



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Swiss Confederation

**Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO)**

# **PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND *SWISS FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE* (*SFSO*) IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Peer reviewers' recommendations and improvement actions in response to the recommendations

### *ISSUE 1: INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP OF THE SWISS NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM*

#### **Recommendation 1:**

The Swiss legislative authorities should amend the relevant legal provisions to assign to the Director General of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the heads of the Other National Authorities producing European statistics the responsibility of deciding on statistical methods and standards and the content and timing of statistical releases. The Ordinance on the Conduct of Federal Statistical Surveys should include the list of statistical outputs without defining methodological characteristics (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 1.4, 6.1 and 6.2).

#### **Current situation:**

The Federal Statistics Act of 9 October 1992 (FStatA), art. 2 and 3, states clearly that all parties involved in federal statistics shall produce representative results on the status and development of the population, economy, society, education, research, territory and environment in Switzerland in an independent, professional manner. Furthermore, article 45 of the Government and Administration Organisation Act of 21 March 1997 (GAOA) stipulates that the directors of groups and offices are responsible to their superiors for the management of the administrative units of which they are placed in charge and for the completion of the tasks entrusted to them. Firstly, these provisions define the responsibilities of directors and secondly they guarantee the latter's professional independence in determining methods.

The newly integrated statistics production is not yet properly described in the Ordinance on Federal Statistics. An improved representation is planned by the SFSO in the context of a total revision of the Ordinance.

#### **Improvement action**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is envisaged.

#### **Timeline:**

N. A.

**Recommendation 2:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should ensure that confidential information collected for statistical purposes, whether from administrative sources or from surveys, should not be shared for administrative purposes. The current statistical regulation stipulating the use of statistical data for administrative purposes should be reviewed accordingly. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should operate administrative and statistical registers separately (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 5).

**Current situation:**

Pursuant to Art. 14 para. 1 FStatA, data collected or passed on for statistical purposes may not be used for other purposes, unless a Federal Law otherwise expressly requests another usage or the concerned party agrees to such usage in writing. The Act must stipulate exceptions. These exceptions are applied in order to keep the burden on respondents to a minimum and to enable the administration to function efficiently. The SFSO keeps registers in close cooperation with the cantons, primarily as an aid for statistical purposes and for research and planning. The SFSO makes data from the registers available for administrative purposes only on the strength of a legal basis. The SFSO and other producers of federal statistics are bound by very strict regulations on data protection. Furthermore, they are subject to monitoring by the Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner. Every measure has been taken, therefore, to ensure use of data in compliance with data protection.

**Improvement action**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office has a divergent view on this recommendation and therefore no improvement action is envisaged.

**Timeline:**

N. A.

**Recommendation 3:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should regularly compile and publish an annual statistical work programme covering statistical surveys and other statistical activities of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and Other National Authorities producing European statistics. Annual progress reports should also be published (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.5, Coordination).

**Current situation:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSSO) already publishes a multi-annual work programme, which represents the work programme of the SFSSO and ONAs for four years. Moreover, with the new multi-annual work programme for the years 2016 - 2019, the SFSSO and the ONAs will also begin to compile and publish an annual work programme and an annual progress report.

**Improvement action 3: *Publication of an annual work programme and a progress report***

On the basis of the new multi-annual work programme, the SFSSO will create and publish an annual work programme and progress reports for the SFSSO and the ONAs statistical activities.

**Timeline:**

2Q 2016: Publishing of the first annual work programme.

1Q 2017: Publishing of the first progress report.

**Recommendation 4:**

The Swiss Federal Department for Home Affairs and other institutions governing the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should review the instruments defining the responsibilities of the heads of statistical authorities to ensure that they specifically stipulate the responsibility of deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures. The criteria for the appointment of heads of statistical authorities producing European statistics should include requirements for professional competence and experience (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 1.4 and 1.8).

**Current situation:**

The definition of the requirements of a federal office's director is the responsibility of the relevant department. The definition of the requirements of statistical authorities regarding the parties involved in federal statistics is the responsibility of the superordinate offices and departments.

**Improvement action 4: *Responsibility of the SFSO's head***

The SFSO has already examined this request and has come to the conclusion that the legal basis is sufficiently defined to meet the requirements. However, in the case of a future job advertisement, the recommendation will be re-examined.

