

PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND ITALIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

REDEFINE THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND STRENGTHEN ITS COORDINATION

- 1. The relevant Italian authorities should take measures to amend national statistical legislation with regard to the clarification of the structure of the National Statistical System, focusing on the main producers of official statistical information at national and European level. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.1, Coordination.)**

Current situation:

The National Statistical System (Sistan) is a network of National Statistical Authorities (public and private) that provides official statistics. It has been established by law (Legislative Decree 322/1989). The Sistan includes: the National Institute of Statistics (Istat); the agencies and public statistical information bodies; statistical offices of government departments and other public bodies, the local government offices, the regions and autonomous provinces, provinces, chambers of commerce, municipalities, individuals or associations, and statistical offices of other public and private institutions that perform functions of public interest. Sistan's bodies share the common goal of supplying the country and international bodies with official statistical information.

Currently the Sistan is composed by 3.435 statistical offices as a whole producing statistical information relevant at different level (territorial, national and European)

The National statistical Law establishes within Istat's duties to organize a National Conference of Statistics on a regular basis and at least once every two years. The Italian national conference of statistics has become a privileged venue to foster the dialogue between statistics and society and an important occasion to discuss relevant issue for the National Statistical System.

Improvement action 1 Initiatives to revise the National Statistical Law to rationalize the structure of Sistan

- a) Reflection on the revision of the structure of the National Statistical system at the National Conference of statistics;
- b) Definition of a proposal to build up exchange within the National Statistical System;
- c) Launch a dialogue with relevant institutional bodies striving for an improvement of the legislation;
- d) Definition of the final proposal for submission in the legislative and enactment process of the new law.

Timeline:

- a) I semester 2016
- b) II semester 2016
- c) I semester 2017
- d) II semester 2018

REDEFINE THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND STRENGTHEN ITS COORDINATION

2. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should focus its coordination activities within the National Statistical System on the institutions responsible for data collection and statistics production for national and European purposes. (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicator 2.1, Coordination.)

Current situation:

The Italian National Institute of Statistics – Istat-, is the coordinating body of the National Statistical System (Sistan) according to the National Statistical Law. The law assigns to Istat the task of coordinating all statistical activities of the bodies belonging to the System and envisaged in the National Statistical Programme and it also states that Istat has the task to develop statistical nomenclatures and methodologies for classifying and surveying the social, economic and demographic phenomena which are binding on all the bodies of the National Statistical System.

Furthermore Art. 2 of the *Italian Presidential Decree no.166 of 7 September 2010* lays down that Istat shall coordinate all statistical activities related to the development, elaboration and dissemination of European statistics. Istat coordination role also includes defining methods and formats that public authorities have to use for the exchange and use of statistical and financial information by electronic means, as well as coordinating modifications, integrations and new settings of the forms and information systems used by governments to collect information used or to be used for statistical purposes.

Istat establishes the Network of Other National Authorities - chaired by the President of Istat - aiming at reinforcing its coordination role, monitoring participation in European and international working groups and transmission of data to Eurostat and International organizations and implementation of the Italian Code for official statistics. Since 2010 Italy has adopted the Italian Code of Official Statistics mirroring the European CoP, in order to promote quality improvements of the statistics produced by the Italian National Statistical System; Istat carried out more than 100 peer reviews on the implementation of the Italian Code, including all current ONAs.

Improvement action 2 Further initiatives on coordination

- a) Organization of a new round of National Peer reviews coming back to the ONAs assessed in the previous round;
- b) Re-profile authorities responsible for the production of statistics relevant at European (ONAs), national and territorial level;
- c) Preliminary discussion of the results of the review at the National statistical Conference with the aim of profiling institutions responsible for data collection and statistics production for national and European purposes and enhancing the coordination role;
- d) Organization of meetings on a yearly basis with all ONAs on specific topics to enhance coordination activities;
- e) Development of a strategy to assess statistical processes and products of the ONAs by domain also to redefine the national Peer review approach.

Timeline:

- a) I semester 2017
- b) II semester 2017
- c) II semester 2017
- d) from II semester 2017
- e) II semester 2017

REDEFINE THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND STRENGTHEN ITS COORDINATION

3. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should elaborate a clear definition of the term “official statistics” to serve as a visible quality label certifying compliance with the European and national statistics Codes of Practice. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 1.1 and 2.1.)

