European Statistical System Peer Reviews

Guide for NSIs and Other National Authorities

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1 Introduction

This guide is intended to help the national statistical institute (NSI) and other national authorities in preparing the second round of ESS peer reviews.

The guide incorporates the lessons learned during the 2006 – 2008 peer reviews, the two pilot peer reviews in 2013, and takes into account the conclusions of the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) Task Force, which developed the methodology of the peer reviews.

The guide is structured in a way that provides both the background and framework for the peer reviews, and a practical step-by-step approach to preparing the peer reviews. As far as possible, direct links have been included to reference documents for the benefit of the reader of the electronic version of this document.

As a general background to the peer reviews, it is recommended to go the Eurostat website on quality, which includes most of the relevant documents and information on the European Statistical System's implementation of the Code of Practice:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/quality/introduction

Please read this guide carefully and do not hesitate to contact your national coordination desk (see 7.1.B) with any questions you may have. Any suggestions on how to improve this guide are also welcome!

2 Background to the European Statistical System peer reviews

Peer reviews were conducted in the Member States, EFTA countries and Eurostat in 2006-2008. They addressed the institutional environment and dissemination practices covered by Principles 1 to 6 and 15 of the Code of Practice (CoP), and some aspects of the coordination function of each statistical authority within its statistical system.

The 2008 Commission Report on the implementation of the Code of Practice envisaged another round of peer reviews within five years. The Code of Practice was revised in 2011, inter alia strengthening the requirements for independent, trustworthy European statistics. In November 2012 the ESSC endorsed a set of recommendations for a new round of peer reviews. The peer reviews were to assess compliance with all the CoP principles, and in addition to address coordination within the National Statistical System (NSS) and the efficiency of the ESS.

Several important developments in statistical governance since 2008 (the new Statistical Law, the creation of ESGAB and ESAC, Commission Communication 'Towards robust quality management for European Statistics', the revised EDP regulation), and the financial and economic crisis have changed the context of the next round of peer reviews.

3   Framework for the ESS peer review exercise

a. The purpose of the peer reviews

The new round of peer reviews seeks to:

- enhance the credibility of the European Statistical System
- strengthen the System's capacity to produce high quality European Statistics
- further reassure stakeholders about the quality of European Statistics and the trustworthiness of the System
- assess progress made in adherence to the principles of the Code of Practice
- assess progress made in the development of the ESS itself

- better cover the European statistics as a whole.

The new round builds on the successful elements and achievements of the previous round, but is more ambitious against the developments in statistical governance and the changed economic and financial climate. Policy developments, such as the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs and enhanced economic governance, have put statistics in the forefront. Sound high-quality data and statistical analysis are required for policy-making at national and European level. More than ever before, statistics have to be seen as credible and trustworthy, and free of any inappropriate influence or interference.

The CoP and its principles set out a framework for credible and trustworthy statistics. The second round of peer reviews seeks to assess progress made in adherence to the principles of the CoP and to identify areas where further progress should be made. In view of stimulating the transfer of knowledge, it also seeks to highlight innovative practices that different countries have developed when implementing the CoP. The peer reviews will also assess the coordination role of the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) within their National Statistical System and cooperation and the level of integration of the ESS.

The peer reviews introduce an external element to the assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice which otherwise follows a basically self-regulatory approach. It thus enhances transparency and accountability.

b. The scope of the peer reviews

The peer review exercise covers the European Union and the European Free Trade Association Member States. The peer reviews have three separate but closely interlinked phases: preparation of in-country visits, conduct of in-country visits, and preparation and publication of final reports.

The peer reviews will cover all parts of the Code of Practice, the coordination role of NSIs and cooperation and the level of integration of the ESS. There will be a greater focus on comparability than in the 2006-08 peer reviews. This is to be achieved by putting more emphasis on standardisation (including a smaller team of reviewers and the use of the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). In addition, there will be more focus than in the previous round on issues requiring special attention, based on self-assessments and other documentation. Other assessment or monitoring activities will be taken into account. These include activities associated in particular with:

- •   EDP visits
- •   Commitments on Confidence (if established)
- •   ESGAB's monitoring activity.

The involvement of other national authorities

The scope of the peer reviews is limited to European statistics only (defined in Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 as relevant statistics necessary for the performance of the activities of the European Union). This means that other national authorities that produce European statistics will also be part of the exercise. Each Member State has compiled a list of other national authorities according to article 5 of the above Regulation. This list will be the starting point for other national authorities' involvement in the exercise.

It is not in the scope of the exercise that the peer reviewers assess the compliance of *all* other national authorities. Therefore, even if the NSI may decide to send the self-assessment questionnaire (full or lighter, see section 6) to all ONAs in the list, it will have to select typically up to three other national authorities whose completed questionnaires will be assessed by the peer reviewers. The selection is based on the following criteria:

- •   the significance of an ONA as producer of European statistics and
- •   the potential negative impact on the credibility of European statistics produced by an ONA if a problem was to arise.

NSIs will inform Eurostat via the functional mail box ESTAT-ESS-PEER-REVIEWS@ec.europa.eu about the ONAs the NSI proposes to be assessed by the peer reviewers. In order to ensure comparability, through the application of a uniform methodology, Eurostat could propose changes to the ONAs selected, if necessary.

Based on their assessment of the ONAs' replies in the self-assessment questionnaire, the peer reviewers will decide if they will interview the ONAs in question during the peer review visit.

In justified cases, for example because of complex national circumstances, the number of ONAs whose questionnaires are assessed by the peer reviewers can be higher than three.

The involvement of the National Central Banks

It has been agreed between the ESS and the ESCB that the NCB's will conduct their own peer review based on the Public Commitment on European Statistics of the European System of Central Banks (ESCB), which is similar to the ES CoP, and on their current audit procedures.

However, the participation of the NCBs in the ESS peer review exercise as users of European statistics is to be encouraged and welcomed.

The Code of Practice is available in all official languages on Eurostat's website:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-32-11-955

4 The road map for NSIs and other national authorities

The peer review process includes collection of information by the peer reviewers (through a self-assessment questionnaire, documentation to be prepared and submitted to the reviewers by the NSI and additional information collected by the peer reviewers); peer reviewers' analysis of the above; a peer review visit; and the preparation and publication of reports.

The road map will be as follows:

- Launch of the peer reviews by NSIs' self-assessment (NSI questionnaire on compliance with the CoP, questionnaire on coordination and questionnaire on cooperation / integration) and ONAs' self-assessment (full NSI questionnaire / lighter ONA questionnaire on compliance with the CoP): beginning of December 2013

- submission of self-assessment questionnaires completed by the NSIs and ONAs: by 30 April 2014

- submission of core documents (see Annex I): by 30 April 2014 or minimum four weeks before the peer review visit (updated documents would be provided by the national coordinator, if needed, considering the timing of the peer review visit)

- peer review visits: August 2014 – July 2015 based on a global visit programme set up by the central coordination desk (see section 7.1.A) taking into account information received from the NSIs

- draft reports to the NSI: two weeks after the peer review visit

- elaboration of improvement actions by the NSIs: within one month after the reception of the final report.

5 Who are the peer reviewers

The peer reviewers are active or retired senior experts with at least 10 years' experience in official statistics and at least 3 years' experience in middle / senior management. All peer reviewers have thorough knowledge of the ESS. Active peer reviewers will not represent their organisations but will undertake work in their personal capacity.

Each peer review team has three members, including a chair, who is responsible for the work of the team.

The peer review team will be accompanied by an observer from Eurostat.

6 The tools for the process

In order to ensure a greater degree of commonality and comparability in the peer reviews, the Task Force has developed the following standard tools for the exercise:

- A self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) for the NSIs. It should be compiled by the NSIs as the first phase of the peer review. The SAQ follows the structure of the European Statistics Code of Practice. It is subdivided into 15 Principles and a set of indicators for each of the Principles against which their implementation can be reviewed.

- A lighter self-assessment questionnaire for other national authorities.

  The NSI is to decide whether an ONA should complete the full or the lighter SAQ.

  The ESS Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) supports the completion of the self-assessment questionnaires. When completing the questionnaire, respondents assess how they have implemented /

are implementing the CoP against the methods set out in the QAF. The QAF now covers principles 4 and 7 - 15 of the CoP. There are no QAF methods for principles 1 – 3 because of their self-explanatory nature. The Task Force developed QAF-like methods for principles 5 – 6 (see Annex II) for the purposes of the peer reviews.

