agency which will be used for reporting on the best professional practices and exchange of experiences of methodologists.
2. <i>The staff participate in relevant international courses and consultations and communicate with colleagues at international level with the intention to learn from the best and to improve their expertise and knowledge.</i>	Continuation of current activities – presence at various seminars, workshops and exchange of experiences with colleagues from statistical offices in other countries.

# European Statistics Code of Practice

## Preamble

### THE VISION OF THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM<sup>1</sup>

*“The European Statistical System will be a world leader in statistical information services and the most important provider for the European Union and its Member States. Based on scientific principles and methods, the European Statistical System will offer and continuously improve a programme of harmonised European statistics that constitutes an essential basis for democratic processes and progress in society.”*

### THE MISSION OF THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM

*“We provide the European Union, the world and the public with independent high quality information on the economy and society on European, national and regional levels and make the information available to everyone for decision-making purposes, research and debate.”*

To realize this mission and vision, the members of the European Statistical System strive for joint cooperation and continuous interaction with users according to the Principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice and general quality management principles, including commitment of leadership, partnership, staff satisfaction and continuous improvement, in addition to integration and harmonization.

### THE EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE

The European Statistics Code of Practice is based on 15 Principles covering the institutional environment, the statistical production processes and the output of statistics. A set of indicators of good practice for each of the Principles provides a reference for reviewing the implementation of the Code. The quality criteria for European Statistics are defined in European Statistical Law<sup>2</sup>.

Statistical authorities<sup>3</sup>, comprising the Commission (Eurostat), National Statistical Institutes and other national authorities responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics<sup>4</sup>, together with governments, ministries and the European Council, commit themselves to adhere to the Code.

The Principles of the Code of Practice, together with the general quality management principles, represent a common quality framework in the European Statistical System.

### Institutional environment

Institutional and organisational factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of a statistical authority developing, producing and disseminating European Statistics. The relevant issues are professional independence, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity.

## Principle 1: Professional independence

*Professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European Statistics.*

### Indicators:

1.1 The independence of the national Statistical Institutes and Eurostat from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating official statistics is specified in law and assured for other statistical authorities;

1.2 The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. They are of the highest professional calibre;

1.3 The Heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have responsibility for ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner;

1.4 The Heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases;

1.5 The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.

1.6 Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements;

1.7 The heads of National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities comment publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of official statistics – as far as considered suitable;

1.8 The appointment of the heads of National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat and, where appropriate, of other statistical authorities, is based on professional competence only. The reasons on the basis of which the incumbency can be terminated are specified in the legal framework. These cannot include reasons compromising professional or scientific independence.

## Principle 2: Mandate for data collection

*Statistical authorities must have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities*

### Indicators

2.1 The mandate of the statistical authorities to collect information for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics is specified in law;

2.2 The statistical authorities are allowed by law to use administrative data for statistical purposes;

2.3 On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authorities may compel response to statistical surveys.

### Principle 3: Adequacy of resources

*The resources available to statistical authorities are sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.*

#### Indicators

- 3.1 Staff, financial and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current statistical needs;
- 3.2 The scope, detail and cost of statistics are commensurate with needs;
- 3.3 Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new statistics against their cost;
- 3.4 Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.

### Principle 4: Commitment to quality

*Statistical authorities are committed to quality. They systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality.*

#### Indicators

- 4.1 Quality policy is defined and made available to the public. An organizational structure and tools are in place to deal with quality management;
- 4.2 Procedures are in place to plan and monitor the quality of the statistical production process;
- 4.3 Product quality is regularly monitored, assessed with regard to possible trade-offs, and reported according to the quality criteria for European Statistics;
- 4.4 There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using also external experts where appropriate.

### Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality

*The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes are absolutely guaranteed.*

#### Indicators

- 5.1 Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law;
- 5.2 Staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment;
- 5.3 Penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality;
- 5.4 Guidelines and instructions are provided to staff on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. The confidentiality policy is made known to the public;
- 5.5 Physical, technological and organizational provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases;
- 5.6 Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.

## Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity

*Statistical authorities develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent way in which all users are treated equitably.*

### Indicators

- 6.1 Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations
- 6.2 Choices of sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are informed by statistical considerations;
- 6.3 Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised;
- 6.4 Information on the methods and procedures used is publicly available;
- 6.5 Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced;
- 6.6 Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies;
- 6.7 All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicized. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality;
- 6.8 Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.

## Statistical processes

European and other international standards, guidelines and good practices are fully observed in the processes used by the statistical authorities to organise, collect, process and disseminate European Statistics. The credibility of the statistics is enhanced by a reputation for good management and efficiency. The relevant aspects are sound methodology, appropriate statistical procedures, nonexcessive burden on respondents and cost effectiveness.

