PEER REVIEW REPORT

ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

LITHUANIA

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this peer review report is to evaluate the extent to which Statistics Lithuania complies with the European statistics Code of Practice.

Statistics Lithuania is the main producer of official statistics in Lithuania. It has a strong legal mandate and enjoys a high level of trust; its professionalism and independence are unchallenged and widely recognised.

Statistics Lithuania plays an important role in coordinating the national statistical system. The coordination role is ensured by law and strengthened by the involvement of the Statistical Council, and by various cross-institutional working groups and commissions. For example, Statistics Lithuania has the authority to standardise questionnaires used by other institutions and to harmonise associated definitions and indicators.

In 2013, Statistics Lithuania, aiming to strengthen its coordinating role in the area of official statistics, began signing formal agreements with other producers on the organisation, quality assurance and dissemination of official statistics.

Statistics Lithuania puts a very high emphasis on quality. Its ISO-certified quality management system is based on process mapping, and provides a good framework for the implementation of quality policy. Statistics Lithuania can build on this high level to further improve its quality management, for example by standardising editing procedures or moving towards the Generic Statistical Business Process Model in its organisational structure, and spreading its best practices in quality management to the other producers of European statistics.

Statistics Lithuania also places high importance on reducing the burden on respondents, by systematically monitoring and taking appropriate decisions to reduce it. Statistics Lithuania's policy is to collect statistical data from respondents only if no other administrative or statistical data sources are available.

Resources of Statistics Lithuania are limited but reported sufficient to perform its mission. However, even if the recruitment of young graduates is assured (thanks to strong cooperation with universities), it is important to offer them motivating career opportunities. In that regard, the culture of Statistics Lithuania puts more value on the acquisition of experience in the same unit than broadening experience in various domains. A recommendation is included to promote an internal mobility policy, especially for young staff.

Statistics Lithuania has recently launched an ambitious online Official Statistics Portal aiming at providing a single point of access, and common methods of access to all Lithuanian official statistics. However, users are not fully satisfied with the performance of the new system and improvements should be made to improve the accessibility and functionality of this portal. While much effort is devoted to developing new tools and services, less is done in promoting these products, and as a result users are not as informed as they should be. Statistics Lithuania should be more proactive in this regard and several recommendations are made related to improving the marketing of products and services.

Finally, the Peer Review team has identified some innovative practices of Statistics Lithuania that could be of benefit to the European Statistical System, such as its quality management system, which describes all processes and includes related documentation and metadata.

Generally, the Peer Review team considers that Statistics Lithuania has a high level of compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice. The recommendations in this report are intended to further enhance compliance with the Code of Practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve dissemination and communication with users

1. Statistics Lithuania should enhance the usability and accessibility of the Official Statistics Portal (and its database of indicators) for both occasional and expert users, by implementing improvements to its content, design, functionality and performance (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

2. Statistics Lithuania should allow users to assess timeliness by keeping track, on the website, of any changes made to the initial release calendar (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

3. Statistics Lithuania should give access on its website to all statistical releases whatever are their dates of publication (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

4. Statistics Lithuania should increase the English content on its website and on the Official Statistics Portal (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

5. Statistics Lithuania should widely promote its products and services and train users in using them to their full potential (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

6. Statistics Lithuania should use search engines optimisation techniques to enhance the visibility of its website and Official Statistics Portal (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

7. Statistics Lithuania should promote and widely publicise its use of social networks to disseminate statistical information (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

8. Statistics Lithuania should develop an English language version of their Twitter account with links to the statistical releases (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

9. Statistics Lithuania should further develop and promote their remote access system to anonymised micro-data for research purposes (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

Strengthen quality management to gain efficiency

10. Statistics Lithuania should standardise the methodology, editing rules and algorithms for data editing and imputation (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7 and 10).

11. Statistics Lithuania should develop a standard environment for questionnaire testing (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicator 8.2).

12. Statistics Lithuania should further develop its quality management system by considering the alignment, where practicable, of its internal organisation to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4).

13. Statistics Lithuania should implement electronic data collection for households (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 9, 10, 12, and 13).

14. Statistics Lithuania should provide a central point for the receipt of all administrative data (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 8, and 10).

15. Statistics Lithuania should further develop training on quality management, quality assurance and quality reporting for other producers of official statistics in the national statistical system, and in particular for their new staff (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4).

16. Statistics Lithuania should promote the practice of systematic quality audits by other statistical authorities, and foster the participation of external reviewers in the auditing process (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4).

Upgrade the human resources policy and internal organisation

17. Statistics Lithuania should establish a policy to promote the internal mobility of its staff, in particular its young staff (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8, and 10).

18. Statistics Lithuania should further develop training in English for its staff, in particular for young staff (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8, and 15).

19. Statistics Lithuania should continue monitoring the workload and productivity of the data preparation divisions, in order to free potentially available resources for other activities and possibly reduce the number of such divisions (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 10).

Strengthen coordination with other producers of official statistics

20. Statistics Lithuania should strengthen its coordination role so that all official statistics are published via the Official Statistics Portal, according to a common release calendar, accompanied by standard metadata and quality reports (Coordination).

21. Statistics Lithuania should implement extranet technology in order to strengthen links and enhance knowledge sharing, communication, collaboration and coordination throughout the national statistical system (Coordination).

22. Where appropriate, Statistics Lithuania should invite relevant staff of other authorities producing statistics to attend the internal methodological courses and workshops that it organises (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 7, Coordination).

23. Statistics Lithuania should examine, with the appropriate authorities, the best ways to facilitate occasional staff exchange with other producers of official statistics (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 7, Coordination).

2. INTRODUCTION

This peer review report is part of a series of assessments, the objective of which is to evaluate the extent to which National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and the European Statistical System (ESS)[1] comply with the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP).

The CoP, which sets out a common quality framework for the ESS, was first adopted in 2005 by the Statistical Programme Committee and updated in 2011 by its successor, the European Statistical System Committee. The CoP — 15 principles and related indicators of good practice — covers the institutional environment, the statistical production process and the output of European statistics. The ESS is committed to fully complying with the CoP and is working towards its full implementation. Periodic assessments review progress towards reaching this goal.

The first global assessment, a round of peer reviews in 2006–2008, explored how the NSIs and Eurostat were progressing in implementing the parts of the CoP relating to the institutional environment and dissemination of statistics (principles 1–6 and 15). This resulted in reports for each NSI and Eurostat, available on the Eurostat website[2]. These reports also include a set of improvement actions covering all the principles of the CoP; these informed the annual monitoring of the implementation of the CoP in the ESS in the period 2009-2013.

The scope of this second round of peer reviews is broader: the assessment of CoP compliance covers all principles; the CoP compliance of selected other national producers of European statistics (as well as the NSI) in each country is being assessed; and the way in which statistical authorities coordinate the production and dissemination of European statistics within their statistical systems is being explored.

It should be underlined that there is a fundamental difference between the reports in the previous round of peer reviews conducted in 2006-2008 and the reports from this round. In the 2006-2008 round compliance with principles 1 to 6 and 15 of the CoP was assessed by means of a four-level scale (fully met; largely met; partly met and not met) and improvement actions were agreed on all 15 principles. After five years of continuous development most of the improvement actions have been implemented and significant progress towards full compliance with the CoP has been made. Therefore, rather than stating the state of play for all principles of the CoP, the reports from the 2013-2015 round mainly focus on issues where full compliance with the CoP has not been found or further improvements are recommended by the Peer Review team.

In order to gain an independent view, the peer review exercise has been externalised and an audit-like approach, where all the answers to the self-assessment questionnaires have to be supported by evidence, has been applied. As in 2006-2008, all EU Member States and EFTA/EEA countries and Eurostat are subject to a peer review.

Each peer review in the Member States and EFTA/EEA countries is conducted by three reviewers and has four phases: completion of self-assessment questionnaires by a country; their assessment by Peer Reviewers; a peer review visit; and the preparation of reports on the outcomes. The peer review of Eurostat has been conducted by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

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[1] The ESS is the partnership between the Union statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), and the national statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. This Partnership also includes the EEA and EFTA countries.

[2] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/first-round-of-peer-reviews

To test and complete the methodology, it was piloted in two countries, Iceland and Slovakia, over the summer of 2013.

The Lithuanian peer review was conducted by Mr Jean-Michel Durr (chair), Mr Adrian Redmond, and Mr Tomaž Smrekar, with a peer review visit to Vilnius on 20-24 October 2014. The programme of the visit is in Annex A and the list of participants in Annex B.