**Timeline:**

The SFSO examined the situation in July 2015 and concluded that the legal basis does not need revision as the methodological independence of the SFSO and federal statistics is sufficiently anchored. However, these legal basis requirements will be explicitly listed in future job descriptions.

## ***Issue 2: Enhancement of the quality management system***

### **Recommendation 5:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should update its Quality Management Manual ensuring its completeness with regard to the European statistics Code of Practice and its uniform application across the organisation (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.2).

### **Current situation:**

The actual quality management handbook of the SFSO was released in 2003. Although, it contains many aspects relating to the CoP as well as some guidelines on how to ensure their implementation, its wording, structure and completeness no longer fully satisfies the FSO's needs and guarantees full compliance with the CoP. In this context, a project already has been launched in order to revise and improve this document as well as the mechanisms that allow a better coordinated quality management system in the FSO. Furthermore, the SFSO is currently using the enterprise register handbook which contains a chapter on equality, written by the FSO. This handbook was approved in spring this year by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES).

### **Improvement action 5: *Revision of the SFSO's quality management handbook***

The SFSO will revise its quality management handbook and make it compliant with the CoP. This document will also include a description of meta-processes to plan and harmonise its application, processes such as quality reviews, process documentation and risk management.

In this context, the SFSO will also create its own quality assurance framework for the production of statistics. This document will be based on both the GSBPM (Generic Statistical Business Process Model) and the QAF (Quality Assurance Framework). Some other requirements from the Quality Performance Indicator handbook (QPI) and Euro SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS) / Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) will also be integrated.

### **Timeline:**

2Q 2016: Validation of the revised quality management handbook by the board of management;

2Q 2016: Validation of the SFSO quality assurance framework handbook;

4Q 2017: First evaluation by the board of management of the SFSO of the implementation of these documents and the mechanisms (such as quality reviews) that are linked to them.

**Recommendation 6:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should make their quality policies publicly available (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.1).

**Current situation:**

The actual SFSO quality policy dates from 2010. In this context, a project has already been launched in order to revise and improve the way quality management is ensured in the FSO. A part of this project will consist in revising the SFSO quality policy and publishing it on its Internet page.

**Improvement action 6: *Revision of the SFSO's quality policy***

The SFSO will revise its quality policy and publish it on its Internet page. In addition, the SFSO will ask the ONAs to revise their own quality policies and to also publish these on the internet.

**Timeline:**

2Q 2016: Validation of the SFSO revised quality policy by the SFSO board of management.

2Q 2016: Publication of the SFSO revised quality policy.

4Q 2016: The SFSO will organise a meeting with the ONAs and discuss the implementation of quality policies for the ONAs.

4Q 2017: The SFSO will organise a meeting and invite the ONAs to present their quality policies and to discuss further actions.

**Recommendation 7:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should systematise and standardise their quality assurance procedures, including regular quality reviews, and also use external experts, where appropriate (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.2 and 4.4).

**Current situation:**

The whole of the FSO's statistical production benefits from many quality assurance and management mechanisms, ensuring reliable results. However, the FSO's current quality management system is assured at the level of each production unit, making it difficult to oversee, to coordinate and to standardise. In this context, a project has already been launched in order to revise and improve the quality management system of the FSO. One part of this work will consist in introducing standardised quality reviews. In addition to this, the SFSO belongs to the Wiesbaden Group which incorporates all countries managing business registers. Concrete exchanges take place on best practice in the keeping of quality registers. The SFSO also wishes to raise awareness of this subject among ONAs.

**Improvement action 7: *Implementation of quality reviews and quality management tools in the SFSO***

In this context, the SFSO will create its own quality assurance framework for the production of statistics. This document will be based on both the GSBPM (Generic Statistical Business Process Model) and the QAF (Quality Assurance Framework). Some other requirements from the Quality Performance Indicator handbook (QPI) and Euro SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS)/Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) will also be integrated.

The SFSO will also introduce regular quality reviews. There will be about 3 to 5 centralised quality reviews each year. The results of these reviews will be presented and discussed by the SFSO board of management.

To also improve the systematisation and standardisation of the quality measures among the ONAs, the SFSO will also appoint a corresponding work group to examine the topic in further detail.