Current situation:

The National Statistical Law clearly states that Official statistics information is provided to the country and to international organisations through the National Statistical System. The statistics surveys of public interest entrusted to the National Statistical System and the related targets are established by the National Statistical Programme. However the current statistical legislation does not provide a clear definition of official statistics. The revision of the National Statistical Law envisaged would include further elements for the formal definition of official statistics to be used as a label of quality within the National Statistical System

Improvement action 3 Elaboration on term Official statistics

- a) Preliminary reflection on the term “official statistics” within the National Conference of Statistics taking into account also the implementation of the revised European statistical law;
- b) Development of a list of requirements for official statistics;
- c) Consider these findings in the proposal for reviewing the national statistical law.

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2016
- b) II semester 2017
- c) II semester 2018

REDEFINE THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND STRENGTHEN ITS COORDINATION

4. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should enhance the transfer of its know-how and good practices in quality management to the Other National Authorities producing European statistics in order to improve the overall quality of official statistics in Italy. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4, Coordination.)

Current situation:

Istat has been carried out several activities of knowledge transfer to Sistan staff. They include both general initiatives (e.g. the Sistan Hub project and the sharing of the Istat Quality Guidelines for Statistical Processes) and targeted initiatives, as the transfer of the know-how on Istat auditing and self-assessment methods and tools to those bodies upon their request. In addition, since 2010 Italy has adopted the Italian Code of Official Statistics mirroring the European CoP, in order to promote quality improvements of the statistics produced by the Italian National Statistical System. The spread of best practices already adopted and the formulation of guidelines will support the offices by assessing their statistical competence and capacity to fulfil their tasks, in view of collaboration and mutual support among the subjects of the Sistan Network. Article 5 of the Italian Code of Official Statistics establishes that Istat has to monitor the application of the quality principles by the Sistan statistical offices. In order to achieve this target, Istat carried out more than 100 peer reviews.

Improvement action 4 Strengthening knowledge and know-how in the ONAs on quality management, measurement and assessment

- a) Definition of a targeted plan of initiatives for Sistan relevant bodies, focused on transferring knowledge and know-how on quality management, measurement and assessment;
- b) New round of national peer reviews to ONAs to monitor the implementation of the recommendations issued in the previous round;
- c) Start out tailor-made audits on specific products / processes through a pilot phase with a view to plan at least 3 yearly audits;
- d) Strengthen the training plan and skills with particular focus on quality management in the ONAs.

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2017
- b) II semester 2017
- c) II semester 2017
- d) II semester 2017

REDEFINE THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND STRENGTHEN ITS COORDINATION

5. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should enhance the role of the existing website of the National Statistical System to serve as a common dissemination portal for official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4 and 15, Coordination.)

Current situation:

The current Sistan Web portal already allows to access to Sistan products and in particular to products of statistical agencies belonging to the National Statistical System - through the dynamic content-based filtering system. Istat is developing Sistan Hub System consisting in the interconnection between local nodes (databases held by administrative institutions belonging to Sistan and Istat) through a central hub which in pull modality, at the request of a user by web interface, catches information where it resides and releases it to users in a single navigation environment. The machine-to-machine communication by web service occurs on the basis of SDMX exchange protocol. An essential part of the project is represented by quality governance which ensures that statistical information meets the standards of official statistics and, therefore, becomes integrated and readable in a single environment. The project is being developed in partnership between Istat, as coordinator, and other Sistan administrative institutions.

Improvement action 5 Development and implementation of Integrated dissemination system

Istat will develop a plan of initiatives for the interconnection and the integrated dissemination of statistics produced by Sistan bodies, as well as for guaranteeing the access to products of the National Statistical Program.

The system for the interconnection and the integrated dissemination of statistics will be implemented providing full coverage of sources.

Timeline:

II semester 2017

IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS

6. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should continue its modernisation programme and consider further alignment of its organisational structure with the Generic Statistical Business Process Model. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4 and 10.)

Current situation:

Since September 2014, Istat has been developing a Modernisation project pursuing the following objectives:

- boost the development and exploitation of methodological, technological and organisational innovation;
- enhance and reorient staff skills;
- develop a specific policy of corporate social responsibility;
- reduce response burden through the reuse of available data and information;
- widen the range of statistical information and services on offer sharing methods and tools to add value to data;
- improve the Institute performance, by reducing costs and response times, and the quality of statistical production and processes.