This report focuses on compliance with the CoP and the coordination of European statistics within the national statistical system. The report highlights some of the strengths of the Lithuanian NSI in these contexts and contains recommendations for improvement. Improvement actions developed by the NSI on the basis of this report will be published within the four-week period starting when the final report is sent to the NSI.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Legislation

The main legal act regulating statistics is the Law on Statistics (No I-270 of 1993). It was last amended in 2010 to strengthen the implementation of the CoP and to assure compliance with EU Regulation 223/2009 on European Statistics. The law establishes the general principles for the organisation of official statistics, one of which is "objectivity and professional independence from political and other interest groups". It defines the coordination role of Statistics Lithuania (SL) and the scope of the Official Statistics Work Programme (OSWP), and stipulates the key tasks and duties of the Other National Authorities (ONAs) which produce statistics. It also establishes a mandate for data collection, sets out the rights and duties of respondents in providing data, and regulates the protection and dissemination of statistics. The OSWP, which is coordinated and prepared annually by SL, plays a central role. Article 8 of the law gives SL the right of access to administrative registers if they are needed for implementing the OSWP. Businesses are obliged to respond to surveys, while household surveys are carried out on a voluntary basis (except for the Census of Population).

Statistical Council

The Law on Statistics also established the Statistical Council as an advisory body to SL. The Council considers the key issues relating to the OSWP, SL's strategy, the organisation and methodology of statistics, the use of administrative registers, etc. It is chaired by the Director General of SL and consists of 20 members, representing state and municipal institutions and agencies managing statistics, universities, public organisations, business representative organisations, and the media.

Mission and strategy

The mission of SL is "to prepare and disseminate official statistics necessary for decision-making and stimulating public discussions on issues relevant to the country, to actively participate in the development of international statistics". The main trends of SL's activity are laid down in its five-year strategy. The current strategy covers the period 2013–2017 and is aimed at the development and improvement of reliable, timely and comparable statistical information, with a particular focus on its accessibility. SL's strategy is deployed via the rolling three-year Strategic Action Plan and annual activity plans.

Head of SL

The Law on Statistics specifies that the Director General of SL is appointed to office by the Government for a period of four years. A person who holds a Master's degree (or equivalent) and has an employment record of at least five years in the field of statistics and five years of managerial work in the field of public administration may be appointed to the post. The Director General may be appointed to hold office for no more than two successive terms. The position has the same rank as top permanent officials in government departments. Dismissal conditions are the same as for the head of any other government agency, and are set out in the Law on the Government.

Organisation structure

The administrative structure of SL consists of 37 divisions: 20 statistics divisions, 5 data preparation divisions, and 12 supporting divisions (IT, dissemination, strategic planning, legal, internal audit, etc.). The headquarters are located in Vilnius. The data preparation divisions, responsible for the collection of data from legal entities, data editing and preparation of primary

databases for further processing are located in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys, and Šiauliai. The Director General supervises these divisions either directly or through Deputy Director Generals: the First Deputy Director General, responsible for macroeconomic statistics, and three Deputy Director Generals (responsible for business/agriculture statistics, social statistics, and IT/dissemination).

According to a government resolution in 2011, the maximum allowable number of employees for SL is 581, though at the end of 2013 the actual number of active staff (not including staff on maternity leave and vacancies) was 546. Out of these, 86 are based in the five data preparation divisions, 98 are involved in household interviewing and 26 in price data collection.

Official Statistics Work Programme

The annual OSWP consists of a list of surveys and other statistical activities assigned to SL and ONAs. All statistical works carried out by SL and ONAs are reflected in the Programme. The compilation of the OSWP is coordinated by SL, which is also mandated by Resolution of the Government to formally approve it. The OSWP specifies for each activity, the authority responsible, the legal background, a brief description, the periodicity, the method of execution, the level of geographic breakdown, the deadline for submission of results, and the means of dissemination. There are 397 statistical activities in the 2014 Programme, of which 249 will be performed by SL, 30 by the Bank of Lithuania, and 118 by ONAs. SL also prepares the annual implementation report on the OSWP and submits it to the Government for approval.

National Statistical System (NSS)

The NSS comprises SL (which produces over 60% of the country's official statistics) and 26 ONAs.

About 80% of the statistical activities carried out by SL are attributed to European statistics. The remainder is carried out by nine institutions, the main ones being the Agricultural Information and Rural Business Centre (agriculture statistics) and the Institute of Hygiene (health statistics). The other producers of European statistics are the Environmental Protection Agency, the State Forest Service, the State Labour Inspectorate (part of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour), the Migration Department (part of the Ministry of the Interior), the State Border Guard Service (also part of the Ministry of the Interior), the Fisheries Service (part of the Ministry of Agriculture), and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Bank of Lithuania, as a member of the European System of Central Banks, also contributes to the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.

Dissemination

SL publishes their statistics not on their own website but on the Official Statistics Portal (Portal): http://osp.stat.gov.lt. Publication is in line with the release calendar, which covers one year and is published at the end of the preceding year. Statistics are accompanied by supporting metadata as well as other information on methods and quality. It is SL's ambition that, by 2017, all Lithuanian official statistics will be published on the Portal and all will use a common release calendar. All statistics of SL are published at the standard release time of 11 am. Press releases related to the main indicators (GDP, inflation, unemployment rate) are provided half an hour before, under strict embargo, only to the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Finance, Social Security and Labour, and Economy.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

This section summarises the Peer Reviewers' views on the extent of CoP compliance and the nature and effectiveness of coordination within the NSS. It first summarises SL's strengths in these respects, and then explores specific issues including making recommendations that the Peer Reviewers consider would strengthen compliance with the CoP.

4.1 STRENGTHS OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE IN RELATION TO ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND TO ITS COORDINATION ROLE

It was clear to the Peer Review team from discussions with staff, the media, ministries and other stakeholders, that SL's professionalism and independence are unchallenged and widely recognised, and that it enjoys a high level of trust (CoP Principles 1, 6, 12).

Coordination is very strong in the NSS. This is driven by SL, which, according to the Law on Statistics, shall prepare the OSWP and "shall implement the general state policy in the fields of statistical methodology and organisation". The coordination role is strengthened by the involvement of the Statistical Council and by various cross-institutional working groups and commissions consisting of experts from SL and the ONAs, such as the High Level Commission on Population and Housing Census or the expert group on national accounts. SL also has the authority to standardise questionnaires used by other institutions and to harmonise associated definitions and indicators. Institutions are obliged by law to consult and coordinate with SL if there are plans to set up or change an administrative register. A cross-institutional working group on the CoP discusses implementation issues and exchanges best practices on the introduction of the CoP provisions in the NSS. This group includes the representatives of 15 ONAs. The Bank of Lithuania also participates in the working group meetings as an observer.

In 2013 SL – aiming to strengthen its coordinating role in the area of official statistics – began signing formal agreements with other producers on the organisation, quality assurance and dissemination of official statistics. The agreements commit the ONAs to adhere to the principles of the European statistics Code of Practice, and will increase the quality, effectiveness and credibility of the NSS and reinforce its organisational environment. So far, agreements have been signed with all nine ONAs producing European statistics, and with seven other ONAs.

SL puts a very high emphasis on quality (CoP Principle 4). Their quality management system is based on process management, which in turn is based on a detailed process map to which documented rules and guidelines on the various processes are linked. This ISO-based quality management system provides a good framework for the implementation of the CoP: management rules, structures, processes and responsibilities are clearly defined and documented; performance results are planned and pursued; quality assessment and improvement methods and tools (such as audits, self-assessments and quality indicators) are implemented systematically. They compile and monitor a large number of quality indicators and have targets or critical thresholds for each. Process managers, assigned to each process of SL, ensure effective operation of the processes they are responsible for. Their responsibilities consist of setting objectives, rules and procedures for a process, analysis of improvement possibilities, management of refinements, and assessing process effectiveness. The quality system is reinforced by a system of self-assessments and inspections, covering management and planning, methodology, staff qualification and competence, application of IT tools, dissemination of statistical information, and user relations. Audits of the statistical divisions and their statistical processes are performed by the Internal Audit

Division of SL. The Methodology Commission, established in 2009 by the Director General of SL and consisting of 17 experts from SL, discusses methodological documents prepared by SL's divisions and by ONAs, solves problematic methodological issues, prepares conclusions, and submits proposals on the development of methodological work. The mandate of the Methodology Commission also includes the analysis of the consistency and comparability of statistics.