The QAF for principles 4 and 7 – 15 is available at:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/QAF_2012/EN/QAF_2012-EN.PDF.

- A questionnaire on the coordination role of the NSI within the NSS: This is presented as a separate questionnaire, since the CoP does not contain a specific principle on coordination. However, some of the indicators developed to assess the topic are based on elements found under different principles in the CoP.

- A questionnaire on cooperation / level of integration achieved by the ESS: This is presented as a separate questionnaire to assess the cooperation/level of integration of the ESS and to evaluate its potential for further integrating the production of European statistics.

- All questionnaires are offered as web-service questionnaires (electronic questionnaire through the IPM platform provided by Eurostat), and the completed questionnaires have to be submitted by 30 April 2014 as the first phase of the peer reviews (see also section 4).

- This Guide

- The Guide for the Peer reviewers.

As mentioned above, in order to avoid duplication of work and hence reduce the burden on the NSIs, other monitoring activities, such as EDP visits, Commitments on Confidence and ESGAB's monitoring activities, will be taken into account.

7 Preparation of the review

Preparation is a key phase of the review process from the perspective of the NSIs and the other actors involved. The preparatory phase is essential to managing the organisational aspects, the logistics and the relations between all the actors involved in the process.

7.1 Organisational aspects

A. Central coordination desk

The peer reviews will be conducted by a contractor under the supervision of and monitoring by Eurostat.

The contractor will set up a central coordination desk to organise the exercise. The central coordination desk is the contact point for and cooperates closely with the national coordination desk (see below) and the peer review teams in preparing and managing the peer reviews. This will involve in particular:

Preparatory work

- working to shape and manage the programme of reviews, including identifying together with Eurostat suitable peer review teams to conduct each peer review, and the chair of each team

- organising together with Eurostat the information workshop for peer reviewers and NSI coordinators and a follow-up workshop for peer reviewers

- establishing a web portal to coordinate the supply of documentation.

Ongoing work

- distributing to the peer reviewers the documentation - completed questionnaires and core documents submitted by the NSIs

- setting up the timetable for the visits based on preferences submitted to Eurostat by the NSIs (avoiding, as far as possible, other European commitments such as ESSC meetings and visits associated with the EDP as well as other international meetings -e.g. UNSD SC, CES, CSTAT)

- preparing the agenda of the visits together with the NSIs

- making travel and other logistical arrangements.

    B. National coordination desk.

In order to facilitate relations with the peer reviewers and to co-ordinate the visit at national level, each NSI has to set up a national coordination desk with the necessary expertise to steer the process. The desk will be headed by a national coordinator who is the first contact point on any matter concerning the peer reviews. The national coordination desk is to make every effort to ensure:

- well-functioning contact with the central coordination desk

- coordination of the activities for the completion and transmission of the SAQs, questionnaire on the coordination role of the NSIs, questionnaire on cooperation / level of integration achieved by the ESS, core documents and any additional information for the peer reviewers, where needed

- well-functioning contact with the peer review team chair and central coordination desk to set up the agenda of the in-country visit and to facilitate logistical aspects (hotel information for the peer review teams etc.)

- a venue and facilities at the premises of the NSI for the peer review visit and organisation of potential visits to ONAs

- management of the relations with other national authorities and stakeholders which will be involved in the peer review process to comply with deadlines and respect the planning

- setting up with the review team chair the list of relevant entities attending the meetings planned for the in-country visit

- coordination of possible comments on the factual accuracy of the report and the drafting of a separate annex containing the NSI view in case it differs from that of the peer reviewers as set out in the draft reports

- coordination of the activities to define the improvement actions.

An information workshop for all national coordinators and peer reviewers will be organised before the launch of the peer review visits. The purpose of the workshop is to explain in detail the methodology and the conduct of the peer reviews.

C. Relations between national coordination desks/peer review team.

Prior to the peer review, the peer review team chair will contact the national coordinator to discuss and agree on an agenda for the visit. The central coordination desk, responsible for travel and logistical arrangements, will be kept informed.

7.2   *Logistics*

It is recommended to use the same venue for the whole duration of the visit. The venue should be located in the premises of the NSI. Availability of a room as well as internet facilities should be foreseen. In addition, another fully-equipped room should be made available to enable the peer reviewers to work during breaks. The peer reviewers can also ask the national coordinator to arrange for them to meet other national authorities in their premises.

If the peer review visit necessitates travelling to locations other than the main venue (e.g. a regional office, a ministry, other national authorities), this must be agreed in advance and set out in the agenda so that the central coordination desk can schedule travel arrangements.

7.3   *Internal preparation*

All national players should be involved through back-to-back meetings/workshops/conferences from the beginning. The NSI is expected to ensure that all departments, divisions, other national authorities and any other entities involved in the peer review process are well briefed on the purpose, nature, and timetable of the peer review as early as possible. In this respect it is important to operate at different levels:

- Within the NSI→The national coordinator has to contact in advance all departments/divisions/units/ to communicate issues, time and duration of the visit.

  It is recommended that a team, headed by the national coordinator and composed of different representatives of the NSI (departments/divisions/other entities), be established in order to support the preparatory phase, follow the process and evaluate the impact with other national authorities. Once an effective co-ordination mechanism at national level has been established, all the activities connected with the peer reviews have to be coordinated.

  A meeting with other national authorities should be planned in order to explain the purpose, timing and the content of the peer review as well as to reinforce collaboration with the national coordinator to streamline the process and networking.

  A constant information flow among all players has to be guaranteed not only in the preparatory phase, but also throughout the whole process. A well-functioning coordination mechanism is important in view of the significant workload caused by the exercise.

- With users→ Based on the experience of the previous peer review round and the pilots, the NSI can prepare a standard list of the main users that can be involved / interviewed in the peer review process. These could include journalists, policy makers, the scientific community, (trade unions,) and representatives of a committee of users - if any (see also section 8).

7.4   Documentation

A. Self-assessment questionnaires

Self-assessment is a key part of the exercise. Before the peer review visit, reviewed countries have to fill in the self-assessment questionnaires. The questionnaires will contain or be accompanied by instructions on how to complete them, including instructions on how to work with the on-line questionnaires.

The NSI is required to submit by 30 April 2014:

1.   using the IPM platform provided by Eurostat the completed self-assessment questionnaires on:

   –   compliance with the Code of Practice (SAQ)
   –   coordination within the NSS and
   –   cooperation / level of integration of the ESS.

2.   PDF versions of the above questionnaires

3.   PDF versions of completed ONA questionnaires.

The up to three (or more in justified cases, see section 3.b) ONAs selected by the NSI are required to submit by 30 April 2014:

1.   using the IPM platform provided by Eurostat the completed self-assessment questionnaire on compliance with the Code of Practice. The NSI shall decide whether an ONA should complete the full NSI SAQ or the lighter SAQ; see section 6).

2.   PDF version of the completed questionnaire to their national coordinator.

Concerning the PDF versions, please note that the final versions of the completed questionnaires have to be saved on the computer just after their submission in IPM by clicking on the 'Export as PDF' after clicking on 'Submit'. The final IPM versions cannot be accessed after their submission.

When completing the questionnaires, the NSIs and ONAs have to refer to concrete evidence in their replies. Evidence means supporting documentation or other type of elements (e.g. websites, electronic tools) which support the replies. Evidence documents are not to be provided with the questionnaires but must be made available to the peer reviewers during the peer review visit upon their request. These can be in the national language, provided some translation facilities are available.

B. Other documentation

The NSIs are requested to provide by 30 April 2014 or minimum four weeks before the peer review visit:

   •   specific types of documentation – such as brief descriptions of the national statistical system, laws, strategies, policies, plans, and other relevant material, and relevant information about other national authorities. Annex I contains a full list of these documents.

All the questionnaires have to be completed in English, and the core documents have to be provided in English, either fully or in summary form. The list in Annex I sets out which documents must be provided fully in English, and for which documents a summary in English, together with the full document in the national language, may be provided.

As said above, documentation referred to as evidence in the SAQ and the other two questionnaires must be made available to the peer reviewers upon request during the peer review visits.

The peer review language is English. However, the NSIs may need to use interpretation and translation facilities to translate some of the core documents set out in Annex I as well as in the meetings with the peer reviewers.