The analysis of international best practices (e.g. via external experts and study visits) has confirmed the commitment to a register-based approach to industrialisation. This allows a notable advantage in terms of reducing costs and response burden, while safeguarding quality, timeliness and completeness. At the same time, registers have a great potential, because different archives can be linked together on the basis of clearly defined keys. Statistical-based registers identify the statistical population: they are based on and linked with administrative registers (gathered in satellite registers) and are also partly based on surveys. In addition, an organised governance mechanism is needed to establish the conditions under which it is possible to identify a responsible person for each group of variable of the system, the core variables that define the populations of the base registers, and thematic variables (gathered mainly in satellite registers). Relations between the responsible persons and the users should be regulated by a Committee for Register Management, which can consult the Business Architect or the IT Architect when needed.

A Business Architecture (BA) model approach guides the operational changes and all stages in the production chain, highlighting the required infrastructure that should be put in place. The BA model used in Istat is the result of a joint work performed by the *Statistical Network* (Statistical Institutes of Australia, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom) and the *ESSNet on Standardisation* (Eurostat and Statistical Institutes of France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, United Kingdom). BA model is a reference model to optimise processes within an organisation and improve their efficiency, based on the reuse of data, methods, processes, and tools. It covers both statistical activities and strategic organisational tasks and capabilities, and it is composed by a generic activity model (with four business lines - Strategy, Corporate Support, Capabilities and Production), a process flow, clear principles and a conceptual definition of the corporate infrastructures needed.

Following such a model, the new organisational structure in Istat will be divided into two main areas:

- a Statistical production area, dealing with statistical themes, the integrated register system based on administrative data, surveys -which will gradually decrease, processes and analysis;
- a Corporate support service area, which will itself be divided into two main groups: one dealing with specialised support (methodology, IT, data collection) and more related to the production processes; the other one dealing with more general and legal support (management/administration).

A specific governance policy is also assured through a strategic and operational planning in order to make these two areas working efficiently and effectively on the basis of a portfolio and project management.

The modernisation process has already started by centralising some functions at department level, extending the access to administrative data, and continuing the process of standardisation. The analysis of the “*as is*” situation has been followed by the definition of a “*to be*” model in terms of activities, data, organisation and governance.

Improvement action 6 Implementation of Modernisation programme

The main lines of the improvement action for the achievement of the modernisation objectives are:

- a) Design of production processes according to a register-based statistical system;
- b) Creation of a centralised data collection structure;
- c) Strengthen the governance mechanisms (in particular for strategic and operational planning);
- d) Centralisation and consolidation of support services;
- e) Design of an integrated system for the management of skills (and the definition of specific training courses to support the new production model);
- f) Development of production, dissemination and communication of integrated data;
- g) Coordinated management of a portfolio of innovation projects;
- h) Creation of a Corporate Social Responsibility system.

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2016
- b) II semester 2016
- c) II semester 2016
- d) II semester 2016
- e) II semester 2016
- f) II semester 2016
- g) II semester 2016
- h) II semester 2016

IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS

7. The relevant Italian authorities should take measures to amend statistical legislation to strengthen the access of the Italian National Statistical Institute to administrative data, releasing confidentiality constraints on sensitive data of individuals that can be suitable for statistical purposes. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.2.)

Current situation:

Legal provisions in the field of processing of personal data gathered from third parties impose the obligation to provide appropriate prior information to the individual. If such an obligation proves to be difficult or impossible, the prior information is considered as given if the survey is included in the NSP or if alternative measures have been adopted (in agreement with the Italian Data Protection Authority) to provide publicity. Problems arise in case of innovative projects not yet included in the NSP or particularly complex, because such constraints can significantly hinder the full and timely implementation of the pursued goals. Indeed, it is worth noting that the NSP survey sheets are filled in during the planning phase, that is well before statistical activities are carried out (approximately one year and a half in advance). As regards both new projects and projects to be revised, in such a phase the survey sources can't always be described in details, so the sheets provide a general framework only of the kind of personal data processing intended to be carried out.