SL also places high importance on reducing the burden on respondents (CoP Principle 9). Their policy is to collect statistical data from respondents only if no other administrative or statistical data sources are available, to consult with respondents and assess the future response burden at the stage of implementing new legal acts, and to develop and promote the use of SL's electronic data collection system, e.Statistika. A plan to reduce the burden is prepared and approved by the order of the Director General every year, and a permanent working group is responsible for its implementation. A system of rotation sampling is applied in business statistical surveys. As a result of these efforts, many questionnaires have been reduced in size or even eliminated. Each questionnaire includes a question on the time taken to complete it (the analysis shows that, in 2013, the average varied from 13 to 681 minutes), and a detailed analysis of the burden is published annually. The average number of hours devoted each year to completing statistical surveys fell from 13.2 in 2006 to 9.2 in 2013.

SL has a good relationship with the academic community, including long-standing cooperation with research institutions in relation to studying demographic issues in Lithuania (CoP Principle 7). Each year several undergraduates spend time as interns in SL, and many of these go on to apply for vacancies as they open (CoP Indicator 7.5). Some students prepare theses on methodological topics arising at SL.

The Peer Review team formed the impression that SL is managed efficiently, has highly educated and well-motivated staff and has a very participative culture.

The Peer Review team identified the following innovative practices:

- ISO 9001 certification:

In line with the strong emphasis that SL puts on continual quality improvement, in 2007 they introduced a quality management system based on ISO 9001, and were awarded with a certificate of conformity with the requirements of this standard. According to the ISO 9001 requirements, processes, and the interactions between them, have been defined. Processes, activities, responsibilities, sequences and links, and associated documentation, are shown on or linked to the process map. The process map is a strong tool for standardisation and the improvement of quality, and is also used as the backbone of the documentation system. Compliance audits take place regularly, and SL was recertified in 2013 as complying with the ISO 9001 requirements for the third time.

- Official Statistics Portal:

In creating the Official Statistics Portal, the aim of SL was to provide a single point of access, and common methods of access, to all Lithuanian official statistics. The Portal offers users many opportunities: accessing sets of indicators and pre-defined tables, forming and saving one's own data tables which are automatically updated when the information is updated in the database, creating one's own information release calendar, subscribing to statistical news about a certain subject, etc. The analysis tool in the database of indicators enables comparison of indicators from different domains, formation of charts and maps, calculation of various statistics, exporting tables to other formats, and subscribing to updates. It is especially convenient for those users who constantly need to monitor detailed social and economic phenomena by various breakdowns.

Its wide scope and rich functionality make it an innovative approach for disseminating statistics. The Portal acts as a strong coordinating tool, and will considerably improve the accessibility of official statistics (CoP Principle 15).

- Electronic submission of returns by respondents:

SL has provided electronic versions of all their questionnaires for legal entities, and all can be completed and submitted online using their e.Statistika system. This system has a range of interesting features: questionnaires are pre-filled with data from administrative registers; respondents are reminded when forms need to be completed and are notified of what forms they will have to complete over the coming year; respondents can use a comparison tool to see how they compare in the relevant economic activity or enterprise size, at regional or national level; in some cases, respondents can automatically import data from their business management systems (CoP Principle 9). About 82% of legal entities now submit their returns electronically. SL is now working on a new web-based data collection system for household data, which is planned to go live in the beginning of 2015.

- Exchange of micro-data with ONAs:

The quality of external trade data can be assessed by comparing, at unit-record level, the exports of one member state with the imports from another. In 2013, a trilateral agreement was signed between the statistical offices of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia on the exchange of trade micro-data. This enables the comparison of Lithuanian external trade data at the enterprise level, thus reducing asymmetries in trade data flows and improving the quality of statistical information (CoP Principle 4).

4.2 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 Improve dissemination and communication with users

SL's dissemination policy is strongly user-oriented and is based on new initiatives and the on-going determination of users' needs. Consistent efforts are made to improve the quality and accessibility of statistical information.

Since 2005, user satisfaction surveys have been organised on annual basis. Information received as a result of these surveys is analysed and actions are planned to improve the service to users. In 2013, three polls of specific user groups (students, researchers, and businesses) and a general satisfaction survey were organised. The satisfaction level reached 65% which was 2 percentage points more than in 2012.

Besides opinion polls, SL gets user feedback during quarterly meetings of the Statistical Council (which represents all the main user groups), and uses web surveys for its website visitors and for subscribers to its services. SL also analyses the number of inquiries about their statistics, the downloads of statistical indicators and publications, the number of citations in the media, the number of unique visitors to the Official Statistics Portal and SL's website, and the number of newly registered users of the Official Statistics Portal. A web analytics tool is used to analyse traffic on the Portal. On the basis of user feedback, SL developed a range of statistical products and services for different user needs.

All statistics prepared according to the OSWP are publicly available, and are released in accordance with the release calendar. Statistics are accompanied by comprehensive metadata, including quality indicators and methodological documents, available in standardised formats.

The Peer Review team met several groups of users of official statistics from different sectors (public and private institutions, academia, media), and was provided with generally positive feedback about the statistics and services of SL. However, users expressed some dissatisfaction with the Official Statistics Portal and proposed some improvements to it.

This chapter considers how dissemination and communication with users could be further improved through:

- Improving the Official Statistics Portal;

- Developing marketing of SL products and services;

- Developing the use of social networks;

- Promoting the access to micro-data for researchers.

4.2.1.1 IMPROVING THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS PORTAL

At the beginning of 2013, SL launched the Official Statistics Portal — a multifunctional statistical information system. The ultimate goal is that all statistics produced on the basis of OSWP, regardless of the institution, would be included in the Portal.

The Official Statistics Portal offers users many opportunities: accessing sets of indicators and pre-defined tables, forming and saving one's own data tables which are automatically updated when the information is updated in the database, creating one's own information release calendar, subscribing to statistical news about a certain subject, etc. The analysis tool in the database of indicators enables comparison of indicators from different domains, formation of charts and maps, calculation of various statistics (totals, differences, averages, medians, minimum and maximum values), exporting tables to other formats, and subscribing to updates. It is especially convenient for those users who constantly need to monitor detailed social and economic phenomena by various breakdowns.

Apart from current statistics, users are able to access historical indicators of interwar and Soviet Lithuania, with detailed information and metadata on the historical indicator of interest.

For advanced users the Geographic Information System (GIS) applications are available: an interactive atlas for spatial and temporal analysis of statistical indicators by administrative unit, and an application for the analysis of indicators at a more detailed territorial level.

On the Portal a range of statistical literacy tools for different user groups is available. For students and novice researchers, public use files from different statistical surveys are available as a teaching resource.

In meetings with users, the Peer Review team observed a wide range of views on the Portal. Some users praised its facilities, while others were critical, in particular of the database of indicators, comparing it unfavourably with the system that preceded it. The main criticisms are related to response time, the amount of time needed to get the data they sought, the difficulty of integrating the data into their own systems, and the inability to download data in bulk. In addition, it was mentioned that metadata were not always accessible next to data. To some extent these difficulties are acknowledged by SL by a notice, on their main database of indicators page, giving users contact numbers if they have difficulties using the system or finding what they want, offering a weekly training course, and providing links to videos on how to use the database of indicators.

The Peer Reviewers noted that the Official Statistics Portal has some visualisation tools, but more visualisation would enhance data utility, particularly for users lacking statistical literacy. For such users, the availability of different kinds of data visualisation could significantly enhance data utility.

The number of users of small-screen devices like smartphones and tablets has increased considerably. However, the Official Statistics Portal does not provide user-friendly solutions for accessing information using such devices. Neither the website nor the Portal are developed using responsive design techniques, and this gives users with small screens a sub-optimal viewing experience. There is no specific application available for users of smartphones or tablets.

SL has taken some first steps in developing web services (a software system designed to support interoperable machine-to-machine interaction over a network) on their GIS application. The Peer Review team sees room for developing web services for the database of indicators.