C. Further documentation

On the basis of the analysis of the SAQ and the documents provided by the reviewed countries, the peer review team might ask the national coordination desk for additional documentation so as to better understand some issues.

8 Peer Review Phase

The peer reviews are carried out by a team of three peer reviewers. A chair is appointed for each team. They will conduct a peer review visit which is expected to last around five days per country. An observer from Eurostat will accompany the peer review team.

The peer reviewers and the NSI agree upon the programme of the visit, based on the generic template in Annex III. The programme includes the scheduling of the interviews to other national authorities and selected users. Based on their assessment of the completed questionnaires, the peer review team will decide if they wish to interview any of the ONAs selected by the NSIs for the assessment by the peer reviewers. They will inform the national coordinator which ONAs they wish to interview.

Once the peer review programme has been agreed, the national coordination desk shall contact the persons / entities to be interviewed so as to set up lists of participants at the meetings. The national coordinator then submits to the review team chair:

- a list of management and senior staff of NSI to be involved in the meeting

- a list of junior staff - with 2-5 years' experience in the NSI - to be interviewed

- a list of staff in the other national authorities to be interviewed

- a list of main users (such as representatives of scientific community / universities, media, policy makers to be interviewed

- a list of representatives of respondents(representatives of business associations and federations) to be included in the interviews.

The peer review team chair will inform the national coordination desk in advance of any additional persons they wish to interview in order to allow the national coordination desk to contact them and to possibly be included in the agenda. The agenda of the review visit identifies which aspects of the CoP and specific topics will be examined on each day.

If several authorities and users are to be involved, then the allocation of their time needs to be planned. The authorities need to know when staff is likely to be required.

9 Debriefing

Where needed, debriefings between the national coordination desk and the peer reviewer team are recommended. The purpose of the debriefings is to discuss potential requests arising from the first days of review in order to let the national coordinator re-schedule the agenda, and to contact other national authorities or users, if needed.

10 Peer Review Reports

The peer reviewers shall prepare a draft final report on the NSI's compliance with the Cop and its coordination of European statistics within the national statistical system and a separate report on cooperation / level of integration within the ESS. Templates for the two reports are in Annex IV.

In line with an audit-inspired approach, the report on compliance with the CoP is structured according to the issues identified by the peer reviewers rather than by Principles of the CoP. The report has a qualitative nature and includes a set of recommendations.

The peer review team shall discuss its preliminary conclusions and recommendations with the top management of the NSI, giving the NSI an opportunity to comment on these. The draft reports shall be transmitted in 15 days after the end of the visit to the NSI so that the NSI can correct any factual errors, and set out, in a separate annex, its views of the findings and the recommendations, if these were to diverge from those of the peer reviewers. The annex shall be published as part of the final reports.

After the conclusion of the visit, the national coordination desk may ask all actors involved for information on the level of satisfaction of the overall process, including the conduct of the interviews by the peer reviewers. The results are shared with the central coordination desk in order to suggest potential improvements in the process.

11 Improvement actions

Within one month of the reception of the final report, a list of improvement actions based on the SMART approach (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time scaled) should be clearly identified by the NSI (also for other national authorities) according to the recommendations expressed in the final report together with a timeline for their implementation (see Annex V). The timeline depends on many elements, such as the external environment, complexity of the action, and actors involved. Therefore there are no specific rules concerning timelines. Improvement actions will be published with a clear link with the review report.

If needed, Eurostat can comment on the improvement actions and the timeline and propose amendments. The final peer review reports and the improvement actions shall be made publicly available at the Eurostat website and the NSI's website. A summary report of cooperation and level of integration in the ESS shall be published at Eurostat website.

Annex I
Core documents requested from the NSIs

I   **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM IN ENGLISH ACCORDING TO THE TEMPLATE BELOW**

[*Country*]

Link to the website of the NSI (hyperlinked to the EN version)

1. **Description of the NSI:**

    1.1. Legal status of the NSI

    1.2. Strategy with mission and vision

    1.3. Procedure of appointment of the Head of the NSI

    1.4. Location of seat(s) of the NSI and, if applicable, of the regional offices or its equivalent

    1.5. Organisational structure of the NSI

    1.6. List of main legal act(s) with a short description.

    1.7. Main characteristics of the Statistical programme.

    1.8. Statistical products and dissemination

    1.9. Description of quality policy and reference to relevant national legislation on quality issues and Committee/Bodies devoted to the quality topic and list of quality guidelines and reference to a system on quality indicators, if the case. Reference to internal audit of statistical processes.

2. **Description of the National Statistical System**

    2.1. Role of the NSI in the NSS.

    2.2. Mission and vision, governance, chairmanship, composition and working arrangements. Decision making process Coordinating body, composition, functioning and main tasks (if applicable).

    2.3. Description of legislative process for regulating statistical tasks (if applicable)

    2.4. Other national authorities in the NSS (list of other national authorities, their legal status, their statistical products and competences.).

In order to have a quick view of the producers of European Statistics a summary table following the model on the following page should be provided

List of other national authorities

Name	Legal status	European Statistics produced	Filled in the full or the light SAQ?	Proposed to be interviewed? (Y/N)	Comments

3. Advisory body/Statistical council/committee (or its equivalent)

3.1. Composition and structure

3.2. Functioning and main tasks

3.3. Decision making process

II   OTHER CORE DOCUMENTS

The following documentation should be provided in English. When indicated with an *, instead of the complete version of the document, a summary in English can be provided together with the version in the national language:

1. **Self-assessment questionnaires**:

- the self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) completed by the NSIs
- the SAQs – full or lighter completed by the up to three ONAs to be assessed by the peer reviewers
- questionnaires completed by the NSI on

    - coordination within the NSS and
    - cooperation / level of integration of the ESS

2. **Legal framework**:

- Statistical Law, Public Act, Statute, Decree
- Other legislation (*)

3. **Description of National Statistical System(NSS)**:

- Key documents describing the decision making process for plans and priorities within NSS like Work Programme (*), Annual Reports (*), Strategic plans (*)

4. **Description of National Statistical Institute (NSI)**:

- list of workshops/conference organized by NSI on aspects covered by the Code
- training and recruitment plan, if any
- Statistical Programme of the NSI (*)
- follow-up reports such as annual reports (*)
- public results of the most recent NSI's user satisfaction surveys (*)
- results of the most recent summary of the improvement actions to implement the Code
- National Code of Practice if any

Indicator 5.1 – *Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Clear provisions are stated in law**. Clear provisions exist in the statistical law, as regards the observance of statistical confidentiality.

Indicator 5.2 – *Staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Mandatory confidentiality commitments.** Commitments for the observance of statistical confidentiality exist within the statistical authorities and are signed by all staff on appointment or in place as well as by external parties who undertake work on behalf of the statistical authority. In case of modification, such agreements should be updated and signed again by all staff or parties concerned.

Indicator 5.3 – *Penalties are prescribed for any willful breaches of statistical confidentiality.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Existence of provisions based on legal framework.** There are national provisions in place in the statistical law or other legal provisions on administrative, penal and disciplinary sanctions for violation of statistical confidentiality.

2. **Provisions on sanctions are known to the public.** Users of official statistical information are aware of the existing provisions on sanctions for violation of statistical confidentiality as this information is publicly available and accessible to them.

Indicator 5.4 – *Guidelines and instructions are provided to staff on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. The confidentiality policy is made known to the public.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Confidentiality policy.** A confidentiality policy is made publicly available, laying out principles and commitments related to statistical confidentiality which are consistent with the goals set out in the Mission and Vision statements.

2. **Organizational structure on the protection of statistical confidentiality.** An appropriate organizational structure provides guidelines, recommend appropriate methodologies and periodically examine the methods used for data protection and to ensure confidentiality.

3. **Guidance to staff.** The statistical authority prepares and provides the staff with written instructions and guidelines in order to preserve statistical confidentiality when dissemination of disaggregated statistical data occurs.

4. **Methods for ensuring confidentiality.** The ongoing research in the field of confidentiality is observed permanently. The methods in use are selected in a way to counteract the trade-off between the risk of identification and the loss of information in an optimal way.

5. **Respondents are made aware of commitments to confidentiality.** Respondents are informed prior or during data collection that the statistical authority commits itself fully to data

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[1] This proposal has been drafted by the TF to develop the methodology of the peer reviews. Although it has not been officially approved as an extension of the QAF it is the source for questions related to principles 5 and 6 of the NSIs SAQ.

protection and statistical confidentiality and the data are only used for statistical purposes and personal data are put forward under no circumstances.