Improvement action 7 Reinforce access and use of administrative data

- a) Make administrative information consistent in order to facilitate access to sensitive data whenever required for statistical purposes, through standardization of administrative forms;
- b) Provide information directly through either Istat website or Sistan Portal on activities included or to be included according to the new needs or according to modified legislation prior to the approval of the next NSP;
- c) Devote a specific area of Istat website to data protection for prior information in order to improve its accessibility;
- d) Following the results achieved by a), b) and c), amendments will be provided in the final proposal for the new Italian Statistical law

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2016
- b) I semester 2017
- c) I semester 2017
- d) I semester 2017

IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS

8. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should expand its management information systems to make them more useful in planning and monitoring activities for enabling further increase of the cost-effectiveness of the office. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 10.)

Current situation:

Istat management monitors human and financial resources through three different information systems: 1) URBI, the HR system for calculating employee effective costs; 2) Libra system for budgeting, accounting, planning and control; and 3) a timesheet system used to certify time and costs of financed projects (e.g. projects funded by Eurostat).

Although Istat has established extensive management information systems, actually each of them provides different indicators and reports. Above all, Istat lacks a real analytical accounting system that allows proper allocation and monitoring of the resources invested in each activity.

Improvement action 8 Integrated planning

- a) In accordance with the Italian new laws on budgeting and in order to connect Planning to Budgeting/Accounting through an integrated planning sheet whose registered activities can be identified by a link code to Istat budget information system, Istat will specify the main targets of its expenditures along with missions, programmes, macro- and micro activities;
- b) Promote a broader utilisation of the management control system, already used to plan IT needs;
- c) Develop analytical accounting in order to fully assess costs & benefits of each activity;
- d) Further expand integration among indicators and reports.

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2016
- b) II semester 2016
- c) II semester 2016
- d) II semester 2016

IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS

9. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should continue monitoring the workload and productivity of its regional offices, in order to free potentially available resources for other activities and possibly redefine their role. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 10.)

Current situation:

Istat regional offices are multifunctional units whose strategic goals focus on the following areas:

- Local coordination of Istat survey implementation phases and monitoring of survey process quality, as well as training and technical assistance addressed to the public bodies involved and to the survey networks. Developing cooperation with local authorities in order to use administrative sources for statistical purposes;
- Developing institutional relations, joint statistical projects, audit and training initiatives aimed at coordinating and strengthening the statistical role within the Sistan organizations acting locally;
- Developing relations with the scientific community, universities and other partners to carry out researches and analyses on locally relevant phenomena, as well as promoting statistical literacy in school and institutions;
- Disseminating and communicating statistical information as well as locally relevant editorial products, in cooperation with local organizations.

The workload and performance monitoring is carried out through the same systems and tools adopted for Istat as a whole.

Improvement action 9 Reorganization of resources in the regional offices

- a) Reassess the tasks entrusted to Istat regional offices in view of their connection and relevance to the modernization process;
- b) Set the planning of activities and workload of regional statistical offices in line with the modernization process

Timeline:

- a) I semester 2017
- b) II semester 2017

IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS

10. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should regularly measure the response burden in various business surveys and inform the general public about the results of the measurements against the set targets. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 9.2.)

Current situation:

Istat is implementing a programme of actions aiming at reducing response burden on businesses. Besides negative coordination of samples, increasing use of administrative data, re-engineering of sample surveys, Istat is investing in the development of the Business Portal. This is a tool designed as a single entry point for all businesses, to provide organized support to respondents and to accelerate the harmonization of web questionnaires, through the adoption of a single software system for data collection. Istat has a long tradition in quality documentation: the SIDI-Siqua system for survey documentation manages a wide range of quality indicators and metadata in compliance with the European CoP. Since 2014, "Quality at a Glance" provides summary quality reports to users for all Istat surveys. Using the Business Portal architecture, Istat already collects information to analyse the response burden in some business surveys but indicators of burden are not produced in a systematic and standardized way. As a matter of fact, this architecture is already set up to allow: a) the analysis of the "persistences" (number of economic surveys that burden each unit); b) the analysis of the complexity of the questionnaires in terms of number of questions/variables, c) the investigation of the average time required for filling in the questionnaires, d) the paradata analysis. Apart from a), analyses under b), c), and d) are currently produced for a reduced subset of surveys. The aim is to design and produce systematic and standardized measures of response burden on businesses, to support decision-making process for its reduction.