The Peer Reviewers were given a demonstration of the system, and also spent time individually using the facilities of the Portal and the database of indicators. Overall, the team was impressed by the system: while it is rather difficult to use due to its complexity, it is innovative, ambitious in its scope, and has great potential. To enhance its usability and accessibility, the Peer Review team encourages SL to further develop the following functionalities:

- Bulk download;

- Visible information on pre-release;

- Visualisations;

- Archiving all statistical releases;

- Accessibility and applications for small screen devices;

- Web services for the database of indicators.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving accessibility, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

1. **Statistics Lithuania should enhance the usability and accessibility of the Official Statistics Portal (and its database of indicators) for both occasional and expert users, by implementing improvements to its content, design, functionality and performance (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).**

The Peer Reviewers observed that the release calendar does not show changes in cases where the calendar has been revised.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

2. **Statistics Lithuania should allow users to assess timeliness by keeping track, on the website, of any changes made to the initial release calendar (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).**

The Peer Reviewers observed that releases published before 2013 are no longer available on the portal. The corresponding data are of course available for the pre-2013 period, but information in releases is important for some users, and, anyway, archived releases should be available as a matter of principle (CoP Principle 15).

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

3. **Statistics Lithuania should give access on its website to all statistical releases whatever are their dates of publication (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).**

Due to limited translation resources, only the main press releases are translated into English. Thus limited access is granted for international users interested in statistical information related to Lithuania, such as potential investors. The Peer Review team is of the opinion that more content in

English, such as press releases, quality and methodological reports, would enhance the accessibility of statistical information.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving accessibility, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 4. **Statistics Lithuania should increase the English content on its website and on the Official Statistics Portal (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).**

4.2.1.2 DEVELOPING MARKETING OF STATISTICS LITHUANIA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

SL carries out many actions to promote its products and services. For example, the Director General is regularly invited to participate in annual meetings of professional organisations or municipalities. The window of the Vilnius headquarters, located on a main avenue, displays the latest publications. But more is needed in the digital era to give full visibility to the wide array of products and services available.

Indeed, it was observed by the Peer Review team that members of different user groups lack full awareness of the availability and accessibility of statistical products and services available by SL, limiting the ability to explore the website and the Official Statistics Portal to their full potential. For example, the GIS functionality has been used so far by only a small number of users.

The Peer Reviewers also noted that the Official Statistics Portal does not rank highly in search engine results, especially in English language. Search engine optimisation could significantly promote the Portal and increase the number of visitors it receives from search engines.

SL manages a database of key users of paid services, and uses this database for usage analysis and for promoting its products and services. SL could encourage a wider range of users to register on the Portal in order to get regular information on new products.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving accessibility, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 5. **Statistics Lithuania should widely promote its products and services and train users in using them to their full potential (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).**
> 6. **Statistics Lithuania should use search engines optimisation techniques to enhance the visibility of its website and Official Statistics Portal (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).**

4.2.1.3 DEVELOPING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media such as Twitter, Facebook and the WordPress blog are used by SL to provide statistical information to society, to reach additional user groups and to promote statistical information. The content is usually lighter than on the Official Statistics Portal, aiming at presenting statistical information in a more entertaining way.

SL's user surveys show increasing numbers of users using or asking for social media for accessing statistics. The Peer Review team observed that Twitter messages, while informative or entertaining, do not include a link to the press release on the Portal. The Peer Reviewers were informed that Twitter lacks a broad audience in Lithuania. However, the clear international trend is the growing access to the Internet via social networks, to the detriment of classical websites. To capitalise on the use that SL already makes of Twitter, Facebook and the blog, it is the opinion of the Peer Reviewers that SL should promote, and publicise as widely as possible, its use of social networks for providing statistical information to society.

In addition, the Peer Reviewers consider that the introduction of an English-language version of their Twitter feed, with links to the Official Statistics Portal release section, would enlarge the audience for Lithuanian statistics outside Lithuania.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving accessibility, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

7. Statistics Lithuania should promote and widely publicise its use of social networks to disseminate statistical information (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

8. Statistics Lithuania should develop an English language version of their Twitter account with links to the statistical releases (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

4.2.1.4 PROMOTING ACCESS TO MICRO-DATA FOR RESEARCHERS

There is an increasing demand for micro-data for research purposes in the European Union. SL provides access to some anonymised datasets to bona fide researchers under strict conditions. So far, this facility is not widely used. It would be beneficial to promote this facility and its technical possibilities, and show Lithuanian researchers leading examples of research projects using micro-data in other countries.

Remote access to micro-data can provide researchers with a user-friendly service while simultaneously safeguarding data security and the Peer Reviewers endorse plans by SL to provide this service.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving researchers' access to micro-data, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

9. Statistics Lithuania should further develop and promote their remote access system to anonymised micro-data for research purposes (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15).

4.2.2 Strengthen quality management to gain efficiency

The quality management system of SL focuses the institution's activity on ensuring the quality of statistical information and processes and enhancing performance efficiency. In 2013 the quality management system standard ISO 9001:2008 was confirmed for the third time and the certificate of compliance was awarded to SL. The ISO auditors determined that the quality policy followed by SL is in line with its strategy and oriented towards the needs and expectations of its stakeholders. In discussion with SL managers and employees, the Peer Reviewers clearly observed the strong culture of quality in the institution. This observation has been confirmed by many users who clearly stated that they have trust in the quality of SL's products and services, particularly in the accuracy, reliability, timeliness and punctuality of its statistics.

The quality policy reflects the key commitments of SL, set in its Strategy for 2013–2017, comprising the mission statement, strategic objective and main trends together with the improvement actions and expected results. According to the ISO 9001 requirements, processes, and the interactions between them, have been defined. Processes, activities, responsibilities, sequences and links, and associated documentation, are shown on or linked to the SL process map. The process map and its use have been demonstrated to the Peer Review team, and it is clear that the map is a strong tool for standardisation and the improvement of quality.

This chapter considers how quality management could be further improved through:

- Standardisation of editing and imputation procedures;

- Developing a standard methodology for testing questionnaires;

- Implementing the Generic Statistical Business Process Model;

- Further developing electronic data collection;

- Centralising administrative data receipt;

- Extending quality management practices to the NSS.

4.2.2.1 STANDARDISING EDITING AND IMPUTATION PROCEDURES

The Methodology and Quality division of SL is responsible for quality management at the institutional level, and survey managers are responsible at the survey or product level. The division is also responsible for setting general requirements for statistical production, coordinating the introduction of common methodologies, and monitoring their implementation. It develops new statistical methods and initiates their application in statistical divisions, and provides methodological consultations on the deployment of approved methods and applications. The division is also involved in the estimation process, in calculating of errors and quality characteristics, in analysing possibilities to increase the usage of administrative data, and in monitoring quality indicators at institutional and survey level.

The aforementioned Methodology Commission, established by the Director General and consisting of experts from SL, discusses and approves all methodologies used by SL and ONAs. Statistical survey methodologies are prepared according to standard procedures, and they include concepts, definitions and classifications applied in surveys.

At present, the Methodology and Quality division provides general rules for editing and imputation. The analysis of edits and imputations done at the data entry stage is centralised and used to assess the quality of data collection. Editing and imputation techniques at the data entry and micro-editing stage follow standard methodological rules. The analysis of effects of editing and imputations on the accuracy of statistical results is performed separately for each survey by the team carrying out the survey.

Recently, the Methodology and Quality division has established a working group to collect the various methods of editing and imputation used in SL and to propose standardised methods that could be applied to various surveys and administrative sources. The timing is appropriate, as SL has decided to move from the use of SAS as the main statistical software to the free, open-source package R. Therefore many programs will have to be rewritten, including those implementing editing and imputation procedures.

The Peer Reviewers support this project, which will also improve the efficiency of SL's statistical processes.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving sound methodology and cost effectiveness, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 10. **Statistics Lithuania should standardise the methodology, editing rules and algorithms for data editing and imputation (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7 and 10).**

4.2.2.2 DEVELOPING A STANDARD METHODOLOGY FOR TESTING QUESTIONNAIRES

SL tests new questionnaires, taking into account of aspects that can have an impact on the quality of data, the response burden, or the work of interviewers. Testing can be performed by internal experts, respondents or interviewers. Survey managers are responsible for the decisions on the testing method considering the nature of the statistical survey. The draft questionnaire, together with a form filled for the coordination and harmonisation of questionnaires, is provided to the Strategic Planning and Official Statistics Programmes division. New questionnaires and the comments of respondents, the results of testing, and the estimation of burden on respondents, are provided for deliberation to the Methodology Commission.