Methods at product level

1. **Statistical disclosure control methods are applied.** Provisions are in place to ensure that prior to the release of statistical information (aggregate data and microdata), requisite statistical disclosure control methods are applied.

2. **Output checking**. Whenever access to statistical information takes place in a secure environment (e.g. remote access, safe centre, remote execution), all output is checked for disclosure before release. Processes are in place preventing the release of researcher output without checking for disclosure.

Indicator 5.5 – *Physical, technological and organisational provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Security processes and measures in place.** The statistical authority has appropriate physical and logical security measures and processes in place to check that data security is ensured and to prevent data breaches and violation of statistical confidentiality.

2. **IT security policy.** An IT security "policy" for the protection and security of personal data is in place, covering the whole business, technical, legal, and regulatory environment in which the statistical authority operates. The "policy" is widely known to the staff of the statistical authority.

3. **IT security audits.** Systematic security audits on the data security system of the statistical authority are carried out. The audit evaluates every tool and safeguard there is to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases.

4. **Secured storage and monitoring of access to data.** All statistical data is stored in secured environments that prevent access by unauthorized persons. All access to statistical databases is strictly monitored and recorded. User rights are recorded and kept up-to-date to prevent unauthorized access. Names and addresses or other personal identifiers are deleted as early as possible.

Indicator 5.6 – *Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for* research purposes.

Methods at institutional level

1. **Conditions for access to confidential data for scientific purposes.** Clear conditions for granting researcher access to confidential data for scientific purposes are set in the statistical law or relevant regulations. These conditions are publicly available on the website of the statistical authority.

2. **Safeguards in place for researcher access to confidential data for scientific purposes.** The statistical authority assures that all legal, technical and logical safeguards are in place to protect confidential information. Users have to sign an agreement on rules of usage of microdata.**Contr** These rules include measures to prevent duplication of data (data illegally copied or not deleted after use).

Methods at product level

3. **Monitoring the use of microdata.** The use of microdata sets is monitored, to identify any circumstance in which data confidentiality may be breached. Procedures are in place to ensure immediate corrective action.

Principle 6 – Impartiality and Objectivity

Indicator 6.1 – *Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Guidelines on impartiality and objectivity.** Guidelines for assuring impartiality and objectivity exist at the statistical authority and are made known to statistical staff. The implementation of the guidelines is monitored.
2. **Objectivity of selection of external partners.** The criteria for the selection of external partners to conduct statistical surveys/work of the statistical authority are objective and made public.

Methods at product level

1. **Methodological objectivity and best practices.** Sources, concepts, methods, processes and data dissemination channels are chosen on the basis of statistical considerations and national and international principles and good practices.

Indicator 6.2 – *Choices of sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are informed by statistical considerations.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Procedures on selection of sources.** Procedures on selection of sources of statistical information are in place and made public.
2. **Criteria for selection of sources and methodology.** Choices of sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are based on generally agreed methodology and best practices.
3. **Justification and information on sources and methodology.** The choices of sources and statistical methods are explicited in quality reports of statistical surveys/works. At the least user-oriented quality reports are published on the website of the statistical authority. Assessment of the selection of sources and methodology: Regular assessments statistically validate the collection mode and the methodology used.
4. **Statistical considerations for non-disclosure of data**. Non-disclosure of data is only permitted for reasons of statistical confidentiality. In case of quality concerns, the data may be published with limitations clearly identified.

Indicator 6.3 – *Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Error treatment policy.** The statistical authority has a clear policy as to how to deal with errors, how to react when they are discovered and how they are corrected. The error treatment policy is publicly accessible.
2. **Error declaration.** Processes are in place to declare an error when found in published statistics.
3. **Announcement and correction of substantial errors.** Processes are in place for announcing and informing users promptly on substantial errors identified in published statistics and about when and how they will be / have been corrected. Errors are corrected as soon as possible.

Indicator 6.4 – *Information on the methods and procedures used is publicly available.*

Methods at product level

1. **Methodological notes and metainformation.** All statistics are accompanied by relevant product

and process-oriented metainformation. Methodological notes and metadata on methods and procedures used are available in databases and are published on the website of the statistical authority.

2. **Transparency of processes.** The statistical authority documents its production processes. Documentation on these processes is available both for staff and users.

Indicator 6.5 – *Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Availability of the release calendar.** A publicly released and easily accessible release calendar is issued and made known to users in advance.

2. **Stability of the release calendar.** Changes to the dissemination schedule, when deemed absolutely necessary, are publicly and promptly announced in advance and duly accounted for. The original schedule remains public.

Indicator 6.6 – *Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Calendar of regular revisions.** A calendar of the regular major revisions is issued and published by the statistical authority.

2. **Information onMajor revisions are communicated in various ways.** Major revisions or changes in methodology are communicated using various channels, e.g. in a calendar of revisions, in the statistical work programme, on a webpage, by a letter to specific users and/or in a user meeting, by the statistical authority.

Indicator 6.7 – *All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, monitored and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Formal provisions.** A formal provision is in force which specifies that statistical authorities should develop, produce and disseminate statistics in an impartial, objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably. Pre-release accesses are publicised.

2. **Mechanisms of equal access in place.** Mechanisms are in place in the statistical authority to ensure equal access of all users to statistics at predetermined times.

3. **Embargo.** If processes for embargo exist, they are known to the public.

4. **Processes to prevent and handle leaks.** Processes are in place to prevent leaks from happening and to deal with them when they occur.

Indicator 6.8 – *Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.*

Methods at institutional level

1. **Objectivity in statements.** Statistical releases issued and statements made by the statistical authority are solely based on statistical findings and results.

2. **Guidelines for press releases.** Statistical press releases are compiled following clear and standard guidelines.

3. **Guidelines for press conferences.** There is a policy available to the staff on norms and rules for press conferences, including guidance on objectivity and non-partisanship

4. **Independency of press conferences.** Press conferences take place independently of political events and are exempt from comments on political statements.

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Annex III
Peer review visit: Agenda/programme

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A possible agenda, addressing the necessary elements, for a 5-day visit is shown below. This could serve as a point of departure for discussion and modifications, and more details could be added.

Based on the pilots the agenda is structured thematically. The NSI should arrange for topic experts at different levels to attend or observe the sessions. The only "closed session" would be with junior staff[2].

During the first day, it is proposed a PR team meeting for an in-depth discussion on the information provided by the NSI (self-assessment questionnaires and other documents). It could be followed by a preparatory meeting with the NSI coordinator team and other national participants (depending on availability) in the visits. The main goals of this meeting are to improve the communication among the participants, to discuss in an informal way practical aspects of the visit and to get to know each other.

Short presentations (max. around 10') from country representatives at the beginning of some sessions might be useful; the presentation is particularly suitable for the general information session on the second day.

The team should have some time to discuss and prepare an outline of the report; hence a time slot has been reserved for the team at the beginning of day 5, followed by a session for clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas.

There should be room for local adaptations, since the need to discuss the different issues may vary. Meeting with producers of statistics outside NSI could need more time in some countries. There may also be need for changes such as timing of coffee breaks, lunch and changing meetings according to the availability of participants. The start of days, coffee breaks and lunches have fixed times in the proposal.

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[2]Staff with 2-5 years' experience in the NSI.

