

ANNUAL REPORT
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	5
1. INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT.....	6
1.1. Administrative capacities.....	6
1.1.1. Human Resources.....	6
Graph 1. Number of employees at the SSO, by location and gender.....	7
Graph 2. SSO employees, by location and education.....	7
1.1.2. Professional training of employees.....	8
1.1.3. Budget of the State Statistical Office.....	9
1.1.4. Internal audit.....	10
1.1.5. Statistical Council of the Republic of North Macedonia.....	10
1.1.6. Coordination Committee.....	11
1.2. Statistical Infrastructure.....	12
1.2.1 Classification.....	12
1.2.2 Statistical registers.....	13
1.2.2.1 Statistical Register of Territorial Units.....	13
1.2.2.2. Statistical Business Register.....	13
1.2.2.3 Statistical Farm Register.....	14
1.2.2.4 Data warehouse for national accounts.....	14
1.2.3 Quality management.....	14
1.2.4 Use of administrative data sources and reducing respondent burden.....	14
1.2.5. New methods in certain statistical surveys.....	15
1.2.6. Metainformation system and electronic data collection.....	15
1.2.7 Data security and statistical confidentiality.....	16
1.3 Information infrastructure.....	16

1.3.1 Development of the IT system to support the statistical business process.....	16
1.3.2 Technical infrastructure.....	16
1.4 Dissemination.....	17
1.4.1. Data dissemination	17
1.4.2. Statistical data available online – more data and more users	17
1.4.3. Publication activity of the institution.....	19
1.4.4. Simple delivery of data to users.....	22
1.4.5. Greater representation of statistical data in the media.....	22
1.4.6 Using the collaborative infrastructure of Eurostat–data transmission through the “Single Entry Point”	22
1.4.7 Special data dissemination system, SDDS plus.....	22
2. STATISTICS BY SECTOR.....	23
2.1. Social statistics	23
2.1.1 Preparations for the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 2020.....	23
2.1.2 Activities in other areas of social statistics.....	23
2.2. National accounts	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3. Business statistics, agricultural statistics and environmental statistics	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3.1. Business statistics.....	25
2.3.2. Agricultural statistics.....	27
2.3.3. Statistics on environment, energy and transport.....	27
2.4. Sector for Regional Departments	28
3. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY	31
3.1. European Integration	31
3.2. International projects where the SSO was included	33
3.2.1. Ongoing projects of the European Commission.....	33

3.2.2 Planned projects.....	34
3.3. Communication and cooperation with other institution.....	35
4. CHALLENGES THAT THE SSO WAS FACING	35
5. COORDINATION OF THE STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND AUTHORISED BODIES	36
5.1. National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia	36
5.2. Ministry of Finance.....	39
5.3. Pension and Disability Insurance Fund	40
5.4. Ministry of Interior	40
5.5. Hydrometeorological Service	40
5.6. Employment Agency Of the Republic Of North Macedonia	41
5.7. Institute of Public Health	41
5.8. Observations of the State Statistical Office.....	43
Abbreviations:	44

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Article 21, paragraph 1 of the Law on State Statistics (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 54/97, 21/07, 51/11, 104/13, 42/14, 192/15, 27/16, 83/18, 220/18 and 31/20), the State Statistical Office (hereinafter: SSO) prepared an Annual Report on the work done and the implementation of the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2018-2022, in terms of the statistical surveys carried out by the Office in 2019, as well as by other institutions that are authorised to conduct statistical surveys under the Programme.

The report consists of five sections, four of which are related to the activities of the SSO, and one section covering the activities of the authorised bodies (total 5) in terms of the implementation of the statistical surveys in the Programme for which they are responsible. Most of the report refers to the carried out activities of the SSO in 2019. Out of a total of 319 statistical surveys in the Statistical Survey Programme for the period 2018-2022, 252 are conducted by the SSO.