Questionnaires are tested to explore their clarity, consistency and usability, and to assess if the number of variables being collected can be reduced. However, the Peer Reviewers were informed that questionnaire testing did not follow a strict protocol, and that it usually involved just a limited amount of informal testing. The Peer Reviewers recommend that SL shall develop a standard testing environment, using testing methodologies such as sample interviews, focus groups and cognitive testing, to further improve the quality of questionnaires.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving appropriate statistical procedures, the **Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 11. Statistics Lithuania should develop a standard environment for questionnaire testing (European statistics Code of Practice, Indicator 8.2).

4.2.2.3 IMPLEMENTING THE GENERIC STATISTICAL BUSINESS PROCESS MODEL

SL is mapping its activities and processes to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), though it does not have plans to reorganise its structure according to the model.

The Peer Review team considers that, given the high level of quality management SL has reached, it would benefit from some alignment of its organisation to the GSBPM. This would enable SL to further develop management of process-related metadata, to efficiently manage the OSWP, and to cooperate with other ESS partners in the exchange of standard statistical methods and procedures. SL could also take advantage of the experience of other European countries that have made progress in implementing this model.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by commitment to quality, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 12. Statistics Lithuania should further develop its quality management system by considering the alignment, where practicable, of its internal organisation to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4).

4.2.2.4 FURTHER DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DATA COLLECTION

SL has successfully developed e.Statistika, the electronic data collection system for legal entities. The implementation of the system has had an important effect on response burden reduction and has raised the level of satisfaction of data providers.

Electronic data collection was also used for the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. The electronic version of the census (e-Census) was opened for two weeks in March; respondents were authenticated via the e-Government gateway and provided the details online. The electronic questionnaires were partly pre-filled with data from various administrative sources. About a third of the population chose to use this method. The other two-thirds were covered using the traditional

method of enumeration. The positive experience of the e-Census suggests that an electronic data collection system for collecting household data would have many advantages.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by reducing the burden on respondents, and improving cost effectiveness, accuracy and timeliness, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 13. **Statistics Lithuania should implement electronic data collection for households (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 9, 10, 12, and 13).**

4.2.2.5 CENTRALISING ADMINISTRATIVE DATA RECEIPT

SL's increasing use of administrative data from various public institutions for production of official statistics has significantly reduced the response burden on both businesses and households. The Peer Reviewers consider that the implementation of a central administrative data receipt point would make the data collection process more secure, transparent and efficient.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving quality, efficiency, and appropriate statistical procedures, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 14. **Statistics Lithuania should provide a central point for the receipt of all administrative data (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 8, and 10).**

4.2.2.6 EXTENDING QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

SL has been auditing statistical surveys for many years. This work is performed by the Internal Audit Division using reviewers selected from the advanced mathematicians and statisticians of SL. The aspects assessed in an audit include management and planning, methodology, staff qualification and competence, the application of IT tools, the dissemination of the resultant statistical information, and user relations.

Self-assessment of statistical processes is performed by survey managers using a checklist for quality assessment of surveys. Every statistical survey is assessed once in five years. Process management allows monitoring the quality characteristics during the process, and the procedures on quality monitoring and reporting are described in the process map.

As the main coordinator of official statistics, SL shares its quality practices with the ONAs. In the view of the Peer Review team, introducing the idea of co-participative quality audits, involving staff from other institutions in the evaluation teams performing the audit exercises, would enhance the value of the recommendations and enrich the assessments with broader perspective.

Training about quality is essential to ensure continuous improvement and commitment of all the persons involved in the production and dissemination process. Quality is indeed part of the basic training SL organises for its new staff. However, staff of institutions managing official statistics can participate in SL's courses only to a very limited extent: SL's five-year strategic plan for 2013-2017 has, as one of its measures, the aim of achieving at least one course or seminar a year for representatives of ONAs.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 15. **Statistics Lithuania should further develop training on quality management, quality assurance and quality reporting for other producers of official statistics in the national statistical system, and in particular for their new staff (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4).**
>
> 16. **Statistics Lithuania should promote the practice of systematic quality audits by other statistical authorities, and foster the participation of external reviewers in the auditing process (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4).**

4.2.3   Upgrade the human resources policy and internal organisation

SL recruits good staff with relevant academic skills. The Peer Review team formed the opinion that the staff is highly educated and well-trained. But staff levels are strictly controlled by Government, and therefore this resource must be managed with a particularly high level of efficiency.

This chapter considers how the use of human resources and the internal organisation could be further improved through:

- Promoting internal mobility;
- Developing English skills of the staff;
- Relocating some of the data preparation divisions to Vilnius.

4.2.3.1   PROMOTING INTERNAL MOBILITY

At the end of 2013, SL had 546 employees (excluding vacancies and staff on maternity leave), among them 98 interviewers for household surveys and 26 price registrars. The maximum number of employees allowed by the Government is 581. The Peer Review team was told that this number was considered by the management sufficient to perform the expected tasks pertaining to the missions of SL.

The average age of the staff is 47, and only 15% of the staff is under 30, 15% are between 31 and 40, but 50% are over 50. This means that in the next ten or fifteen years, half of the staff of SL will be replaced. It is thus important to prepare at this stage for the new generation, especially in management positions.

The staff of SL is highly educated, as three out of four have a university degree. However, when interviewed by the Peer Review team, some junior staff expressed the feeling that it would be difficult for them to reach a management level, partly due to internal policy and culture.

Indeed, it was explained to the Peer Review team that SL has a long-standing "expert" culture, promoting acquisition of experience and expertise in a specific domain by retaining staff for much of their career in the same unit. Thus, heads of sub-divisions or divisions are usually chosen among the staff of the unit. Each manager has in a certain way the responsibility of identifying the staff member most able to take over his or her position, and to prepare that staff member in this regard.

This has two main consequences. Firstly, staff, and especially young staff, forms the impression that promotion follows a long-run process, and that their specific skills and motivation can be recognised only after a long time. For some of the younger staff, this can be demotivating. Secondly, young staff is encouraged by the system to stay in the same unit, instead of gaining experience and knowledge of the institution and its various domains and methodologies. Only personnel in horizontal units, such as the Methodology and Quality Division, have a chance to get a broad view of the scope of activities performed by SL. This represents a certain loss of competence, as many innovations or improvements come from the implementation of a methodology or a new technique to another area. For example, having experience in dissemination of statistical information can help produce statistics and meta-information that fit better the needs of the users. Cross-experience is also a powerful factor in standardising best-practice solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency. As salaries are not very attractive in the public sector, it is important for SL to give reasonable career expectations to its younger staff.

In addition, newcomers may not have the opportunity to choose their first position. Offering the possibility to new staff to discover new areas during the first years of their career would give them the choice of the domain in which they really want to become expert.

The Peer Review team was informed that staff members willing to have experience in another area have the possibility to request specific training in this domain, and that this may be granted. However, staff may be reluctant to give the impression that they are not so happy in their unit, thus hampering their chances for being promoted within this unit. In addition, in the absence of a regular "open market", it might be difficult for a volunteer to find a position available in another unit of his or her choice. Moreover, some staff, to their own disadvantage, will settle into a "comfort zone" and not request a move.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, SL has had, for many years, a high-standard system of quality management. It includes a very detailed and standardised system to document processes. This represents an opportunity to facilitate mobility, as staff joining a new unit can easily access all appropriate documentation.

It is the view of the Peer Review team that SL would benefit from establishing an internal mobility policy, which could allow for example:

- That young staff occupy a post in two or three units in the first ten years of their career;

- That for the appointment of heads of unit, priority would be given to candidates demonstrating experience in more than one domain.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving the efficiency of its human resources management, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 17. **Statistics Lithuania should establish a policy to promote the internal mobility of its staff, in particular its young staff (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8, and 10).**

4.2.3.2   DEVELOPING ENGLISH SKILLS OF THE STAFF

The Peer Review team was told that limited command of English of many staff members was hindering their participation in international activities, such as joint ESS projects or task forces, where professional and fluent language skills are required for inputs like preparation of methodology, analytical overviews, etc. The Peer Reviewers could also notice that even some of the young staff had difficulties to express themselves in English.