Day 1	
Morning and beginning of the afternoon	PR team discussion to finalise the preparation of the visit, in particular to share views on the information received (self-assessment questionnaires and other documents)
	Lunch
15.30 – 17.00	Preparatory meeting with the NSI coordinator team and, possibly, other national participants in the visit to improve the communication among the participants, to discuss in an informal way practical aspects of the visit and to get to know each other.
Day 2	
09.00 – 09.30	Welcome and introduction of programme, organisational matters
09.30 – 10.30	General information session with a description on how the national statistical system is organised (bodies, distribution of responsibilities, relations between authorities …). A short presentation from the NSI would be useful.
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break
10.45 – 11.45	Coordination role of the NSI
11.45 – 12.45	Cooperation / level of integration of the ESS
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.45	Meeting with main users – Ministries and other public/private institutions (including Central Bank as a user)
14.45 – 15.00	Coffee break
15.00 – 16.00	Meeting with main users – Media
16.00 – 17.00	Meeting with main users - Scientific community

Day 3	
09.00 – 10.30	The statistical law and related legislation (CoP principles 1, 2, 5 and 6)
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break
10.45 – 12.45	Programming, planning and resources (CoP principles 3, 9 and 10)
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.45	Quality (organisational structure, tools, monitoring, …) (CoP principles 4 and 11 to 15)
15.45 – 16.00	Coffee break
16.00 – 17.30	Dissemination and confidentiality (CoP principles 5, 6 and 15)
Day 4	
09.00 – 10.30	Methodology, data collection, data processing and administrative data (CoP principles 2, 7 and 8)
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break
10.45 – 11.45	Methodology, data collection, data processing and administrative data (CoP principles 2, 7 and 8)
11.45 – 12.45	Meeting with junior staff
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	Meeting with other national authorities
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break
15.00 – 17.00	Meeting with main data providers/respondents
Day 5	
09.00 – 10.30	PR team discussion
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break
10.45 – 12.45	Clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.30	Meeting with senior management: conclusions and recommendations

*Outline of the structure of the review reports on compliance with the code of
practice and the coordination role of the NSI*

**Outline of the structure of the review reports on compliance with the code of practice and the
coordination role of the NSI**

Recommended length of the peer review report: It is recommended that the peer review reports
are around 40 pages long, with a minimum of 35 pages and a maximum of 50 pages. These numbers
are based on the figures of the reports of the first round of peer reviews (average and median length
26 pages; minimum: 21; maximum 34) but extended to take into account that all principles of the CoP
and the coordination role of the NSI are covered in the new exercise.

1. Executive summary

2. Introduction

3. Brief description of the national statistical system (max 2 pages)

4. Compliance with the Code of Practice and Coordination role of the NSI within the National
   Statistical System in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics

    4.1. Strengths of the NSI in relation to its compliance with the Code of Practice and to its
    coordination role

    *(This section is meant to describe those aspects and elements where the NSI shows high
    standards and where no problems/issues are detected. Links to the principle, indicator(s) or
    coordination role should be stated. If there are innovative practices[3] applicable to other
    national settings they should be indicated in this section. The structure of the section should
    be flexible, i.e. it should be adapted depending on the outcome of the review)*

    4.2. Issues and recommendations

    *(In this section, issues where improvements are needed and recommendations of the peer
    review team would be detailed. Links to the principle, indicator(s) or coordination role should
    be stated. The structure of the section is flexible, i.e. it could be adapted depending on the
    outcome of the review. An example based on the pilots is the following:*
    1.1.1. *Modernise governance to improve coordination and to become more outward-facing*

    1.1.2. *Enhance efficiency*

    1.1.3. *Enhance the value of investment in official statistics*

    1.1.4. *Other)*

    4.3. NSI views where they diverge from peer reviewers' assessment

Annex A: Programme of the visit

Annex B. List of participants

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[3] Innovative practices refer not to best practices, but to genuinely new ways which have made a difference in
implementing the CoP.

Outline of the structure of the review report on cooperation/level of integration within the ESS (National input for the ESS summary report)

1. Executive summary

2. Introduction

3. Main findings

    3.1. Overall summary of the main findings

        3.1.1. Findings in the Strategy

        3.1.2. Findings in the Design

        3.1.3. Findings in Process chain management

        3.1.4. Findings in Process chain implementation

4. Other issues (supplementing finding 3.1.1 – 3.1.4)

5. NSI views where they diverge from reviewers' findings

Procedure for improvement actions and monitoring

Improvement actions

1. The NSIs shall propose:
   - improvement actions on the basis of the recommendations in the final peer review reports
   - improvement actions should be SMART (see below) in order to avoid situations where the status was on-going for several years
   - a timeline for putting the improvement actions in place.

2. The NSIs will formulate improvement action(s), together with the timeline for implementation within one month from the reception of the final report.
   - The timeline for implementing improvement actions depends on many elements, such as the external environment, complexity of the action, actors involved etc. Therefore, there is no rule specific to this, except that the reviewed entity should implement the mitigating measures as soon as possible.

   The NSIs will also send the improvement actions to Eurostat, to be forwarded to ESGAB for assessment of their consistency with the peer reviewers' recommendations, and to be used as input for the summary reports.

3. If needed, Eurostat can comment on the sufficiency of the improvement actions and the proposed timeline, and propose amendments.

Monitoring of improvement actions

1. Annually, starting in January 2016, the NSIs shall report on the progress of implementation. In case of delays, the NSIs shall explain reasons and set out an adjusted timeline for the action/s concerned. New improvement actions might be proposed by the NSIs.

2. Eurostat shall produce an annual progress report to the ESSC and the ESGAB which would include the list of pending issues, the delays and their reasons and an agreed timeline for addressing these.

Due notice shall be paid to other monitoring activities related to the CoP in order to avoid any duplication or overlap.

Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART)

i.   Specific

The first criterion stresses the need for a specific goal rather than a more general one. This means the goal is clear and unambiguous; without vagaries and platitudes. To make goals specific, they must tell a team exactly what is expected, why is it important, who's involved, where is it going to happen and which attributes are important.

A specific goal will usually answer the five "W" questions:

What: What do I want to accomplish?

Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

Who: Who is involved?

Where: Identify a location.

Which: Identify requirements and constraints.

ii.   Measurable

The second criterion stresses the need for concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the goal. The thought behind this is that if a goal is not measurable, it is not possible to know whether a team is making progress toward successful completion. Measuring progress is supposed to help a team stay on track, reach its target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs it on to continued effort required to reach the ultimate goal.

A measurable goal will usually answer questions such as:

How much?

How many?

How will I know when it is accomplished?

iii.   Attainable

The third criterion stresses the importance of goals that are realistic and attainable. While an attainable goal may stretch a team in order to achieve it, the goal is not extreme. That is, the goals are neither out of reach nor below standard performance, as these may be considered meaningless. When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. The theory states that an attainable goal may cause goal-setters to identify previously overlooked opportunities to bring themselves closer to the achievement of their goals.

An attainable goal will usually answer the question:

How: How can the goal be accomplished?

iv.   Relevant

The fourth criterion stresses the importance of choosing goals that matter. A bank manager's goal to "Make 50 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches by 2:00pm" may be specific, measurable, attainable, and time-bound, but lacks relevance. Many times you will need support to accomplish a goal: resources, a champion voice, someone to knock down obstacles. Goals that are relevant to your boss, your team, your organization will receive that needed support.

Relevant goals (when met) drive the team, department, and organization forward. A goal that supports or is in alignment with other goals would be considered a relevant goal.

A relevant goal can answer yes to these questions:

Does this seem worthwhile?

Is this the right time?

Does this match our other efforts/needs?

Are you the right person?

Is it applicable in current socio- economic- technical environment?

v.   Time-bound

The fifth criterion stresses the importance of grounding goals within a time frame, giving them a target date. A commitment to a deadline helps a team focus their efforts on completion of the goal on or before the due date. This part of the SMART goal criteria is intended to prevent goals from being overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise in an organization. A time-bound goal is intended to establish a sense of urgency.

A time-bound goal will usually answer the question:

When?

What can I do six months from now?

What can I do six weeks from now?

What can I do today?