The first section of the report covers the institutional environment of the SSO, and it contains information about the administrative capacities (human and financial resources, professional development of staff, internal audit and Statistical Council and Coordination Committee), statistical infrastructure, information infrastructure and the activities related to the data dissemination of the SSO in 2019.

The second section of the report contains information about the activities carried out by the SSO with regard to Sector statistics, the Sector of Business Statistics, Agricultural and Environmental Statistics, the Sector of Social Statistics and the Sector of National Accounts.

The third section of the report describes the activities that were carried out in 2019 for observing European standards and international activity. The international activity of the SSO was implemented through direct involvement in the process of European integration of the country, as well as by participation in several international projects as part of the foreign aid that was provided to the SSO.

The fourth section contains information about the challenges the SSO was faced with in 2019.

The fifth section of the report contains a brief overview of the coordination of the statistical system of the country and the implementation of the Programme of Statistical Surveys by the authorised bodies in the statistical system: National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, Employment Agency, Hydrometeorological Service and Institute of Public Health.

1.INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The statistical environment is an essential precondition for achieving the objectives of official statistics as defined in the Law on State Statistics and other laws, and further operationalised in the Strategic Plan of the SSO and other documents adopted by the SSO. According to the European Statistics Code of Practice, "Institutional and organisational factors have a significant impact on the effectiveness and the credibility of the statistical authority that develops, produces and disseminates European statistics".

1.1. Administrative capacities

The Law on State Statistics is a comprehensive law governing the role, position and authority of the State Statistical Office. This Law also regulates the position and powers of the authorised bodies with regard to their statistical activity. The Law was adopted in 1997 (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 54/97). Over the years, the Law was amended eight times.

In addition to the Law on State Statistics, the second most important bylaw adopted by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia on proposal of the SSO is the Programme of Statistical Surveys. The Programme specifies the statistical surveys conducted by the SSO and the authorised bodies during a five-year period. The current Programme of Statistical Surveys covers the period 2018-2022 (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 22/18 and 224/18).

In 2019, the SSO adopted the Strategic Plan 2019-2020, which defines the values, priorities and the strategic goals of the Office. This is a basic document containing the main activities to be performed in the upcoming period in order to achieve harmonisation of national statistics with EU legislation.

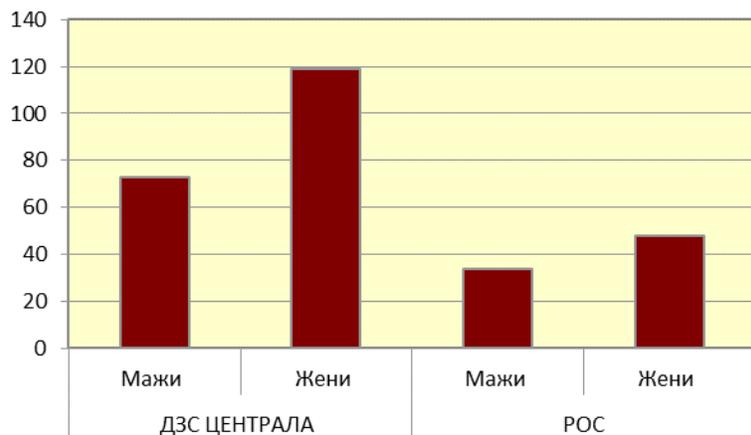
1.1.1. Human resources

The organisational structure and powers of the SSO are laid down in the Rulebook on Internal Organisation of the SSO. According to the Rulebook, adopted by the Director of the State Statistical Office in December 2015, the SSO is organised in seven sectors and 36 departments. Of these departments, three are independent and not part of any sector, while eight are regional statistical departments throughout the Republic of North Macedonia (Stip, Veles, Strumica, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Ohrid, Bitola and Skopje).