To be fully active in the ESS as well as being able to benefit from other countries' experience or develop products for international users, it is of the utmost importance that statisticians have a good command of English, being the common language used in the international statistical community.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving the skills of its human resources, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 18. **Statistics Lithuania should further develop training in English for its staff, in particular for young staff (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8, and 15)**

4.2.3.3   RELOCATING SOME OF THE LOCAL DATA PREPARATION DIVISIONS IN VILNIUS

SL has five divisions in charge of data preparation, located in Kaunas (23 staff), Klaipėda (11 staff), Panevėžys (9 staff), Šiauliai (9 staff), and Vilnius (34 staff). Their tasks include data from legal entities collection and primary editing, consulting respondents on data provision, and contact

with non-respondents. These divisions are under the responsibility of the Deputy Director General in charge of business statistics together with seven other divisions (Agricultural and Environmental Statistics Division, Construction and Investment Statistics Division, Domestic Trade Division, Economic Entities Register Division, Enterprise Statistics Division, Industry Statistics Division, Transport and Service Statistics Division).

The e.Statistika system for electronic transmission of statistical information is increasingly used by companies to respond to statistical surveys. Currently 82% of legal entities complete their questionnaires via e.Statistika. The system includes pre-filled information available from administrative sources and access to feedback information, for example to compare the company with its sector. While the data preparation divisions still perform primary editing of all questionnaires, including the electronic ones, the workload tends to be reduced due to higher response rates and the better quality of data received via the electronic system.

The Peer Review team was informed that a recent internal audit of the data preparation divisions led to the transfer of seven positions from the data preparation divisions to other activities in the headquarters in Vilnius.

However, the Peer Review team is of the opinion that the tasks of these divisions could be performed remotely, i.e. without being geographically close to the respondents. In addition, the resource of 86 staff members of SL allocated to tasks such as primary control of legal entities questionnaires seems rather disproportionate in regard to the number of companies surveyed, and it is possible that more of the staff could be reallocated to other statistical areas. In addition, the small size of three of the data preparation divisions, consisting of around 10 staff members, may entail additional functioning costs as well as lower productivity compared to the larger ones.

While consideration should be given to the staff of the data preparation divisions, the Peer Review team recommends considering a reduction in the number of these divisions. While it may be difficult to relocate all the staff of these divisions in Vilnius, due to insufficient office space, it is suggested to keep the two main locations, Vilnius and Kaunas, in order to reach a critical mass. This move could be programmed in the mid-term to accompany the reduction of workload of the data preparation divisions.

Another advantage of a reduction in the number of data preparation divisions would be to decrease the number of divisions under the responsibility of the Deputy Director General of Business Statistics, who currently is in charge of 12 divisions.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving the efficiency of its organisation, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

19. **Statistics Lithuania should continue monitoring the workload and productivity of the data preparation divisions, in order to free potentially available resources for other activities and possibly reduce the number of such divisions (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 10).**

4.2.4 Strengthen coordination with other producers of official statistics

Coordination is already one of the strengths of SL. It launched the Official Statistics Portal in the beginning of 2013, and is signing agreements with all ONAs producing European statistics and publishing them on their website. These agreements cover the organisation, quality assurance, and dissemination of official statistics. Indeed, one of the key objectives of SL's five-year strategic plan for 2013-2017 is to strengthen the coordination of institutions producing official statistics. This chapter considers how statistical coordination could be further improved through:

- The single portal for the NSS;
- Improving inter-agency communication;
- Skills transfer between SL and ONAs.

4.2.4.1 SINGLE PORTAL FOR NATIONAL OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Currently, the many institutions that collect and produce official statistics publish them in various ways and forms, on their websites, in publications, press releases, and databases. The websites vary considerably in their design and structure; while they provide, presumably, good information on their core businesses, the websites are often not suitable for disseminating statistics. Moreover, this variation in design and quality adversely affects the accessibility of official statistics.

In creating the Official Statistics Portal, one of the aims of SL is to address this problem by including all official statistics in the portal, thus providing for all users a single contact point and common methods of access. Currently, the portal contains only the statistics published by SL. However, their ambition is that, by 2017, all statistical indicators produced by ONAs will be integrated into the common portal. Furthermore, statistical information prepared by ONAs is published according to their own release calendars, but SL also plans to integrate these calendars into the common Portal release calendar by 2017.

The Peer Review team fully supports these developments, which would amount to a considerable achievement in coordinating official statistics and improving their usability and accessibility. The Peer Review team also suggests that:

- There should be a fixed release time for all official statistics (just as there is currently for the statistics published by SL).
- SL should monitor and assess the compliance of ONAs with the pre-announced calendar.
- The opportunity should be taken to include the standard metadata and quality reports in the Official Statistics Portal.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by strengthening coordination with other producers of official statistics, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 20. **Statistics Lithuania should strengthen its coordination role so that all official statistics are published via the Official Statistics Portal, according to a common release calendar, accompanied by standard metadata and quality reports (Coordination).**

4.2.4.2 IMPROVING INTER-AGENCY COMMUNICATION

There are various fora for sharing knowledge within the NSS. Technical knowledge and good practice are exchanged during meetings of the Statistical Council, the Lithuanian Statistical Society, various cross-institutional working groups, as well as conferences, seminars and projects. However, while SL has implemented a very effective electronic document management system for

its own internal use, document sharing between SL and the ONAs is generally done by using email. While email is of course a useful and sometimes essential tool, it does not provide an effective means of collaborating and sharing knowledge across a widely-spread interest group.

The Peer Review team considers that effective coordination requires effective communication, and that this should be based on extranet technology that would be accessible to statistical staff in SL and the ONAs. This could strengthen links and enhance knowledge sharing, communication, collaboration and coordination throughout the whole NSS. It could provide a forum for discussion, and act as an information repository for:

- Implementing the CoP;

- Preparing the OSWP and reports on its implementation;

- Cross-institutional working groups;

- Quality management;

- Methodology, standards and guidelines;

- Reports of EU Working Party meetings;

- Progress on relevant draft EU legal acts;

- Sharing information on the use of IT tools;

- Linking data to produce new statistical information;

- Sharing experience and exchanging information about current projects.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP by improving communication with other producers of official statistics, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

> 21. **Statistics Lithuania should implement extranet technology in order to strengthen links and enhance knowledge sharing, communication, collaboration and coordination throughout the national statistical system (Coordination).**

4.2.4.3   SKILLS TRANSFER BETWEEN STATISTICS LITHUANIA AND OTHER PRODUCERS OF STATISTICS

SL places a strong emphasis on the continuous improvement of qualifications and competence of their staff. An annual training plan is prepared, which is approved by the order of Director General based on the results of the annual appraisal of staff performance and the staff competence survey, performed every two years. There is also special job orientation training for new staff.

Apart from external training organised by Training Centre of the Lithuanian Ministry of Finance, Eurostat, the IMF, etc., internal courses are provided as required on quality management, metadata management, data editing techniques, sampling, classifications, R package, data analysis, seasonal adjustment and various other statistical issues. The staff can also participate in special workshops conducted by their colleagues of SL.

SL provides regular training on the CoP to representatives of the ONAs, and invites them to the occasional seminars that they organise. However, the staff of ONAs is not invited to the internal courses provided by SL.

The Peer Review team considers that there would be benefit to the NSS as a whole, including improved coordination, if relevant staff of ONAs could attend the internal methodological courses and workshops given by SL. It is noted that SL intends, in 2015, to conduct a poll of ONAs to identify their needs in statistical training and compile the list of themes for appropriate trainings/seminars to be performed by their experts. The Peer Review team considers this should

go further and that staff of ONAs should be able to attend relevant internal courses organised by SL. The Peer Review team acknowledges that there are resource implications to this proposal, and that there may be some administrative obstacles, but feels that such hurdles can be overcome.

Currently, staff exchange does not take place between SL and the ONAs. Occasional time-limited staff exchanges would be beneficial to the individuals and organisations concerned, and to the NSS as a whole. Again, while the Peer Review team was informed that there were constraints to such exchanges, it believes that efforts should be made to overcome these.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, and to improve the skills exchange between SL and other producers of statistics, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

22. Where appropriate, Statistics Lithuania should invite relevant staff of other authorities producing statistics to attend the internal methodological courses and workshops that it organises (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 7, Coordination).

23. Statistics Lithuania should examine, with the appropriate authorities, the best ways to facilitate occasional staff exchange with other producers of official statistics (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 7, Coordination).