Annex VI
Glossary of terms and weblinks

The table below presents concepts close related to the peer review exercise, additional terms can be found in the Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
See also glossary of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) 2013 pages 69 to 76

Concept	Definition	More details available?
Accessibility	Accessibility is an attribute of statistics describing the set of conditions and modalities by which users can obtain data.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Accuracy	Accuracy is an attribute of statistics measuring the closeness of estimates to the unknown true values.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Adequacy of resources	Adequacy of resources is the characteristic of a statistical institute of authority which enables them to meet statistical requirements. These resources include staff, financial and computing resources and must be adequate both in magnitude and in quality.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Administrative dataset	Any organised set of data extracted from an administrative source, before any processing or validation by the Statistical Authority.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Appropriate statistical procedures	Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, are those procedures which underpin quality statistics.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Audit	It is a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence (records, statements of fact or other information, which are relevant to the audit criteria and verifiable) and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria (set of policies, procedures or requirements) are fulfilled.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Benchmarking	Benchmarking is a methodology that is used to search for best practices. Benchmarking can be applied to strategies, policies, operations, processes, products, and organizational structures. By finding and adopting best practices you can improve your organization's overall performance.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Bias	An effect which deprives a statistical result of representativeness by systematically distorting it, as distinct from a random error which may distort on any one occasion but balances out on the average.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

Calibration	An estimation method using weights, where the weights are adjusted to minimise the effects of various errors.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Centres of competence	Bodies foreseen to have an active and dynamic role in ensuring sustainability of the results of development activities. Just like ESSnets, Centres of Competence involve several ESS organisations, and cover tasks with a high European added value and respond to needs of Member States. They are be based on existing standards (e.g. results of ESSnet), and their activities include maintenance work, implementation, training and sharing of best practices. The Centre of Competence concept is currently under development.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Clarity	Clarity is an attribute of statistics describing the extent to which easily comprehensible metadata are available, where these metadata are necessary to give a full understanding of statistical data.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Coherence	Coherence is an attribute of statistics measuring the adequacy of the data to be reliably combined in different ways and for various uses.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Commitment to quality	Commitment to quality is the characteristic of a statistical institute of authority through which they systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Comparability	Comparability is an attribute of statistics measuring the extent to which differences between statistics can be attributed to differences between the true values of the statistical characteristics.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Completeness	Completeness is the extent to which all statistics that are needed are available. It is usually described as a measure of the amount of available data from a statistical system compared to the amount that was expected to be obtained	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Consistency	Consistency is an attribute of statistics measuring the logical and numerical coherence, i.e. the adequacy of the data to be reliably combined in a logical and numerical way.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Coordination role	The set of activities of a single organisation which ensure that the activities of different members of the system meet the relevant quality standards. For NSIs (National Statistical	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	Institutes), the coordination role ensures that all other national authorities which contribute to the development, production and dissemination of European statistics comply with the standards of the ESS (European Statistical System) and fulfill the quality requirements for European statistics.	
Cost effectiveness	Cost effectiveness is a characteristic of a process where the costs of producing the statistics are in proportion to the importance of the results and the benefits sought, the resources are optimally used and the response burden minimised. Where possible, the information requested is readily extractable from available records or sources.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Coverage error	Error caused by a failure to cover adequately all components of the population being studied, which results in differences between the target population and the sampling frame.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Credibility	Credibility is the confidence that users place in statistical products based simply on their image of the data producer, the statistical authority i.e., the brand image.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Data archiving	Process of storing the final version of a dataset in a safe location, outside of the production database, for a determined period of time and according to archiving policies (archiving programme and plan). The data can be fully used whenever it is required.	
Data back-up	Process of making a complete secondary copy of a database or a database server according to a user defined data retention policy, typically configured with a backup application for how long copies of data are required. It allows recovering data • after their loss by deletion or corruption or • from an earlier version.	
Data editing	Data editing is the application of checks that identify missing, invalid or inconsistent entries or that point to data records that are potentially in error.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Data reconciliation	The process of adjusting data derived from two different sources to remove, or at least reduce, the impact of differences identified.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Data revision	Any change in a value of a statistic released to the public by an official statistical agency.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Data sharing	Exchange of data and/or metadata in a	Eurostat's

	situation involving the use of open, freely available data formats and where process patterns are known and standard.	concepts and definitions database
Data validation	Process of monitoring the results of data compilation and ensuring the quality of the statistical results.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Electronic Data Files Administration and Management Information System (Edamis)	Modern communications management system providing a simple generic solution for a transparent and reliable exchange of data files using an advanced control system with acknowledgements, notifications, content validation, monitoring and dispatching of data files towards the relevant recipients (application or users). eDAMIS could be considered as an advanced post service which uses the latest internet technologies to guarantee the easy, reliable and smooth transmission of all statistical data files that have to be sent to Eurostat. It also offers tracking and monitoring reports that can be used as input to check the respect of the legal obligations to transmit data.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Effectiveness	Means the extent to which the activity's stated objectives have been met.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Efficiency	Means achieving maximum output from a given level of resources used to carry out an activity.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Embargo time	It is the time span between the finalisation of the production process of statistical data and the moment when the data produced is released and made publicly available to the users (see also pre-release access).	Based on embargo time definition available on Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Error	In general, a mistake or error in the colloquial sense. There may, for example, be a gross error or avoidable mistake; an error of reference, when data concerning one phenomenon are attributed to another; copying errors; an error of interpretation. In a more limited sense the word error is used in statistics to denote the difference between an occurring value and its true or expected value. There is here no imputation of mistakes on the part of a human agent; the deviation is a chance effect. In this sense we have, for example, errors of observations, errors in equations, errors of the first and second kinds in the	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	testing hypothesis, and the error band surrounding an estimate; and also the normal curve of errors itself.	
EuroGroups Register (EGR)	The EuroGroups Register (EGR) is a network of registers, consisting of a central register kept at Eurostat and registers in each EU Member State and in EFTA countries. The central register contains information about multinational enterprises groups (MNEs), which have statistically relevant financial and non-financial transnational operations in at least one of the European countries. Registers in the EU Member States and in EFTA countries contain information regarding MNEs active in the respective countries and are fully consistent with the central register. In practice both, Eurostat and European countries exchange confidential and non-confidential data on MNEs by EDI exclusively for statistical purposes.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC)	The ESAC ensures that user requirements as well as the response burden on information providers and producers are taken into account in developing the Statistical Programmes. It delivers its opinion on the Multiannual Statistical Programme, addressing in particular its relevance to the requirements of European integration. It also gives its view on the balance (priorities and resources) between different areas of the Multiannual Statistical Programme as well as the annual statistical work programme of the Commission.	Eurostat's website and Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB)	The ESGAB has been established to enhance the professional independence, integrity and accountability of the European Statistical System, key elements of the Code of Practice, as well as to enhance the quality of European statistics. It provides an independent overview of the European Statistical System as regards the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice.	ESGAB website and Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
ESS Standard for Quality Report (ESQR)	Reporting structure used for harmonising quality reporting across different types of statistical processes and across ESS (European Statistical System) Member States.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
ESSnet project	Project consisting of a netwok of several ESS (European Statistical System) organisations and aiming at developing results which can be used by the whole ESS community. ESSnet projects are co-financed by the Commission and	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	participating institutions.	
ESS Vision Implementing Project (ESS VIP) programme	The ESS VIP programme aims at developing a common ESS infrastructure and appropriate legal framework and new administrative mechanisms that will allow for sharing of information, services and costs among ESS partners, based on better integrated processes. It covers a 5 years period starting from 2013. The ESS VIP Programme will consist of concrete projects which will move the ESS towards a more efficient system in a coordinated way. The projects will be organised in two main strands: · Technical cross cutting projects that focus on building a common ESS infrastructure for sharing data and services; · Business (domain oriented) projects that realize the sharing of information, services and costs in individual statistical domains	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS)	Reporting structure used for documenting statistical data and providing summary information useful for assessing data quality and the production process in general.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Estimate	The particular value yielded by an estimator in a given set of circumstances.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Estimator	A rule or method of estimating a parameter of a population. It is usually expressed as a function of sample values and hence is a variable whose distribution is of great importance in assessing the reliability of the estimate to which it leads.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Europe 2020	Europe 2020 is the European Unions's growth strategy for the coming decade. The Union has set five ambitious objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at EU (European Union) and national levels underpin the strategy.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
European Statistical Authority (Commission (Eurostat))	At European Union level the statistical authority is the Commission (Eurostat). It is responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database.
European Statistical Programme	The European statistical programme provides the framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics, the	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	main fields and the objectives of the actions envisaged for a period not exceeding five years. It lays down priorities concerning the needs for information for the purpose of carrying out the activities of the European Union (EU). Those needs are weighed against the resources needed at EU and national levels to provide the required statistics, and also against the response burden and the respondent's associated costs.	
European Statistical System (ESS)	The European Statistical System (ESS) is the partnership between the European 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.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
European Statistical System Committee (ESSC)	The European Statistical System Committee (ESS Committee) provides professional guidance to the European Statistical System (ESS) for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics in line with the statistical principles set out by the Commission (Professional independence, impartiality, objectivity, reliability, confidentiality and cost effectiveness). The ESS Committee is composed of representatives of the NSIs who are national specialists for statistics. It is chaired by the Commission (Eurostat).	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
European Statistical System Quality Assurance Framework (ESS QAF)	The ESS QAF is a guidance on how to implement the indicators of principles 4 and 7 to 15 of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP). It identifies activities, methods and tools that provide evidence for the implementation of the CoP. While the CoP sets the principles and indicators as standards by which the compliance by National and European statistical authorities will be judged through peer reviews and other forms of assessment, the ESS QAF describes, for each indicator, activities, methods and tools that facilitate the implementation of the CoP.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
European Statistical System – Metadata Handler (ESS-MH)	A set of IT applications developed for the production, management, exchange and dissemination of metadata within Eurostat and the European Statistical System (ESS).	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
European Statistics	Relevant statistics necessary for the performance of the activities of the European Union (EU). European Statistics are statistics:	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	1. included in the European statistical programme and the corresponding annual work programme, 2. in accordance with the statistical principles set out in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and in Regulation (EC) No 223/2009, and further elaborated in the European statistics Code of Practice.	
European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP)	The European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP) is the European Statistical System (ESS) quality framework, providing a structure for supporting improvements of quality for the ESS. The Code provides an encompassing conceptual ground for quality management and is based on 15 principles. Governance authorities and statistical authorities in the European Union commit themselves to adhering to the principles fixed in the Code covering the institutional environment, statistical processes and statistical outputs for the ESS. A set of indicators of good practice for each of the 15 principles provides a reference for reviewing the implementation of the Code.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Evidence	Information that supports a statement or fact. Evidence is considered to be essential in forming a firm conclusion or a judgement.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP)	The Maastricht Treaty, which foresaw the creation of the Euro, organized the way multilateral fiscal surveillance is conducted within the European Union. This surveillance is based on the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP): it sets out schedules and deadlines for the Council, following reports from and on the basis of opinions by the Commission and the Economic and Financial Committee, to reach a decision that an excessive deficit exists in a Member State.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Follow-up	Subsequent to a self-assessment process and changes to an organisation, a follow up aims at measuring goal achievement against stated objectives. The analysis may result in the launching of new initiatives and adjusting strategy and planning in accordance with the new circumstances.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM)	GSBPM models the phases of the statistical business process (also known as the statistical value chain or statistical	Eurostat's concepts and definitions