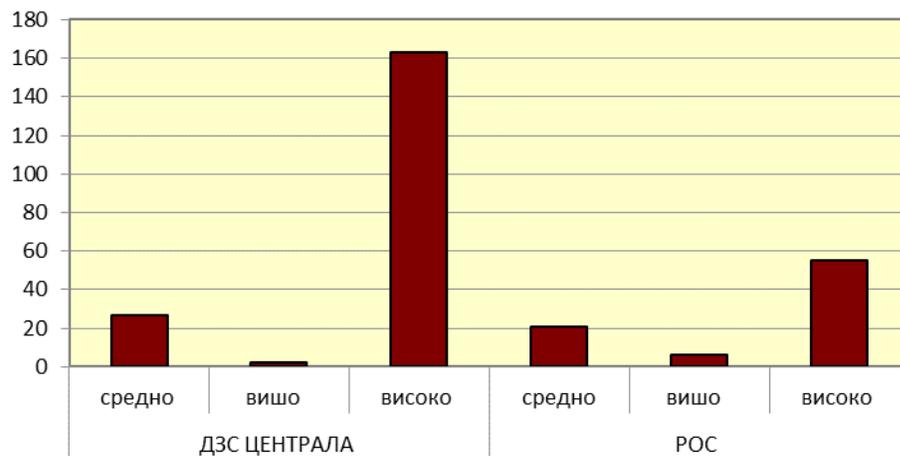
The number of employees at the State Statistical Office, as at 31 December 2019, was 274 persons. The central Office employed 192 people, while the regional departments (8) had 82 employees.

In 2019, a functional analysis of the State Statistical Office was prepared, which explained the need to establish a new organisational structure of the Office and increase the number of jobs. It was approved by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, whereby a Rulebook for the work organisation of the State Statistical Office and a Rulebook for job systematisation were prepared. Also, in December 2019, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration gave written consent for the implementation of the above acts, whose implementation began in early 2020.

Graph 1. Number of employees at the SSO, by location and gender



Graph 2. SSO employees, by location and education



		Condition 31.12 2019							
Work position	Total	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks	Roma	Serbians	Vlachs	Bosnians	Other
Managerial	31	27	2	0	0	1	0	0	1

Non-managerial	243	172	47	4	3	10	5	2	0
1. Higher or secondary education	58	37	16	1	0	1	2	1	0
2. High education	216	162	33	3	3	10	3	1	1
Total	274	199	49	4	3	11	5	2	1

Named 1-Macedonian and 1 Albanian

Condition of public announcements for 2019 at a fixed time									
Work position	Total	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks	Roma	Serbians	Vlachs	Bosnians	Друго
Managerial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Managerial (high education)	15	6	7	1	1	0	0	0	0
Total	15	6	7	1	1	0	0	0	0

Condition of internal announcements for 2019									
Work position	Total	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks	Roma	Срби	Vlachs	Bosnians	Other
Managerial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-managerial (high education)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1.1.2. Professional training of employees

The professional development of SSO employees is a precondition for creating professional, competent and highly motivated employees who are ready to meet the needs not only of the SSO in terms of producing high-quality and reliable statistical data, comparable statistics with the developed EU countries, but also the needs of a wider range of users in the country. Professional development and training of SSO staff is a continuous activity to which the senior management of the SSO pays great attention.

In 2019, 22 persons from the SSO participated in 10 international conferences, while 106 SSO representatives and one National Bank employee took part in 73 Eurostat meetings. In addition to the Eurostat meetings, 55 people took part in 42 other meetings, including a representative of the Fund for

Innovations. Also, a total of 623 persons from the SSO attended 168 external training events (expert missions, study visits, workshops, seminars, courses, summer schools, etc.) organised by external experts. Besides the SSO representatives, the training events were attended by employees from several other institutions: the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Finance and Public Revenue Office. Furthermore, 12 SSO representatives participated in 2 webinars, and 3 people took part in 1 e-meeting. One person from the SSO was on an internship in Eurostat, in the period from September - December 2019.