**Timeline:**

2Q 2016: Validation of the SFSO quality assurance framework handbook and the standardised quality review process (which will be described in detail in the SFSO revised quality management handbook) by the board of management;

2Q 2016: Identification and decision on a quality review programme for 2016 with the SFSO board of management;

4Q 2016: Implementation of three to five quality reviews;

4Q 2016: Presentation and discussion of the results of this first exercise with the SFSO board of management;

4Q 2016: Identification and decision on a quality review programme for 2017 with the SFSO board of management;

4Q 2016: The SFSO will organise a meeting with the ONAs and discuss the quality assurance procedures and possible improvements in this field;

4Q 2017 Meeting with the ONAs concerning an intermediate evaluation of its measures in this area and concerning the definition of new measures;

4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and concerning the definition of new measures.

**Recommendation 8:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should set a standard for statistics quality reports consistent with the European Statistical System Standard for Quality Reports Structure and promote their consistent application across all the domains of official statistics produced by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should produce and publish detailed and user-orientated quality reports (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3, 12.2 and 15.7).

**Current situation:**

At the moment, in Switzerland only European statistics are required to establish producer oriented quality reports for each statistic produced. The SFSO is willing to do more in this domain and also wants to enlarge its implementation for its major national statistics. The SFSO already publishes a short version of user-oriented quality reports for each statistic on its website called overviews. The SFSO is also willing to revise these reports. The SFSO also wishes to raise awareness of this subject among ONAs.

**Improvement action 8: *Quality reports for the SFSO's major statistics***

The SFSO will define standardised templates for quality reports based on the ESMS and introduce the producer oriented quality reports also for its major statistics. The importance of producing such reports is further enhanced in the newly created SFSO quality assurance handbook that will clearly state that user-oriented and detailed reports should be established in line with Eurostat standards.

**Timeline:**

2Q 2016: Validation of the SFSO quality assurance framework handbook which includes requirements on the production of quality reports based on Eurostat standards.

4Q 2016: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion on using the SFSO templates for quality reports.

4Q 2017: Assessment of the current situation in this field with the board of management and establishment of a work programme for a wider production of these reports in the FSO.

4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and concerning the definition of new measures.

4Q 2019: Assessment of the evolution of the work programme in this field with the board of management.

**Recommendation 9:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should systematically analyse revisions of statistics to help improve methods and processes and publish the results of revision analyses (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 12.3).

**Current situation:**

The FSO's current revision and amendment policy dates from 2010. In the case of statistical results, the need for correction may arise following publication. The framework conditions and the reasons for such measures are very varied and diverse. The policy on the correction of statistical events presents the principles and regulations that enable a coordinated approach between production units. A revision analysis is also often carried out during revision projects. However, this does not happen systematically. Furthermore, the results are not generally published. To provide statistical users additional clarity and transparency regarding when, how and why revisions and corrections are made, the SFSO is prepared to publish its revision analyses in the future and to modify its policy in this regard accordingly.

**Improvement action 9: *Statistics revision analysis***

Whenever statistics are revised and further developed, a revision analysis should also be carried out in the future. For this purpose, the SFSO will include a corresponding chapter in the SFSO project management handbook.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2016: Review of existing revision and reporting policy.

4Q 2017: Integration of the revision analysis requirement into the FSO's project management handbook.

4Q 2017: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion of the SFSO revision and reporting policy.

4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and concerning the definition of new measures.

4Q 2018: Assessment of the evolution of the new policy in this field with the board of management.

### ***ISSUE 3: METHODOLOGY AND QUALITY OF STATISTICAL PRODUCTION PROCESSES***

#### **Recommendation 10:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should set a standard for methodological documentation and ensure its office-wide application. It should also systematically document and publish key aspects of statistical production processes in its quality reports. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.4 and 7.1).

#### **Current situation:**

The SFSO already publishes methodological reports for numerous statistics. These reports describe the various methods developed that are used to produce these statistics. They handle very diverse methodological aspects and are therefore not completely standardised. The SFSO is willing to further improve this standardisation where possible.

#### **Improvement action 10: *Standard template for methodological reports***

The SFSO will make an inventory of methodological reports and define a standard for future reports. It will start documenting and publishing key aspects of statistical production processes in its quality reports.