	cycle) and provides generic terms to describe them.	database
Good statistical practice	A process or a methodology that represents the most effective way of achieving a specific objective, namely the collection, processing and dissemination of high quality statistics. In other terms, a good practice is one that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Impartiality	Impartiality is an attribute confirming that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in a neutral manner, and that all users must be given equal treatment.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Imputation	Procedure for entering a value for a specific data item where the response is missing or unusable. This can be done by changing some of the responses or assigning values when they are missing on the record being edited to ensure that estimates are of high quality and that a plausible, internally consistent record is created.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Institutional environment	Institutional environment is the set of rules and the organisational structures that are used as the basis for producing statistics.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Integrity	Integrity is the set of values and related practices of a statistical authority that maintain confidence in the eyes of users in the agency producing statistics and ultimately in the statistical product.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Key indicator	An estimate of a target statistical concept that is considered of special importance by the users. For example national unemployment, GDP growth, 12-month inflation rate.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Mandate for data collection	Mandate for data collection is the characteristic of a statistical institute of authority to have the legal power to collect information for statistical purposes.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Measurement error	Measurement error refers to errors in survey responses arising from the method of data collection, the respondent, or the questionnaire (or other instruments). It includes the error in a survey response as a result of respondent confusion, ignorance, carelessness, or dishonesty; the error attributable to the interviewer, perhaps as a consequence of poor or inadequate training, prior expectations regarding respondents' responses, or deliberate errors; and error attributable to the wording of the questions in the questionnaire, the order or context in	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	which the questions are presented, and the method used to obtain the responses.	
Metadata	Data that defines and describes other data. For the ISO standard, metadata is defined as data that defines and describes other data and processes. This means that metadata are data that describe other data, and data become metadata when they are used in this way. This happens under particular circumstances and for particular purposes, as no data are always metadata. The set of circumstances and purposes (or perspective) for which some data are used as metadata is called the context. So, metadata are data about data in some context.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Methodological soundness, sound methodology	Methodological soundness is the extent to which the methodology used to compile statistics complies with the relevant international standards.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Mirror statistics	The statistical procedure used for inferring a country's, region's, etc. data or checking their accuracy, by bilateral comparisons of the basic measures of a statistical flow with other countries, regions, etc. This approach is a traditional tool for detecting the causes of asymmetries in statistics. It is typically used in trade statistics (imports versus exports), population statistics (immigrants versus emigrants) or tourism statistics (outbound tourism versus inbound tourism).	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Mission	A description of what an organisation should achieve for its stakeholders. The mission of a public sector organisation results from a public policy and/or statutory mandates. It is the organisation's raison d'être. The final goals an organisation sets out to achieve in the context of its mission are formulated in its vision, translated into strategic and operational goals.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
National Reference Metadata Editor (NRME)	Web application developed for the production, management, exchange and possible dissemination of national metadata files. Its main objective is to enable the National Statistical Authorities to produce reference metadata files based on the European Standards (ESMS and ESQRS) and to send them directly to Eurostat through the application eDamis - the Eurostat Single Entry Point.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
National Statistical Authority (NSA)	The national statistical authority is the body having the responsibility for	Eurostat's concepts and

	coordinating all activities at national level for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. It shall act as the contact point for the Commission (Eurostat) on statistical matters.	definitions database
Non-excessive burden on respondents	Non-excessive burden on respondents is the reasonable effort, in terms of time and cost, which is required for respondents to provide satisfactory answers to a survey.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Non-sampling error	Error in sample estimates which cannot be attributed to sampling fluctuations. Non-sampling error may arise from many different sources such as defects in the sampling frame, faulty demarcation of sample units, defects in the selection of sample units, mistakes in the collection of data due to personal variations, misunderstanding, bias, negligence or dishonesty on the part of the investigator or of the interviewer, mistakes at the stage of the processing of the data, etc.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Objectivity	Objectivity is an attribute confirming that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in a systematic, reliable and unbiased manner. It implies the use of professional and ethical standards, and that the policies and practices followed are transparent to users and survey respondents.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Outlier	In a sample of n observations it is possible for a limited number to be so far separated in value from the remainder that they give rise to the question whether they are not from a different population, or that the sampling technique is a fault. Such values are called outliers.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Output (product) quality	Output (product) quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils output requirements. According to the European Statistics Code of Practice ("Code"), quality is determined by three major factors: the institutional environment, the statistical processes and the statistical output. The Code distinguishes between nine output quality components: - relevance - accuracy and reliability - timeliness and punctuality - coherence and comparability - accessibility and clarity	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Partnership	A durable working relationship with other parties on a commercial or a non-commercial basis to reach a common goal, thus creating added value for the	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	organisation and its customers/stakeholders.	
Peer review	The peer review is a special kind of external audit, carried out by an organisation for another organisation of a similar status (i.e. by a peer organisation), for instance a National Statistical Institute (NSI) is reviewed by another NSI. In general, it is less formal than an audit. It aims rather at assessing the general quality than at controlling the conformity with an external quality standard	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Preliminary data/Provisional data	Some statistical agencies use the term "Preliminary data" to describe the first released version of a series and "Provisional data" to describe subsequent versions prior to final amendment. However, the two terms are often used interchangeably, though users in general should have no great problem in understanding that data labelled either "preliminary" or "provisional" are subject to revision provided this is clearly highlighted by the agency in the release. Clearly informing the use that the data is subject to revision is more important than the term used to describe such data.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Pre-release access	The pre-release access is the practice of giving certain individuals or organisations access to data under embargo before those data are released to the public.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Process description	Process description is a document which describes: - the name and the aim of the process - who is the process owner and operators - inputs (and the process they come from); outputs (and the process they go to) - sub-processes (activities) that transform inputs into outputs - regulatives (internal, external) that characterise the regulated environment - resources that are used in the transformation - how the process is managed and improved (performance and quality indicators with target values; the way of monitoring, measurement, analysis; improvements; records stating results achieved or providing evidence of activities performed).	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Process quality	Process quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils process requirements. According to the European Statistics Code of Practice	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	("Code"), quality is determined by three major factors: the institutional environment, the statistical processes and the statistical output. The Code distinguishes between four process quality components: - sound methodology - appropriate statistical procedures - non-excessive burden on respondents - cost effectiveness	
Processing error	The error in final survey results arising from the faulty implementation of correctly planned implementation methods.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Professional independence	Professional independence is the characteristic of a statistical institute or authority to develop, produce and disseminate statistics in an independent manner, particularly as regards the selection of techniques, definitions, methodologies and sources to be used, and the timing and content of all forms of dissemination, free from any pressures from political or interest groups or from European Union (EU) or national authorities, without prejudice to institutional settings, such as EU or national institutional or budgetary provisions or definitions of statistical needs.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Punctuality	Punctuality is an attribute of statistics measuring the delay between the date of the release of the data and the target date (the date by which the data should have been delivered or released).	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality	Quality is the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements. Quality is a multi-faceted concept. The dimensions of quality that are considered most important depend on user perspectives, needs and priorities, which vary across groups of users. Several statistical organisations have developed lists of quality dimensions, which, for international organisations, are being harmonised under the leadership of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA). The European Statistics Code of Practice defines quality in terms of the institutional environment, statistical processes and statistical output.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality assessment	Quality assessment is a part of quality assurance that focuses on assessment of fulfilling quality requirements (need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory).	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