Improvement action 10 Systematic and standardized burden measurement system

- a) Definition of a systematic and standardized burden measurement system and identification of a set of target indicators. Istat plans to define a system of standard indicators for assessing the response burden on businesses, monitoring it over time and making it accessible to general public. This set of indicators will be defined consistently with the potential role of the Business Portal and more in general of web questionnaires. Those represent powerful tools to get the information required (e.g. connection time for the entire questionnaire or for each web-page, number of entries for web-pages, length of navigation routings, respondent evaluation on data retrieval and questionnaire complexity). A single software tool, consistent with the Business Portal IT architecture, will produce this set of indicators for all surveys. Data will become available gradually as each electronic questionnaire migrates in the Business Portal data collection system.
- b) Preparation of the first release of a report to be disseminated annually on the web, presenting the results of the measurement in relation to the set targets to be achieved. It is planned to analyse both the 'objective' and 'subjective' respondent burden, because different actions could be identified to reduce each of them. For the 'objective' respondent burden, paradata provide different information to be considered which could be summarized in a single synthetic indicator. Concerning the 'perceived' respondent burden, a small set of questions has been designed to be added to the questionnaires of surveys as they are included in the business portal architecture. The measures of the response burden in the various surveys will be made available in the SIDI-Siqua documentation system. Regular updates of measurements will be annually provided for both monitoring purposes and for assessing their evolution over time. Appropriate communication of the availability of new information will be provided to the general public through the Istat communication channels.

Timeline:

- a) I semester 2016
- b) December 2016

IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS

11. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should put more emphasis on mitigating the non-response of business surveys by improving communication and dialogue particularly with small and medium-size enterprises and promoting wider use of the Business Portal. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 2.3 and 8.4.)

Current situation:

The current response rates on business surveys are quite low, particularly those on micro enterprises. During the last years an enhancement of response rates has been observed, but not for those rates regarding business surveys on micro enterprises.

The Business Portal contributes to mitigate this problem, as it establishes new effective relation modes with the enterprises involved in economic surveys: the system constitutes a single entry point for all businesses, adopts a single software system for data collection, guarantees procedural simplification, full transparency, organised support and informative «return».

Currently about 3.500 large enterprises (nearly most of the companies have 250 employees or more) are included in the Business Portal.

The Section of the Portal regarding Statistical informative «return» presents statistical information in a new «business oriented» perspective. The information is particularly addressed to small and medium enterprises that normally do not have a specific internal department producing this kind of statistics.

An initiative carried out in the perspective of Portal massive extension consists of providing systematic and organised support to companies involved in economic surveys. For this purpose Istat has established a professional contact-centre service that will provide integrated and systematic support for the different problematic areas (statistical, technical, administrative, register updating).

Improvement action 11 Extension of the Business Portal

- a) Gradual extension of the Portal to all the enterprises involved in business surveys. Istat plans to promote a wider use and gradual extension of the Business Portal. The extension will gradually include all the enterprises involved in the Istat business surveys. In parallel with massive Portal extension Istat will complete the statistical informative "return" section, that will include a full set of personalized indicators;
- b) Activation of a professional contact-centre for systematic and organised support. Massive extension will be associated with the activation of a professional contact-centre service in order to improve the support to companies involved in economic surveys.

Timeline:

- a) I semester 2016
- b) I semester 2016

IMPROVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

12. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should aim at reducing the precariousness of its staff recruited under fixed-term contracts by defining the relevant criteria to determine whether the different job positions should be filled under permanent or fixed-term contracts. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 3.1.)

Current situation:

The recruitment of Istat personnel (both permanent and fixed – term contract) is carried out through public competition. Most of people recruited by Istat for Census purposes under fixed-term contracts (349, representing 15% of the staff) are currently employed in Census related permanent tasks. Since 2009, with the recruitment of fixed-term staff, Istat employees have increased by 8% whereas the permanent staff has decreased by 8%, basically through the reduction of undergraduate employees. All the fixed-term contracts are currently extended till the end of 2017.