The Office hosted a study visit by representatives of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics on preparations for the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of North Macedonia and on the same topic, the SSO hosted a two-day regional seminar attended by representatives of the Statistical Offices of the countries of the Western Balkans Region - North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1.1.3. Budget of the State Statistical Office

The budget of the SSO for performing regular activities in 2019, was 357.822.000 denars. Of these funds, 186.507.000 denars were approved for regular operation, and 171.315.000 denars were approved for the implementation of preparatory activities for the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, which was to be carried out in 2020.

The budget of the SSO in 2019, intended for implementation of regular activities (without the approved funds for the census activities), was increased by 5.894.000 denars (3.26%) compared to the previous year. During the year, with the rebalance of the budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, the budget of the Office was increased by 1.960.000 denars.

With the redistribution of funds among the budget users of the central government and among the funds, from the total approved funds for conducting preparatory activities for the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 154.000.000 denars were redistributed, from item 480-Procurement of equipment and machinery.

In the total budget of the SSO, the share of funds for the Programme 10 - Administration was 0.96%, the highest share had the Programme 20 - Statistical Surveys with 49.25%, Programme 30 - Census 47.61% and the Programme MA - EU Integration participated with 2.16%.

In the funds approved for Programme 20 – Statistical Surveys, salaries and contributions for SSO employees had the highest share with 71.39%, utility services 6.43%, funds for conducting statistical surveys accounted for 9.22%, while capital expenditures participated with 7.4%. The part for subsidies and transfers accounts for 1.56%. In the remaining part of the funds - 4.00%, participated: travel and daily expenses by 0.15%, materials and small inventory by 0.85%, repairs and current maintenance by 2.39%, other current expenses by 0.57%. The above budget parameters show its unfavorable structure, primarily in terms of the predominance of employee salaries in relation to the funds for implementation of statistical surveys of the Five-Year Programme of Statistical Surveys.

1.1.4. Internal audit

In the SSO, internal audit is conducted as an independent activity of objective assurance and consulting in order to determine whether adequate policies and procedures are applied, whether the regulations and the established standards are implemented, whether the resources are used in an efficient and economic manner, and whether the planned objectives are achieved effectively.

The internal audit provides the Director with additional assurance that the implementation of the management and control instruments is adequate, economical and consistent with the generally accepted standards and the national legislation. It also provides the Director with analyses, recommendations, advice and information concerning the reviewed activities, in order to contribute to the improvement of SSO's work.

Internal audit at the State Statistical Office is carried out in accordance with the principles of legality, independence, objectivity, competency, professionalism, integrity and confidentiality.

During 2019, the SSO continued the process of establishment of the Financial Management and Control (FMC) system. The task of internal audit is to give recommendations to strengthen the FMC for transparent, regular, economical, efficient and effective use of available funds.

In the course of 2019, internal auditors performed 6 audits, for which they prepared auditor's reports, based on the strategic plan, the internal audit annual plan and the plans for individual audits, in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. A total of 26 recommendations were given in the specified period.

In 2019, an Annual Report was prepared about the performed audits and activities of the internal audit for 2018.

1.1.5. Statistical Council of the Republic of North Macedonia

The Statistical Council of the Republic of North Macedonia is an expert advisory body for state statistics, whose position and responsibilities are defined in Articles 10, 11 and 11 of the Law on State Statistics. The current Statistical Council was established by Decision No. 08-3106/1 of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia of 27 May 2019, with mandate of 4 years. Due to the expired mandate, during 2018 the Statistical Council did not hold sessions. With the last amendment to the Law on State Statistics ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 220/2018), the Council is composed of a president and 13 members representing:

- The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia from among the employees, with the title of at least one state counsellor - one member, the Ministry of Finance - one member, the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia - one member, The Association of Local Self-Government Units - two members, the Economic and Social Council - one member, NGOs - one member, Chambers of Commerce - three members and scientific institutions - three members. The Director of the Office is an ex-officio member of the Council.