## Principle 7: Sound methodology

*Sound methodology underpins quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.*

### Indicators

- 7.1 The overall methodological framework used for European Statistics follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices;
- 7.2 Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority;
- 7.3 The business register and the frame for population surveys are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to ensure high quality;

- 7.4 Detailed concordance exists between national classifications systems and the corresponding European systems;
- 7.5 Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited;
- 7.6 Statistical authorities implement a policy of continuous vocational training for their staff;
- 7.7 Co-operation with the scientific community is organised to improve methodology, the effectiveness of the methods implemented and to promote better tools when feasible.

### Principle 8: Appropriate statistical procedures

*Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, underpin quality statistics.*

#### Indicators

- 8.1 When European Statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for administrative purposes are a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes;
- 8.2 In the case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection;
- 8.3 Survey designs, sample selections and estimation methods are well based and regularly reviewed and revised as required;
- 8.4 Data collection, data entry, and coding are routinely monitored and revised as required;
- 8.5 Appropriate editing and imputation methods are used and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required;
- 8.6 Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures;
- 8.7 Statistical authorities are involved in the design of administrative data in order to make administrative data more suitable for statistical purposes;
- 8.8 Agreements are made with owners of statistical data which set out their shared commitment to the use of these data for statistical purposes;
- 8.9 Statistical authorities co-operate with owners of administrative data in assuring data quality.

### Principle 9: Non-excessive burden on respondents

*The reporting burden is proportionate to the needs of the users and is not excessive for respondents. The statistical authorities monitor the response burden and set targets for its reduction over time.*

#### Indicators

- 9.1 The range and detail of European Statistics demands is limited to what is absolutely necessary;
- 9.2 The reporting burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations;
- 9.3 The information sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used, where possible, to facilitate its return;
- 9.4 Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information;
- 9.5 Data sharing within statistical authorities is generalised in order to avoid multiplication of surveys;

9.6 Statistical authorities promote measures that enable the linking of data sources in order to reduce reporting burden.

### Principle 10: Cost-effectiveness

*Resources are used effectively.*

Indicators

10.1 Internal and independent external measures monitor the statistical authority's use of resources

10.2 The productivity potential of information and communications technology is being optimised for data collection, processing and dissemination;

10.3 Proactive efforts are made to improve the statistical potential of administrative data and to limit recourse to direct surveys;

10.4 Statistical authorities promote and implement standardised solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency.

### Statistical Output

Available statistics meet users' needs. Statistics comply with the European standards and serve the needs of European institutions, governments, research institutions, business concerns and the public generally. The important issues concern the extent to which the statistics are relevant, accurate and reliable, timely, coherent, comparable across regions and countries, and readily accessible by users.

### Principle 11: Relevance

*European Statistics meet the needs of users.*

Indicators

11.1 Process are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and consider their emerging needs and priorities;

11.2 Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme;

11.3 User satisfaction is monitored on a regular basis and is systematically followed up.

### Principle 12: Accuracy and reliability

*European Statistics accurately and reliably portray reality.*

Indicators

12.1 Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated;

12.2 Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented according to the European standards;

12.3 Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve statistical processes.

### Principle 13: Timeliness and punctuality

*European Statistics are released in a timely manner and disseminated in a punctual manner.*



## Indicators

- 13.1 Timeliness meets European and other international release standards;
- 13.2 A standard daily time for the release of statistics is made public;
- 13.3 The periodicity of statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible;
- 13.4 Divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set;
- 13.5 Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate accuracy can be released when considered useful.

**Principle 14: Coherence and comparability**

*European Statistics are consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it is possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.*

## Indicators

- 14.1 Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (i.e. arithmetic and accounting identities observed);
- 14.2 Statistics are comparable over a reasonable period of time;
- 14.3 Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources;
- 14.4 Statistics from the different sources and of different periodicity are compared and reconciled;
- 14.5 Cross-national comparability of the data is ensured within the European Statistical System through periodical exchanges between the European Statistical System and other statistical systems. Methodological studies are carried out in close co-operation between the Member States and Eurostat.

**Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity**

*European Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.*

## Indicators

- 15.1 Statistics and the corresponding metadata are presented, and archived, in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons;
- 15.2 Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy;
- 15.3 Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and the public is informed;
- 15.4 Access to microdata is allowed for research purposes and is subject to specific rules or protocols;
- 15.5 Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems;
- 15.6 Users are kept informed about the methodology of statistical processes including the use of administrative data;
- 15.7 Users are kept informed about the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the quality criteria for European Statistics.