Improvement action 12 Human resources policy

- a) Start changing the fixed-term contracts in permanent ones through public competitions from the end of 2015, according to current legislation;
- b) Map the fixed-term staff and plan an efficient allocation of fixed term staff by project according to Istat planning

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2017
- b) II semester 2017

IMPROVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

13. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should improve dialogue in the office by strengthening internal communication and conducting regular staff opinion surveys. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 10.1.)

Current situation:

Currently Istat intranet is the most important tool to spread information about Istat working environment. News not only concerns initiatives related to the work (there is a special section on the Modernization process too) but through the intranet, services, tools, materials and working papers are made available. On average about 300 news and 600 documents are published each year. Building actions are also implemented to strengthen the employees' sense of belonging to the Institute, such as "Istat children's day", a day dedicated to the employees' children who can visit their parents' place of work and can participate to entertaining and educational events. Initiatives to raise awareness of environmental values are also organised.

Since March 14, 2014 an internal communication network of contacts has been activated. The members of the network report needs and opinions of their colleagues.

Improvement action 13 Strengthening internal communication

- a) Issue a new release of Intranet focused on a greater integration of contents and with participative management of the information to be spread. It will have to be strongly oriented towards sharing values.
- b) Develop a plan of initiatives to support the sense of belonging.
- c) Prepare and administer a satisfaction survey on specific communication initiatives/activities.

Timeline:

- a) 2015 QIV: first version of the new intranet release;
- b) 2016 Q I;
- c) 2016 Q II.

IMPROVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

14. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should enhance the transparency of its internal quality reviews by publishing the complete audit reports on the office intranet, thus allowing further use of the recommendations for improvement in other subject matter areas of the organisation. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.2 and 4.3.)

Current situation:

Documentation on the auditing procedure and its tools are accessible to all Istat staff in the wiki area of the Quality Committee. In addition, Istat personnel is regularly informed on the audit/self-assessment kickoff (at the beginning of each year) and its general results by means of a summary of the identified improvement actions (at the end of each year).

Improvement action 14 Publication of Audit Reports on intranet

Final reports from audits and self-assessment procedures will be published on the Istat intranet website.

Timeline:

From December 2015 onwards

IMPROVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

15. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should establish a policy to promote the internal mobility of its staff, in particular its young staff, independently of their contractual status. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8 and 10.)

Current situation:

Istat has a very low internal mobility ratio of less than 3%. As a consequence, especially new staff, has very low opportunities, during the first years of its career in Istat, to experience different working activities in order to gain a general overview enabling to identify the working area that better suits its skills or in which achieve expertise. The high standard of Istat quality management along with a detailed and standardised system to document processes, currently represent an opportunity for the staff mobility as it can obtain the appropriate documentation when moving to a new unit.

Improvement action 15 Enhancement of internal mobility

- a) Initiatives for internal mobility on a regular basis (calls, administrative mobility, Seconded National Experts, compulsory mobility actions according to anticorruption laws, etc.);
- b) Definition of procedure for providing internal rotation of newly hired employees;

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2016
- b) II semester 2016

IMPROVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

16. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should aim at developing the capacities of its staff by extending its training programme, as well as offering more opportunities for skilled staff to participate in scientific activities, conferences and publications. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 7.6.)

Current situation:

Budgeting constraints for training have led Istat to set the target for the current year at 58% of staff training and 1.9 days on average per employee. Nevertheless, Istat has to continuously ensure a high training level in terms of both number of involved staff and wealth of contents, in order to sustain statistical capacity in the long term period.

Furthermore, as in Italy Istat is a public research institute, among its graduate staff there are researchers that legitimately intend to participate in scientific activities and take part in producing scientific publications.

Improvement action 16 Enhancement of internal training

- a) Increase by 15% of Istat staff attending training programs, taking into account all components of employees (gender, skills, etc.);
- b) Increase by 15% the number of training days per employee, also focusing on portfolio and project management training;
- c) Develop a repository of documentation/output provided by the staff participating in training/scientific events in order to improve and coordinate the researchers' activities in Istat.

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2016
- b) II semester 2016
- c) II semester 2016

CONTINUE EFFORTS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF USERS

17. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should further enhance the accessibility of statistical information on its website, in particular for less experienced users, in order to ensure wider use of statistics in society. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15.)