#### **Timeline:**

4Q 2016: Inventory of the methodological and quality reports and their structure.

4Q 2017: Definition of a new standard for methodological reports.

4Q 2018: Assessment of the- application of the new methodological documentation with the board of management.

**Recommendation 11:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should develop and apply consistent techniques and tools for statistical disclosure protection in published statistics, ensuring that the risk of identification of individuals is minimised, and promote the use of such tools among all Swiss producers of European statistics. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should also systematically record access logs and update application access rights (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 5.4 and 5.5).

**Current situation:**

The SFSO has carried out some tests using disclosure protection tools such as Mu-Argus and Tau-Argus. The processing steps of Mu-Argus are often directly implemented in SAS as in this way they can be more easily incorporated into the production process.

To systematically record access logs and update application access rights, the SFSO promotes the use of tools of the Statistical Information System (SIS). Furthermore, at the SFSO all statistics already have to create a report on protection needs analysis.

**Improvement action 11: *Standardised procedure for disclosure protection***

The SFSO will list the current production procedure to produce an overview of common practices. More formal tests will be defined based on this overview to establish a standardised procedure. The SFSO will further promote internal usage of tools for disclosure protection as well as SIS. The SFSO will also raise awareness among the ONAs regarding the possible use of such or similar tools through a workshop (or several workshops depending on the needs of the ONAs).

**Timeline:**

4Q 2016: Assessment of the current situation with the board of management and definition of further actions.

4Q 2017: Evaluation of formal tests for a standardised procedure.

4Q 2018: Presentation of these new instruments to the ONAs

## Recommendation 12:

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should further integrate and standardise administrative data processing, ensuring the use of common tools, non-duplication of tasks and wider reuse of administrative data. Feedback about data quality should be delivered while respecting statistical confidentiality (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 8.1, 8.9 and 9.4).

### Current situation:

Between 2008 and 2011, the SFSO carried out several modernisation programmes aimed at the introduction of an integrated statistical production with harmonised production processes and the reuse of data already collected. These programmes enabled data to be harmonised, standardised and reused for large scale statistics (register-based Population Census, register-based Enterprise Census) and also to develop reusable IT components. The SFSO also wishes to continue these important activities in the future.

### Improvement actions 12.1 to 12.5: Wider reuse of administrative data and common IT tools

1. Harmonisation of variable definitions by using the metadata system (SMS) whenever possible.
2. Consistent use of reusable IT components by IT applications used for statistical production.
3. Introduction of "delivery" quality report (completeness, consistency....) for multi-establishment enterprises and public authorities.
4. Consistent use of data matching procedures and processes (processing regulations) for statistical production.
5. Introduction of "register and administrative data" quality reports (completeness, consistency) for statistical production.

### Timeline:

1. **4Q 2017:** The initial stage of the harmonisation process concerns the cross-domain variables (as in the SDMX content-oriented guidelines) and especially the variables included in the single integrated metadata structure (SIMS, incl. ESMS and ESQRS) reports. **4Q 2018:** Progress report to the board of management.
2. **2Q 2018:** The reutilisation of generic cross-cutting IT components is already a fact, when talking about the statistical metadata system (SMS), data base scripts and infrastructure (MONTEROSA), data anonymisation and transformation components (INFA), data collection tools (SDAP / DSM) and projects collaboration systems (JIRA / Confluence) to cite but a few. An increasing number of new or updated statistical applications are beginning to use these transversal IT services. New reusable IT components are planned as well, where some of them are already under development. **4Q 2019:** Progress report to the board of management.
3. **2Q 2018:** Proof of concept for standardised "delivery" quality reports for public authorities and multi-establishment enterprises is completed. Roadmap for the implementation is completed. **4Q 2019:** Progress report to the board of management.
4. **2Q 2018:** Guidelines for standardised data matching procedures at SFSO are completed. Roadmap for an incremental implementation in all statistical activities of the SFSO is completed. **4Q 2019:** Progress report to the board of management.
5. **4Q 2018:** Proof of concept for standardised "register and administrative data" quality reports for statistical production is completed. Roadmap for the general implementation at SFSO is completed. **4Q 2019:** Progress report to the board of management.

**Recommendation 13:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should introduce regular response burden measurement across statistical domains (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 9.2).