4.3 National Statistical Institute views where they diverge from Peer Reviewers' assessment

Statistics Lithuania's diverging view on recommendation 23:

According to the Law on Civil Service of the Republic of Lithuania, a civil servant may be transferred to another post in the same or another state or municipal institution or agency only in specific cases, e. g. only upon the civil servant's request; in case of vacancy in the civil service post; when the post is of the same or lower category; a civil servant meets special requirements set out in the job description. However, the transfer can only be permanent without the guarantee that the position in the previous employment is preserved.

We would like to stress that the Law on Civil Service does not allow staff exchanges among governmental institutions, including producers of official statistics. The implementation of this recommendation goes beyond the SL's mandate.

ANNEX A: PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT

PEER REVIEW VISIT TO LITHUANIA

20-24 October 2014

Statistics Lithuania (29 Gedimino Ave., Vilnius)
Room 434, 4th floor

AGENDA

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
Day 1 – Monday 20 October 2014			
09.00 – 10.30	PR team discussion to finalise the preparation of the visit.	PR team	Mr Jean-Michel Durr, Mr Adrian Redmond, Mr Tomaž Smrekar
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 12.30	Preparatory meeting with the NSI coordinator team and, possibly, other national participants in the visit to discuss practical aspects of the visit.	Statistics Lithuania	**NSI coordinator team:** Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Ms Audronė Miškinienė, Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Mr Valerij Žavoronok **Representatives of other producers:** Ms Valdemaras Sviackevičius, Ms Aleksandras Savilionis
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch		
13.30 – 14.00	Welcome and introduction of programme, organisational matters	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Vilija Lapėnienė, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Ms Dalia Ambrozaitienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė, Mr Raimondas Rimša, Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Ms Audronė Miškinienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė
14.00 – 15.00	General information session with a description on how the national statistical system is organised (bodies, distribution of responsibilities, relations between authorities).	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Vilija Lapėnienė, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Ms Dalia Ambrozaitienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė, Mr Raimondas Rimša, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Ms Audronė Miškinienė
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break		
15.15 – 16.15	Coordination role of the NSI	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Ms Irida Žibūdienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Birutė Liberienė, Ms Kristina Liutkienė, Ms Audronė Miškinienė, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė
16.15 – 17.15	Cooperation / level of integration of the ESS	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Audronė Miškinienė, Ms Raimonda Šimienė, Ms Jolita Galeckienė, Ms Gabija Ramšaitė, Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Mr Valerij Žavoronok, Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Birutė Liberienė, Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Vilija Lapėnienė
Day 2 – Tuesday 21 October 2014			
09.00 – 10.30	Meeting with main users – Ministries and other public/private institutions (including Central Bank as a user)	Statistics Lithuania	Mr Darius Abazorius, Ms Lina Jurevičiūtė, Mr Andrius Kurklietis, Mr Evaldas Pranckevičius, Ms Alvyra Vaitauskienė, Mr Vytautas Juršėnas, Mr Mindaugas Žilionis, Ms Albertas Kasperavičius, Ms Darius Vižlenskas, Ms Laura Kazlauskaitė, Ms Kamilė Sabaliauskaitė, Ms Aušra Balsytė, Mr Darius Imbrasas, Ms Eugenija Tvarijonavičiūtė, Ms Vilija Tauraitė, Ms Julita Varanauskienė **Statistics Lithuania:** Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė, Ms Birutė Liberienė, Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 –	Meeting with main users –	Statistics	Ms Aušra Lėka, Mr Mindaugas Samkus, Ms Vytautas Žeimantas

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
11.45	Media	Lithuania	**Statistics Lithuania:** Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Birutė Liberienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Vilija Lapėnienė
11.45 – 12.45	Meeting with main users – Scientific community	Statistics Lithuania	Mr Vilijandas Bagdonavičius, Mr Domantas Jasilionis, Mr Vytautas Kazakevičius, Mr Alfredas Račkauskas, Mr Rimantas Rudzkis, Ms Vlada Stankūnienė **Statistics Lithuania:** Ms Birutė Liberienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Mr Raimondas Rimša
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch		
13.30 – 15.00	The statistical law and related legislation (CoP principles 1, 2, 5 and 6)	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Irida Žibūdienė, Ms Margarita Malakauskienė, Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Birutė Liberienė, Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Vilija Lapėnienė, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Ms Dalia Ambrozaitienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė, Mr Raimondas Rimša, Ms Audronė Miškinienė
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break		
15.15 – 17.00	Programming, planning and resources, including training (CoP principles 3, 9 and 10)	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Ms Agnė Mikalonytė, Ms Kristina Liutkienė, Ms Daliutė Kavaliauskienė, Ms Vera Bevziuk, Ms Violeta Šalnienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė, Mr Raimondas Rimša, Ms Audronė Miškinienė
Day 3 – Wednesday 22 October 2014			
09.00 – 10.30	Quality (organisational structure, tools, monitoring...) (CoP principles 4 and 11 to 15)	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Ms Daliutė Kavaliauskienė, Ms Laima Grižaitė, Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Birutė Liberienė, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Ms Audronė Miškinienė
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break(Presentation of OSP functionalities)		Ms Jana Vanagė
10.45 – 11.45	Implementation of Quality management: concrete example and discussion	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Milda Šličkutė-Šeštokienė, Ms Laimutė Maksimavičienė, Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Ms Dalia Ambrozaitienė, Ms Audronė Miškinienė
11.45 – 13.15	Dissemination, including user's consultation (CoP principles 6, 11 and 15)	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Laima Grižaitė, Ms Eglė Kasperavičiūtė, Ms Birutė Liberienė, Ms Margarita Malakauskienė, Ms Ana Gricevič, Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Audronė Miškinienė, Mr Raimondas Rimša
13.15 – 14.00	Lunch		
14.00 – 15.00	Methodology, data collection, data processing and administrative data (CoP principles 2, 7 and 8)	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Daliutė Kavaliauskienė, Ms Nadežda Fursova, Ms Šaltenienė Nijolė, Mr Vytautas Azbainis, Ms Milda Šličkutė-Šeštokienė, Ms Laimutė Maksimavičienė, Ms Vera Bevziuk, Ms Regina Deveikytė, Ms Jūratė Šinkūnienė, Ms Violeta Kunigelienė, Ms Inga Masiulaitytė-Šukevič, Ms Kristina Liutkienė, Ms Violeta Šalnienė, Ms Olga Trofimova, Ms Antanina Valiulienė, Ms Giedrė Vaišnoraitė, Ms Aušra Skorniakova, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Ms Dalia Ambrozaitienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė, Mr Raimondas Rimša
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break		
15.15 – 17.00	Methodology, data collection, data processing and administrative data (CoP principles 2, 7 and 8) (Cont'd)	Statistics Lithuania	(Cont'd)
Day 4 – Thursday 23 October 2014			
09.00 – 10.00	Meeting with the Agricultural Information and Rural Business Centre	Agricultural Information and Rural Business Centre	Ms Sigitas Puodžiukas, Ms Aleksandras Savilionis **Statistics Lithuania:** Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Aušra Jablonskienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė
10.00 – 10.45	Confidentiality (CoP principles 5)	Statistics Lithuania	Mr Raimondas Rimša, Ms Margarita Malakauskienė, Ms Laura Vilimė, Ms Olga Trofimova, Mr Valerij Žavoronok, Mr Sigitas Leskauskas, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė
10.45 –	Coffee break		