Current situation:

The accessibility of statistical information for less experienced users on Istat website is granted by different tools, products and services, in particular:

- A web section “Information for users” that offers a panorama about the available services for general users (in particular through a unique web Contact center).
- The annual publication “Italy in figures”, available on the web site, that provides knowledge at a glance of Italy's social, economic and environmental phenomena.
- “Noi Italia” web edition, accessible from the home page of the web site, that provides, with the help of dynamic graphs and by an easy access to data, a general framework for understanding the economic, social, demographic and environmental aspects and territorial differences of Italy. It also provides information on its role within Europe.
- A web section called “Interactive contents” contains tools enabling to better understand statistics: infographics, charts and maps for statistical data visualization, widgets and calculating tools (monetary revaluations, number of the resident population, most common names in Italy), all e-books and mobile apps.
- A web video channel that provides all videos (tutorial and story telling) produced by Istat to explain statistical phenomena or to help people to use statistical tools or participate to surveys.

Improvement action 17 Dedicated web area

- a) Development of a prototype section for a dedicated web area “Statistics for all”* on the Istat web site
- b) Launch and Publication of a dedicated web area “Statistics for all”*.

The new web section will be accessible from the Istat Home page web site and tagged to be easily reachable by search engines. “Statistics for all”* will better organize the statistical contents in order to facilitate their use and their understanding by non-specialized users. It will contain the most popular tables and the main indicators will be easy to find. It will also contain a simplified access to data, a glossary, popular web publications and mobile apps, infographics and video (tutorial and story telling). It will give evidence to the activities of statistical literacy among individuals and society, with specific attention to young people.

Timeline:

- a) Q1 2016 Prototype
- b) QIV 2016 Launch of the web area "Statistics for all"*

CONTINUE EFFORTS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF USERS

18. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should provide more in-depth analysis in its releases in order to further exploit the potential offered by combining different data sources. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15.)

Current situation:

The dissemination of official statistics is mainly provided via our official website and is carefully planned well in advance every year (by the end of November of the previous year). The dissemination calendar is then made fully transparent to data users through our institutional website and officially communicated to international organisations and government bodies. It includes approximately 900 outputs declined in various formats depending on contents and timeliness of the data. With reference to press releases (about 400 a year), they are classified as Flash, Report and Focus ones. The latter product is designed to meet users' needs with respect to specific or emerging phenomena of relevant interest for the media, the society or for policy makers.

At present, our dissemination policy mainly reflects the stove-pipe approach adopted by the statistical production. Nevertheless, there are some significant exceptions to this general rule. Our flagship publications and research oriented outputs provide a less fragmented description of socio-economic phenomena based on integrated data from different sources both at the aggregated and micro-level. For instance, since 1992, Istat has regularly published an Annual Report based on official data every year. It illustrates the state of the nation (short terms development and structural trends for the Italian economy and society), covering a wide range of phenomena quite often through an integrated use of statistical production, including the innovative combination of data sources, the use of advanced models and analytical tools to explore data in an original way. Most recently, this approach has been extended to other flagship publications and reports, such as the Report on the structure and competitiveness of Industrial Sectors, the Report on Well-Being and "Noi Italia: 100 Statistical indicators to better understand the Country we Live in". In 2015 we have started a new project aimed at producing integrated analyses of socio-economic phenomena. A recent outcome of this new approach is a dedicated section, recently published on our website and continuously updated, that brings together all short terms indicators in a common analytical framework. The first outputs of this work have been some press-releases on industrial and retail trade trends that have been enriched with new indicators based on the combined use of nominal values and price indexes. The labour market domain has been enriched with a special focus integrating statistical information on households, firms and macroeconomic indicators produced by national accounts. It's planned an e- book on integrated analysis on changes in women life during the last ten years.

Improvement action 18 Review of dissemination policy towards more integrated products

- a) Reinforce the shifting from the dissemination of the statistics referred to a single survey toward more integrated products providing in depth analysis of the phenomena under investigation;
- b) Streamline our dissemination by reducing the number of highly fragmented outputs that will be clustered in few key topics;
- c) Develop thematic notes, reports and other releases on economic and social trends to meet users needs with respect to broad social and economic issues

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2016
- b) II semester 2016
- c) II semester 2016

CONTINUE EFFORTS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF USERS

19. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should establish a revision policy following standard and transparent procedures and publish it on its website, including a revision calendar to inform users of when revisions of statistical results are planned to be published. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.6 and 8.6.)