**Current situation:**

A detailed measurement of the administrative burden in economic statistics was carried out on the FSO's behalf in 2013.

**Improvement action 13: *Response burden measurement***

The SFSO is working on a proposal to periodically measure the burden. The proposal will be consolidated following a pilot phase. Subsequently, the introduction will be planned.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2016: Development of a corresponding concept.

4Q 2017: Implementation and introduction.

4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the use of the burden measurement concept.

4Q 2018: Assessment of the current situation with the board of management and definition of further actions.

2Q 2019: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and concerning the definition of new measures.

**Recommendation 14:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should facilitate data sharing between producers of statistics, by developing technical tools and improving documentation of repositories for production and archived data. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should assess existing legal provisions, which restrict data sharing for European statistics and initiate respective amendments in the law (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 9.5).

**Current situation:**

Data exchange and data sharing are important themes for the FSO. For this reason, the SFSO is working on a study regarding remote access. On the basis of this study, the SFSO will then define and implement further measures.

Subsequently, the SFSO will consider together with the ONAs how the data exchange between the parties involved in official statistics in Switzerland could be simplified.

**Improvement action 14: *Data sharing between Swiss producers of national statistics***

The SFSO is working on a remote access study which will be finished at the end of 2016.

The SFSO will then meet the parties involved in official statistics in Switzerland to continue pursuing the topic of data exchange.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2016: Remote access study and definition of further measures are finished.

4Q 2017: Start of discussion and definition of measures with the parties involved in Switzerland's official statistics in order to simplify data exchange. The timeline of this action will be updated during the peer review follow-up process.

**Recommendation 15:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should speed up further integration of its Statistical Information System, aiming to reduce the variety of information technology tools and to secure necessary resources. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 10.2).

**Current situation:**

The IT Strategy plan (SIP) and the IT service catalogue of the SFSO define the activities which promote and support the principles of SIS (Statistical Information System). Synergies between the Confederation, the cantons and local authorities are planned in the area of analysis (standard software) in particular with regard to education and training, best practices and license costs.

**Improvement action 15: *Consolidation of the FSO's statistical information system (SIS)***

The SFSO launched a Change Program to deploy the SIP (IT Strategy Plan). The program contains activities and milestones to standardise and to manage the lifecycle of the IT landscape (application portfolio) with the aim of achieving the consolidation of SIS.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2019: Report on the basis of the roadmap of SIP for the next legislature

The SIP 2016-19 is not yet finished and approved but will be in August 2016 and will contain intermediate milestones. The timeline of this action will be updated during the peer review follow-up process on the basis of this new information.

**Recommendation 16:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should further strengthen continuous vocational training of their staff by supporting individual employee career plans. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 7.6).

**Current situation:**

The SFSO wishes to introduce a professional path in this context. The initial preparatory work for designing a professional path has already been carried out.

**Improvement action 16: *Concept and measures for professional paths***

Development of a concept, presentation and approval in the board of management, implementation/introduction of professional paths at the FSO.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2016: Approval of the concept within the board of management.

4Q 2017: Implementation/introduction of the concept in the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

2Q 2018: Presentation of the concept and definition of measures with the other parties involved in official statistics.

4Q 2018: Assessment of the situation with the board of management and definition of further actions.

4Q 2019: Assessment of the situation with the board of management and definition of further actions.

## ***ISSUE 4: STRENGTHENING USER ORIENTATION***

### **Recommendation 17:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should extend its arrangements for user consultation and feedback by considering the establishment of a user advisory body and by establishing regular, effective, user-satisfaction surveys. These arrangements should take into account, in respect of Swiss official statistics, lessons learnt from international best practice (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.3, 11.1 and 11.3).

### **Current situation:**

The SFSO has already carried out two customer satisfaction surveys in 2007 and 2009. In addition, the SFSO holds a number of meetings and coordination talks with important customers. Furthermore, the SFSO is currently working on a pilot project on stakeholder management. More comprehensive monitoring of media feedback and user statistics is also currently underway. However, in the future the SFSO would like to further focus on user consultation.