The purpose of changing the current structure of the Council, in the opinion of the Office, as well as of the foreign experts, was to be dominated by representatives of the users, ie representatives of the scientific, business community and other entities.

In the period June - December 2019, the Council held three sessions at which the following materials were reviewed:

- Introduction to the documents adopted by the Statistical Council,
- Verification of the Rules of the Procedure of the Statistical Council of the Republic of North Macedonia,
- Financial plan of the Statistical Council for 2019,
- Review of the Draft Work Programme of the Statistical Council of the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019,
- Presentation of the website, the Facebook page of the Office and the manner of using the MakStat database,
- Improving the Business Register as part of the National IPA Programme,
- Information on the implementation of the obligations in the NPAA (National Programme for the Acquisition of EU Law) and the screening process for Chapter 18. Statistics, for the current year,
- Review of the Draft Strategic Plan of the SSO, 2020 - 2022,
- Review of the Draft Work Programme of the Statistical Council for 2020, with Budget Proposal,
- Annual work programme of the State Statistical Office, 2020.

1.1.6. Coordination Committee

The Coordination Committee as an expert coordination and advisory body for coordination of the State Statistics was established in accordance with the Decision on appointing the President and the members of the Coordination Committee, No. 24-318 / 12 of 21 May 2019, adopted by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" No. 110/19.

The Coordination Committee is composed of a President, who is a representative of the Office, and one member each as a representative of the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia and the authorised bodies listed in the Statistical Survey Programme, from among the employees responsible for performing statistical activities.

The President and the members of the Coordination Committee are appointed and dismissed by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. The Director of the Office is the President of the

Coordination Committee. The members of the Coordination Committee are appointed for a period of four years. The Office performs the administrative and technical work for the needs of the Coordination Committee.

The Coordination Committee performs the following tasks:

- supports the work and activities of the Office in the realisation of its function in the system of state statistics,
- strengthens the direct cooperation between the Office and the authorised bodies,
- monitors the implementation of the Acquis in the field of statistics,
- builds a unique approach in the interpretation of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practise, relevant to the authorised bodies and defines the manner of conformity assessment,
- evaluates the implementation and compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practise,
- forms joint working groups due to the need for professional-methodological and information harmonisation between the Office and the authorised bodies,
- promotes joint projects and trainings of employees working on statistical surveys,
- strengthens the identity of the National Statistical System,
- proposes measures and forms of modernisation of the national statistical system,
- works on building strategic partnerships for improving the statistical system of the country,
- prepares a report on its work and
- adopts Rules of Procedure for its work.

In the past period, the Committee held one session.

1.2. STATISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

1.2.1 Classification

Several national classifications and nomenclatures were adopted as SSO standards in 2019:

- Nomenclature of the territorial units for statistics - NTES ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" no. 131/19)

The following correspondent tables were prepared:

- Correspondence table between the National Nomenclature of Industrial Products, 2017 and the National Nomenclature of Industrial Products, 2016;

- Correspondence table between the National Nomenclature of Industrial Products, 2017 - 2018 and the Combined Nomenclature (CN), 2018;

- Correspondence table, Nomenclature of agricultural products, forestry products, hunting and fishing and related services (2018) and Nomenclature of agricultural products, forestry products, hunting and fishing and related services (2011)

1.2.2 Statistical registers

1.2.2.1 Statistical Register of Territorial Units

In 2019, the activities with the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre related to the preparation of the census cartography continued.

During 2019, the updating of the data in the web cartography application continued. In the course of 2019, WMS services were prepared for the Population by five-year age groups, by gender and by regions. SSO persons participated in several workshops within the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) organized by the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre.

1.2.2.2. Statistical Business Register

The Statistical Business Register is updated on a regular basis and the accuracy and quality of the data are checked regularly, in particular the data on activity, size, address data, etc.