Current situation:

Currently, a common revision policy, stating principles, reasons for data revisions and how to manage scheduled and non-scheduled revisions does not exist. Revision policies for specific statistical domains presenting frequency and timing of revisions, sources of revisions, depth and revision length are available on the methodological note attached to the press releases. As far as the revision analysis is concerned, a technical note is available on the Istat website illustrating revisions, how the different vintages are collected in the so-called revision triangles and the indicators computed on revisions. The revision triangles, containing also details about sources of revisions and the revisions indicators suggested by the OECD recommendations are currently available for quarterly national accounts (GDP and its main demand components). A short report attached to the press releases of GDP describes the main revision indicators.

However, more harmonization across practices followed in different domains (Quarterly National Accounts, Industrial production index, Production index in construction, Quarterly Wage and Labour Cost Indices, Foreign Trade) as well as more transparency towards external users is needed.

Improvement action 19 Development of revision policy

- a) The internal Centre of Competence on Time Series Analysis and Seasonal Adjustment has set off a work programme aimed at developing (through a dedicated Working Group) improvement actions, namely:
 - producing a protocol on policy, analysis and dissemination of revisions of published statistics;
 - proposing a classification of revisions by their sources and timing;
 - defining input/output requirements of a generalized tool for storing indicators together with revisions;
 - choosing a set of quality measures to be calculated in revision triangles;
 - defining communication requirements (calendar of revisions, release of vintage series, dissemination of the revision triangles, etc.) to improve transparency.
 - devising main features of a section on the website dedicated to revision policy and tools.
- b) Formal adoption by the Istat management of proposals submitted by the Working Group. The outcome of the Working Group will be submitted to the top management, for a formal adoption as a standard policy for revisions.
- c) Publication in the Istat official website of the official revision policy and dedicated pages hosting triangles of revisions related to key-indicators, together with all necessary documentation (methods and quality indicators).

Timeline:

- a) I semester 2016
- b) I semester 2016.
- c) II semester 2016.

CONTINUE EFFORTS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF USERS

20. The Italian National Institute of Statistics and Other National Authorities producing European statistics should further expand their systems to report quality indicators to users on a regular basis. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.3)

Current situation:

SIDI-SIQual is the Istat information system used as basis for the Quality Reporting (metadata and quality indicators) for the statistical products, for different uses and for different typologies of users. Since 2014, the reports "Quality at a glance", providing summary metadata and some quality indicators for all Istat direct surveys, are published through Istat internet website. By October 2015, Eurostat Quality reports will be produced directly from SIDI-SIQual.

Improvement action 20 Improvement of Quality documentation

- a) Dissemination of Eurostat quality reports;
- b) Further increase of indicators and documentation on quality, and improvement of the accessibility to the information on quality:
 - Increase of available indicators;
 - Increase of the documentation on quality;
 - increase of its accessibility on the website

Timeline:

- a) Q4 2016
- b) Q4 2017

CONTINUE EFFORTS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF USERS

21. The Italian National Institute of Statistics should assure facilities for remote access to microdata for research purposes and increase communication about the possibilities to use microdata. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4.)

Current situation:

Access to the four Istat categories of microdata files (public use files, standard files for research purposes, scientific use files and files for Sistan) is granted through an administrative procedure subject to specific conditions. All files are released free of charge and in compliance with the principle of statistical privacy and protection of personal data.

Within the process of release of microdata, Istat provides a free of charge research data centre named Laboratory for Elementary Data Analysis (ADELE Laboratory), a secure site accessible for researchers and academics enabling them to conduct their own statistical analyses on microdata from the Institute's surveys. Special datasets are also available. At territorial level, all Istat regional offices manage a Research Data Centre access point.

In compliance with the new EU regulation on access to microdata (No. 557/2013), Istat aims at providing the scientific community with remote data access, according to best practices at European and international level. To achieve this goal Istat is working on a proposal for reviewing the current legal framework.

Improvement action 21 Review of dissemination policy

- a) Release of a website devoted to microdata to enhance their accessibility (data archive).
- b) Proposal for amending national relevant legislation in order to promote access to microdata, in accordance with the Data Protection Authority, through virtual labs among others

Timeline:

- a) II semester 2016
- b) 2017 Q1