Time	Programme	Organisation	Participants
11.00			
11.00 – 12.00	Meeting with the Institute of Hygiene	Institute of Hygiene	Ms Rita Gaidelytė, Ms Vilė Cicėnienė, Ms Danė Krisiulevičienė **Ministry of Health:** Ms Rima Vaitkienė, Ms Daiva Dudutienė **Statistics Lithuania:** Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Inga Masiulaitytė-Šukevič, Ms Dalia Ambrozaitienė
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch		
13.30 – 15.00	Meeting with Junior staff	Statistics Lithuania	Mr Raimondas Malinauskas, Ms Kristina Kiriliauskaitė, Ms Aušra Skorniakova, Ms Daiva Vainorienė, Ms Milda Urbonaitė, Ms Žaneta Jakubonytė, Ms Donata Vosyliūtė, Ms Eglė Senkutė, Ms Agnė Gedvilienė, Ms Ignė Graičiūnienė, Ms Audronė Burokaitė, Ms Rūta Sakalauskaitė
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break		
15.15 – 16.30	Meeting with main data providers/respondents	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Rima Melnikovienė, Ms Jelena Čerpak, Mr Danas Juzėnas, Ms Ana Cicėnienė, Ms Birutė Valienė, Mr Alvidas Bujavičius, Ms Giedrė Žilinskaitė **Statistics Lithuania:** Ms Daliutė Kavaliauskienė, Mr Vytautas Azbainis, Ms Violeta Šalnienė, Head, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Dalia Ambrozaitienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė
Day 5 – Friday 24 October 2014			
09.00 – 10.30	PR team discussion		PR team
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break		
10.45 – 11.45	Clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas	Statistics Lithuania	PR Team + NSI coordinator team+ Ms Violeta Šalnienė, Ms Vanda Vaitiekūnienė, Ms Zita Serafinienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė, Ms Birutė Liberienė
11.45 – 12.30	PR team discussion (cont'd)		PR team
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch		
13.30 – 15.30	Meeting with senior management: conclusions and recommendations	Statistics Lithuania	Ms Vilija Lapėnienė, Mr Jonas Markelevičius, Ms Dalia Ambrozaitienė, Ms Aldona Gibaitė-Kudžmienė, Mr Raimondas Rimša, Ms Jūratė Petrauskienė, Ms Laura Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė, Ms Gita Burokaitė, Ms Birutė Liberienė, Ms Daiva Jurelevičienė, Ms Daliutė Kavaliauskienė, Ms Kristina Liutkienė, Ms Audronė Miškinienė, Ms Irida Žibūdienė, Ms Milda Šličkutė-Šeštokienė, Ms Laimutė Maksimavičienė, Ms Regina Deveikytė, Ms Aušra Jablonskienė, Ms Gailutė Juškienė, Ms Violeta Kunigelienė, Ms Violeta Šalnienė, Ms Olga Trofimova, Ms Antanina Valiulienė
15.30 – 17.00	Preparation of the report: task sharing	PR team	PR team

ANNEX B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Peer reviewers
1	Mr Jean-Michel Durr, France (chair)
2	Mr Adrian Redmond, Ireland
3	Mr Tomaz Smrekar, Slovenia
	Observer
1	Mr Antonio Consoli, Eurostat, Task Force Peer Reviews
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1	Lapėnienė Vilija, Director General
2	Markelevičius Jonas, First Deputy Director General
3	Ambrozaitienė Dalia, Deputy Director General
4	Gibaitė-Kudžmienė Aldona, Deputy Director General
5	Rimša Raimondas, Deputy Director General
6	Azbainis Vytautas, Head, Economic Entities Register
7	Bevziuk Vera, Deputy Head, Enterprise Statistics Division
8	Burokaitė Audronė, Chief Specialist, Living Standards and Employment Statistics Division
9	Burokaitė Gita, Head, Public Relations Division
10	Deveikytė Regina, Head, Living Standards and Employment Statistics Division
11	Fursova Nadežda, Head of Subdivision, Methodology and Quality Division
12	Galeckienė Jolita, Chief Specialist, European Affairs and International Cooperation Division
13	Gedvilienė Agnė, Chief Specialist, Agricultural and Environmental Statistics Division
14	Graičiūnienė Ignė, Chief Specialist, Living Standards and Employment Statistics Division
15	Gricevič Ana, Chief specialist, Dissemination of Statistical Information
16	Grižaitė Laima, Deputy Head, Public Relations Division
17	Jablonskienė Aušra, Head, Agricultural and Environmental Statistics Division
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19	Jurelevičienė Daiva, Head, Strategic Planning and Official Statistics Programmes Division
20	Juškienė Gailutė, Head, National Accounts Division
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22	Kavaliauskienė Daliutė, Head of Subdivision, Methodology and Quality Division
23	Kiriliauskaitė Kristina, Chief Specialist, Methodology and Quality Division
24	Kunigelienė Violeta, Head, Industry Statistics Division
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26	Liberienė Birutė, Head, Dissemination of Statistical Information

27	Liutkienė Kristina, Acting Head, Human Resource Management Division
28	Lukšaitė-Balakauskienė Laura, Acting Deputy Head, Methodology and Quality Division
29	Maksimavičienė Laimutė, Deputy Head, Labour Statistics Division
30	Malakauskienė Margarita, Deputy Head, Dissemination of Statistical Information
31	Malinauskas Raimondas, Chief Specialist, Information Systems Maintenance Division
32	Masiulaitytė-Šukevič Inga, Head, Demographic and Migration Statistics Division
33	Mikalonytė Agnė, Head, Economy and Finance Division
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36	Petrauskienė Jūratė, Head, Methodology and Quality Division
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46	Trofimova Olga, Head, Information Systems Maintenance Division
47	Urbonaitė Milda, Chief Specialist, Education and Culture Statistics Division
48	Vainorienė Daiva, Chief Specialist, Strategic Planning and Official Statistics Programmes Division
49	Vaišnoraitė Giedrė, Chief Specialist, Methodology and Quality Division
50	Vaitiekūnienė Vanda, Head, Population Census and Survey Organisation Division
51	Valiulienė Antanina, Head, Enterprise Statistics Division
52	Vanagė Jana, Chief Specialist, Dissemination of Statistical Information
53	Vilimė Laura, Chief specialist, Legal Division
54	Vosyliūtė Donata, Chief Specialist, Economic Entities Register
55	Žavoronok Valerij, Deputy Head, Information Systems Maintenance Division
56	Žibūdienė Irida, Head, Legal Division
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1	Puodžiukas Sigitas , Director General
2	Savilionis Aleksandras , Head, Market Information and Economic Analysis Division
3	Sviackevičius Valdemaras , Deputy Director General

	Ministries and other public/private institutions (including Central Bank as a user)
1	Abazorius Darius, Head, Economic Analysis Division, Economic Progress Department, Office of the Government
2	Balsytė Aušra, Chief specialist, Urban and Architecture Division, Territorial Planning, Urban Development and Architecture Department, Ministry of Environment
3	Imbrasas Darius, Economist, Macroeconomics and Forecasting Division, Economics Department, Economics and Financial Stability Service, Central Bank
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5	Juršėnas Vytautas, Chief Specialist, Labour Market Division, Labour Department, Ministry of Social Security and Labour
6	Kasperavičius Albertas, Deputy Director, State Forest Survey Service
7	Kazlauskaitė Laura, Chief specialist, Pollution and Waste Management Accounting Division, Environment Status Assessment Department, Environmental Protection Agency
8	Kurklietis Andrius, Chief Specialist, Macroeconomics Division, Fiscal Policy Department, Ministry of Finance
9	Pranckevičius Evaldas, Head, Economic Analysis Division, Economics and International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Agriculture
10	Sabaliauskaitė Kamilė, Chief specialist, Pollution and Waste Management Accounting Division, Environment Status Assessment Department, Environmental Protection Agency
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12	Tvarijonavičiūtė Eugenija, Head, General Statistics Division, Statistics Department, Economics and Financial Stability Service, Central Bank
13	Vaitauskienė Alvyra, Chief Specialist, Economic Analysis Division, Economics and International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Agriculture
14	Varanauskienė Julita, Household economist, AB SEB bankas
15	Vižlenskas Darius, Head, Forest Use and Statistics Division, State Forest Survey Service
16	Žilionis Mindaugas, Adviser, Economic Policy Division, Economic Development Department, Ministry of Economy
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1	Lėka Aušra , Weekly Veidas
2	Samkus Mindaugas , BNS Agency
3	Žeimantas Vytautas, Daily Verslo žinios
	Scientific community
1	Bagdonavičius Vilijandas , Professor, Habil Doctor, Department of Mathematical Statistics, Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, Vilnius University
2	Jasilionis Domantas , Doctor, Research Scientist of Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR), Senior Research Fellow of Lithuanian Social Research Centre
3	Kazakevičius Vytautas , Professor, Doctor, Head, Department of Mathematical Statistics, Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, Vilnius University
4	Račkauskas Alfredas , Professor, Habil Doctor, Head, Department of Econometric Analysis, Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, Vilnius University

5	Rudzkis Rimantas , Professor, Habil Doctor, Senior Researcher, Probability Theory and Statistics Department, Institute of Mathematics and Informatics, Vilnius University
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2	Vaitkienė Rima , Head, Strategic Health Development Division
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2	Cicėnienė Ana , Director of Personnel and Administration, Lithuanian Business Employers' Confederation
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6	Valienė Birutė , Chief specialist, Finance and Accounting Division, State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour
7	Žilinskaitė Giedrė , Senior Specialist , Market Research and Data Analysis Division, Centre of Registers