### **Improvement action 17: *Stakeholder management***

The SFSO is carrying out a pilot project on stakeholder management. This should result in the establishment of a plan with further measures, including an annual meeting with user advisory body, i.e. Commission for Federal Statistics. Official statistics wishes to consolidate its ongoing dialogue with its main users with the help of its institutionalised organisations (KBStat, FEDESTAT, REGIOSTAT and various expert groups). Furthermore, the SFSO also wishes to examine the possibility of automatised satisfaction surveys in different channels through an IT system that could allow the users of statistics to evaluate their satisfaction when being on the Swiss Statistics website.

### **Timeline:**

2Q 2016: Annual Colloquium with the main user groups (members of the Commission for Federal Statistics, FEDESTAT, REGIOSTAT and the chairmen of the experts groups).

4Q 2016: Results from the pilot project on stakeholder management and plan of measures for any customer survey are available.

2Q 2017: Annual Colloquium with the main user groups (members of the Commission for Federal Statistics, FEDESTAT, REGIOSTAT and the chairmen of the experts groups).

4Q 2017: Report examining the possibility of carrying out automated user satisfaction surveys with a plan of measures is available.

2Q 2018: Annual Colloquium with the main user groups (members of the Commission for Federal Statistics, FEDESTAT, REGIOSTAT and the chairmen of the experts groups).

2Q 2019: Annual Colloquium with the main user groups (members of the Commission for Federal Statistics, FEDESTAT, REGIOSTAT and the chairmen of the experts groups).

**Recommendation 18:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should increase activities to raise statistical awareness and ensure more widespread use of official statistics at local, regional and national level, working with partners such as the Swiss Statistical Society and academic institutions (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 11).

**Current situation:**

The SFSO has recognised the importance of raising statistical awareness and ensuring more widespread use of official statistics. For this reason, the SFSO would like to further optimise its dialogue with its stakeholders and its target group specific offerings.

**Improvement actions 18.1 to 18.3: *Regular meeting with main users and stakeholders***

- 1) Yearly-meetings with representatives from science, stakeholder associations, social partners, political parties.
- 2) Strengthen target group specific offers on the web and in direct contact.
- 3) Explanatory communication on the importance of statistics on different channels. This refers to the concept “Statistics counts” that implies a series of informative actions including the launch of a micro-website (linked to the Swiss Statistical website) to better explain the usefulness of statistics

**Timeline:**

- 1) 4Q 2017 Intermediate report concerning the regular meetings
- 2) 4Q 2017
- 3) 3Q 2015: Launch of the micro website “Statistics counts” linked to the Swiss statistics website

**Recommendation 19:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should re-examine the pre-release access arrangements, and define and publish the names of specific persons or their positions in organisations with pre-release access rights. They should also publicly explain the purpose of those pre-release accesses (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 6.7).

**Current situation:**

The SFSO already publishes all pre-release access agreements and the institutions concerned.

**Improvement action 19: *Pre-release access processes***

The SFSO will examine, further optimise and communicate to its partners the relevant processes.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2017: The SFSO will examine, further optimize and communicate to its partners the existing processes.

**Recommendation 20:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should establish arrangements to monitor the timeliness of European statistics, and develop quality indicators on timeliness for major statistical outputs (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 13.1.).

**Current situation:**

Timeliness is a crucial quality aspect for the SFSO and its production units. Although, it is not measured in a centralised way allowing an overview, it is intensively monitored at the level of production units. The SFSO wants to do more in this field especially in the way units monitor it.

**Improvement action 20: *Standard way to calculate timeliness***

The SFSO will introduce a standard way to calculate timeliness (actuality, punctuality) in its newly created quality assurance handbook. It will use the standard given in the ESS QPI handbook on this subject.

**Timeline:**

2Q 2016: Validation of the SFSO quality assurance framework handbook that will include requirements on the calculation of timeliness according to the ESS QPI handbook standards on this subject.

4Q 2016: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion of implementing the regulations.

4Q 2017: Assessment of the current situation in this field with the board of management and definition of further possible actions.

4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and concerning the definition of new measures.

**Recommendation 21:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should make public information on requests for custom-designed analysis which have been met and make the results available, either through publication or on request (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.3).

**Current situation:**

Due to the high demand for special analyses in the past, the SFSO developed Stat-tab, a tool that allows users to carry out their own defined evaluations. Subsequently, nowadays the SFSO rarely receives inquiries for special evaluations. With regard to the political agenda in Switzerland, the SFSO is working on special evaluations that it supplies to the general public at the same time free of charge.