Quality assurance	Quality assurance is an organisation's guarantee that the product or service it offers meets the accepted quality standards. It is achieved by identifying what "quality" means in context; specifying methods by which its presence can be ensured; and specifying ways in which it can be measured to ensure conformance.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality audit	The quality audit is a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining quality audit evidence (records, statements of fact or other information, which are relevant to the quality audit criteria and verifiable) and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the quality audit criteria (set of policies, procedures or requirements) are fulfilled.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality control	1) Quality Control of the data collection process assures that the underlying statistical assumptions of a survey are not violated, i.e. the meaning of the principal statistical measures and the assumptions which condition their use is maintained. 2) Quality Control in data review process measures the impact of data adjustment on the data.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality framework	Quality framework is a management system to direct and control an organisation with regard to quality - ranging from generally applicable, basic quality management systems and advanced forms referred to as excellence models, to systems or models developed for the concrete areas (e.g. for statistical production and dissemination).	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality improvement (actions)	Quality improvement refers to anything that enhances an organization's ability to meet quality requirements. Quality improvement is one part of quality management.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality index	A one-dimension synthetical information on quality, possibly calculated as a weighted mean of all available quality indicators.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality indicator	Specific and measurable element of statistical practice that can be used to characterise the quality of statistics.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality management system	A quality management system (QMS) is a set of interrelated or interacting elements that organizations use to direct and control how quality policies are implemented and quality objectives are achieved. A process-based QMS uses a process	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	approach to manage and control how its quality policy is implemented and quality objectives are achieved. A process-based QMS is a network of many interrelated and interconnected processes (elements). Each process uses resources to transform inputs into outputs. Since the output of one process becomes the input of another process, processes interact and are interrelated by means of such input-output relationships. These process interactions create a single process-based QMS.	
Quality manual	A quality manual documents an organization's quality management system (QMS). It can be a paper manual or an electronic manual.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality plan	A quality plan is a document that is used to specify the procedures and resources that will be needed to carry out a project, perform a process, realize a product, or manage a contract. Quality plans also specify who will do what and when.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality policy	An organization's quality policy defines top management's commitment to quality. A quality policy statement should describe an organization's general quality orientation and clarify its basic intentions.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Quality report	A quality report is a report conveying information about the quality of a statistical product or process.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Relevance	Relevance is an attribute of statistics measuring the degree to which statistics meet current and potential needs of the users.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Reliability	Reliability is an attribute of statistics that measure as faithfully, accurately and consistently as possible the reality that they are designed to represent and implying that scientific criteria are used for the selection of sources, methods and procedures.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSCs)	ROSCs summarize the extent to which countries observe certain internationally recognized standards and codes. The IMF has recognized 12 areas and associated standards as useful for the operational work of the Fund and the World Bank.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Sampling error	That part of the difference between a population value and an estimate thereof, derived from a random sample, which is due to the fact that only a a subset of the population is enumerated.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
SDMX Reference Infrastructure (SDMX-RI)	A generalized service infrastructure that	Eurostat's concepts and

	can be re-used partially or completely by any organisation interested in starting SDMX projects for data exchange.	definitions database
Seasonal adjustment	A statistical technique to remove the effects of seasonal calendar influences operating on a series.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Self-assessment	The self-assessment is a comprehensive, systematic and regular review of an organisation's activities and results referenced against a model/framework, carried out by the organisation itself.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
SMART objectives	Objectives state what an organisation has set out to achieve. It is recommended that objectives should be SMART: • Specific: precise about what you are going to achieve; • Measurable; with quantified objectives; • Achievable; • Realistic: are the necessary resources available? • Timed: within manageable timing.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Sponsorship on quality	High level ESS Task Force established in 2008 by the Partnership Group to consider and propose how to proceed with quality work in the European Statistical System (ESS). The TF started its work in September 2009 and presented its final report to the ESSC (European Statistical System Committee) in September 2011.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Sponsorship on standardisation	High level ESS Task Force established for two years (2011-2013) in order to investigate ways to organise and strengthen the sharing of methods and tools and the creation of common infrastructures. The Sponsorship should recommend priorities in standardisation and initiate appropriate actions in order to realise these priorities.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Stakeholders	Stakeholders are all those who have an interest, whether financial or not, in the activities of the organisation. Internal and external stakeholders can be classified in four major categories: the political authority; the citizens/customers; the people working in the organisation; the partners. Examples of stakeholders: political decision-makers, citizens/customers, employees, society, inspection agencies, media, partners, etc. Government organisations are also stakeholders.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

Statistical confidentiality	The statistical confidentiality is a principle according to which confidential data related to single statistical units, obtained directly for statistical purposes or indirectly from administrative or other sources, are protected and their use for non-statistical purposes and their unlawful disclosure prohibited.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Statistical data and metadata exchange (SDMX)	Set of technical standards and content-oriented guidelines, together with an IT architecture and tools, to be used for the efficient exchange and sharing of statistical data and metadata.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Statistical disclosure control	Statistical disclosure control (SDC) techniques can be defined as the set of methods to reduce the risk of disclosing information on individuals, businesses or other organisations. SDC methods minimise the risk of disclosure to an acceptable level while releasing as much information as possible.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Statistical metadata	Data about statistical data. Statistical metadata comprise data and other documentation that describe objects in a formalised way. They provide information on data and about processes of producing and using data.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Statistical (production/business) process	Statistical (production/business) process is the complete set of sub-processes that are needed to support statistical production.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Statistical register	Registers that have been processed for statistical purposes. Statistical registers are created by processing administrative registers so that object sets, objects and variables meet statistical needs.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Statistical release	Dissemination of statistical data to interested parties.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Statistical unit	Entity for which information is sought and for which statistics are ultimately compiled.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Statistical work programme (multiannual and annual)	The multiannual statistical work programme provides the framework for the development, production and dissemination of statistics, the main fields and the objectives of the actions envisaged for a given period which usually does not exceed 5 years. It lays down priorities concerning the needs for statistical information. Those needs are to be weighed against the resources needed to provide the required statistics and also against the response burden and the respondents' associated costs. The objectives of the multiannual work programme are spelled out in detail in	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database

	annual work programmes.	
Survey design	All the aspects of a survey from the establishment of a need for data to the production of final outputs. The survey design addresses the following issues: what statistics are produced, for which population, when, and with what accuracy; what data are to be collected for which units of the population of interest, and what are the methods by which those data are to be collected and processed to produce the required statistics. Operational, organisational and administrative issues are usually addressed	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Timeliness	Timeliness is an attribute of statistics measuring the period between the availability of the information and the event or phenomenon it describes.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Transparency	Transparency shall mean the right of respondents to have information on the legal basis, the purposes for which the data are required and the protective measures adopted. The authorities responsible for collecting European Union statistics shall take every step to supply such information.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
True value	The actual population value that would be obtained with perfect measuring instruments and without committing any error of any type, both in collecting the primary data and in carrying out mathematical operations.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
User satisfaction survey	A user satisfaction survey is a survey which aims at assessing the satisfaction or the perception of the users, normally as a basis for improvement actions.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database
Vision	The achievable dream or aspiration of what an organisation wants to do and where it would like to be. The context of this dream and aspiration is determined by the mission of the organisation.	Eurostat's concepts and definitions database