**Improvement action 21: *Internal survey concerning the implementation of possible special evaluations***

The SFSO will carry out an internal survey over a two-year period concerning the implementation of possible special evaluations and then define appropriate measures. The SFSO will also make public information on requests for custom-designed analysis on the Swiss Statistics website.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2016: a web page is created on the Swiss Statistics website to inform users about custom-designed analysis possibilities.

4Q 2018: The SFSO works on a report concerning special evaluations with possible measures.

4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion of implementing the measures.

4Q 2019: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and the definition of new measures.

**Recommendation 22:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should provide users with standardised metadata according to the Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure Standard and make these metadata publicly available in user-friendly formats (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.2 and 15.5).

**Current situation:**

The Statistical Metadata System (SMS) of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office offers the possibility for the production units to create and manage statistical metadata reports according to the Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure Standard. However, for the time being, only certain statistics have created such reports in SMS. Other statistics create these reports directly in the National Reference Metadata Editor (NRME) tool of Eurostat. The metadata stored in SMS is internally accessible (for the office personnel only) via web services in SDMX-ML format or via HTML export directly from the internal metadata editor SAE. The metadata can also be duplicated in the Shared Service Zone (SSZ) for external access via web services only.

**Improvement actions 22.1 and 22.2: *Ensure more consistent use of the SFSO's Statistical Metadata System (SMS)***

1. In relation to recommendation 8, efforts will also be made to ensure more consistent use of the SMS tool in order to manage reports directly in this tool.
2. The SFSO will develop a new module (an extension to the Statistical Metadata System) which will allow for the Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure statistical metadata reports to be publicly available in user-friendly formats, e.g. a website similar to Eurostat website presenting the content of the report.

**Timeline:**

## 1) Improvement action 22.1

2Q 2017: assessment of the current situation in this field with the board of management and establishment of a work program for wider use of SMS in the FSO.

4Q 2017: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion of the topics and possible measures.

4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and the definition of new measures.

4Q 2019: Assessment of the evolution of the work program in this field with the board of management.

## 2) Improvement action 22.2

2Q 2016: Development of prototype.

1Q 2017: Put in production.

2Q 2017: Integration in SFSO website.

**Recommendation 23:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should make arrangements for routine archiving of statistics and metadata, and improve online accessibility of the archives (European statistics Code of Practice indicator 15.1).

**Current situation:**

Archiving is already fully implemented for all information assets on the website (publications, tables, charts, maps) of the SFSO but not yet for metadata as mentioned for example in the overviews (short version of user-oriented quality reports for each statistic published on FSO's website).

**Improvement action 23: *Measures for routine archiving of statistics and metadata***

The SFSO will establish a detailed inventory of the work that has already been carried out in this area and the remaining gaps and formulate corresponding measures on this basis.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2017: Inventory of the work carried out in this area and existing gaps.

4Q 2018: Definition of corresponding measures.

4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion of the topic and possible measures.

4Q 2019: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and the definition of new measures.

**Recommendation 24:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should improve the arrangements for safe access to microdata for research purposes, including remote access facilities, and clarify the arrangements for charges and discounts that are applicable to different types of users (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4).

**Current situation:**

Data exchange and data sharing are important themes for the FSO. For this reason, the SFSO is working on a study regarding remote access. On the basis of this study, the SFSO will then define and implement further measures (see also measures on recommendation 14).

The way in which fees are calculated is stipulated in the Fee Regulations that apply to the FSO. The SFSO plans to revise and simplify this directive.

**Improvement actions 24.1 to 24.4: *Improve the arrangements for safe access to microdata for research purposes***

- 1) The SFSO is working on a study on remote access which will be finished at the end of 2016.
- 2) Clarification and revision of the Ordinance on the Conduct of Federal Statistical Surveys together with the Open Government Data-strategy of the Federal Administration.
- 3) Meeting with the ONAs to discuss the topic.
- 4) Meeting with the ONAs to evaluate the topic.

**Timeline:**

- 1) 4Q 2016: Remote access study and definition of further measures are finished.
- 2) 4Q 2017: Revision of the schedule of fees.
- 3) 4Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion of the topic and possible measures.
- 4) 4Q 2019: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in this area and the definition of new measures.

**Recommendation 25:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should publish its dissemination policy and the policy on error treatment and revisions. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should harmonise their dissemination policies (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.6, 13.2, 15.1, Coordination).

**Current situation:**

The SFSO has a dissemination policy and a policy on error treatment and revisions, but they are not yet published on the SFSO website.

**Improvement action 25: *Publication of the SFSO's dissemination and error treatment and revision policies***

The SFSO will revise the dissemination policy and the policy on error treatment and revisions and publish them on the SFSO website.

**Timeline:**

2Q 2016: Publishing of the dissemination policy.

1Q 2017: Publishing of the policy on error treatment and revisions.

2Q 2017: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion of implementing the regulations in these areas.

2Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in the mentioned area and the definition of new measures.

**Recommendation 26:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office, in collaboration with the Other National Authorities producing European statistics, should use the release calendar facility on the Swiss Statistics website (the “Agenda”) to provide information on the release of all European statistics. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should include major revisions in its pre-announced release calendar (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.5 and 6.6).

**Current situation:**

The SFSO offers a release calendar on the Swiss Statistics website which could be used for all Other National Authorities producing European statistics. The SFSO will further promote the use of this calendar. In addition, the SFSO will also use the calendar to announce major revisions of statistics.

**Improvement actions 26.1 and 26.2: *Announcement of major revisions and integration of the ONA’s EU statistics on the Swiss Statistics website***

- 1) The SFSO will create a special filter to announce major revisions of statistics on the release calendar.
- 2) The SFSO will enter into talks with the ONAs to optimise the integration of their statistics into the Swiss Statistics website.

**Timeline:**

- 1) 4Q 2016: Creation of a special filter on the release calendar for major revisions.
- 2) 2Q 2017: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the discussion of implementing the regulations in these areas.  
2Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of its measures in the mentioned area and the definition of new measures.

**Recommendation 27:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities producing European statistics should communicate changes in release calendars in a transparent manner, with reasons for the changes. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should introduce mechanisms for monitoring and assessing the dissemination schedules of Swiss statistical authorities producing European statistics (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 13.4, Coordination).

**Current situation:**

The SFSO already publishes all amendments of statistical publication data that have been previously published.

**Improvement action 27: *Communication and monitoring of publication dates and changes***

The publication deadlines are announced in the agenda one month in advance. This procedure will also be discussed and, as far as possible, implemented by the ONAs.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2017: The existing process such as the announcement of publication dates in the agenda one month in advance is being examined and communicated to partners.

2Q 2018: Meeting with the ONAs concerning communication and monitoring of publications dates and changes and evaluation of their current situation.

2Q2019: Follow-up meeting with the ONAs concerning the measures they took in this context and possible potential for improvement.

**Recommendation 28:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should make the different language versions of the Swiss Statistics website consistent, ensuring that users of any language version are aware of all the content available on the website (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

**Current situation:**

All content on the website and in publications is available in German and French (the two major languages in Switzerland). The Italian and English sites are not exhaustive.

**Improvement action 28: *Consistency between the different language versions of the Swiss Statistics website***

The SFSO will create consistent links on the Italian and English pages to the German and French pages.

**Timeline:**

1Q 2017 : Consistent links on the Italian and English pages to the German and French page are created.

**Recommendation 29:**

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office should include all data produced by the Other National Authorities producing European statistics on the Swiss Statistics website. It should also include these data in the self-tabulation tool (STAT-TAB) (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.1, Coordination).

**Current situation:**

The Swiss Statistics website already offers the possibility for the ONAs to publish their statistics. The SFSO will enhance the use of the website and of Stat-Tab for the ONAs.

**Improvement action 29: *Enhance the use of the Swiss Statistics website for the dissemination of the ONAs statistics***

The SFSO will strive to enter into a dialogue with the ONAs and work on a proposed solution.

**Timeline:**

4Q 2017: Proposed solution with measures agreed with the ONAs, start of implementation.

4Q 2018 Meeting with the ONAs concerning an intermediate evaluation of the implementation of the measures and the definition of new measures

4Q 2019: Meeting with the ONAs concerning the evaluation of the implementation of the measures and the definition of new measures.