We have been continuously working on developing the methodological bases and functionality of SDR, harmonised with European standards and recommendations, especially on improving the quality and coverage of groups of enterprises.

The enterprise groups database was updated with 2017 data.

The IPA 2017 national program analysed the collected information on administrative sources used to update the Statistical Business Register (SBR) as well as their quality and timeliness. The functionalities of the SBR, the scope, the type of statistical units, the metadata used and the implementation of the Enterprise Group (EG) as a unit in the SBR were also analysed. Comprehensive list of all basic and mandatory variables which should the SBR contain, required by EU regulations (Regulation (EC) No. 177/2008 and FRIBS), has been finalised under the IPA 2017 national program and the concept for logical design of the SBR has been prepared.

In the period October-December 2019, in the area of the Statistical Business Register, within the IPA 2017 project, the main activities were focused on discussions of open issues, problems and risks, obtaining recommendations from experts, their review and proper implementation.

1.2.2.3 Statistical Farm Register

The Register is updated continuously with data from administrative sources and statistical surveys. The Statistical Farm Register is used as a sampling frame for statistical surveys in the field of agriculture.

1.2.2.4 Data warehouse for national accounts

One of the main activities in the upcoming period is upgrading the data warehouse for national accounts and the creation of inputs and outputs for the warehouse.

For this purpose, the "Ad hoc project on DWH for National Accounts - methodological aspects" was launched as part of IPA 2015 MBP.

During 2019, intensive work was done on the methodological aspects related to the calculations in the national accounts, both on the input data and on the output data and on balancing the output data with the help of the supply and use tables. In that direction, work was done on creating several types of data files, classification links with data and job descriptions for achieving the final calculations of the main categories of GDP, sector accounts and supply and use tables. Also it was worked on migration files to save data sets with results in long series.

1.2.3 Quality management

The quality management framework in the SSO is based on the quality standards established in the European Statistical System (ESS) and expressed in the Quality Declaration of the ESS and the European Statistics Code of Practice (hereinafter: the Code). The Office continuously works on implementation of the principles of the Code. The last Peer Review on the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice was conducted in February 2017, and the Office continuously works on the implementation of the review recommendations.

1.2.4 Use of administrative data sources and reducing respondent burden

Reducing respondent burden is a very important activity of the SSO, and as such it has been identified as a major objective in the priority "Strengthening the cooperation with providers of data and holders of data sets" in the Strategic Plan of the SSO, 2019-2021. Respondent burden is most effectively reduced by using administrative data sources and through the electronic data collection system (eStat) of the SSO.

In the context of monitoring the activities of the SSO for the use of administrative resources, a working group was established whose main goal is to centrally monitor the activities related to the use of administrative resources (determination of management framework, assessment of the quality of administrative resources, implementation of recommendations from the last Peer Review and identification of new possible administrative sources.)

Regarding the use of administrative data sources, the SSO in 2019 undertook several activities, primarily in function of the preparations for the implementation of the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in RSM, which should be conducted in 2021, assessing the compatibility, expediency and

quality of the administrative data collections from several state institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia.

In 2019, the SSO continued with the use of the electronic data collection system - eStat, through which the reporting units - business entities, can simply and easily submit data through web questionnaires.

1.2.5. New methods in certain statistical surveys

For the first time, new methods were applied for:

- Using the data from the PRO and the final accounts for the selection of the sample and redesign of the survey Structure of the earnings of the employees (SES);
- Comparison of data obtained from SES with the appropriate administrative data from the PRO and analysis of the accuracy and coincidence of the two sources;
- Automation of the process of tabulation of the data for the release from the SES 2018;
- Automation of validation processes using SAS in the Labor Force Survey, improving the procedure for calculating annual errors taking into account the rotation method and the dependence of the observations;
- Generalisation of the procedures for calculation of errors and inclusion in the quality report for the main indicators in the LSMS;
- Analysis of the correlation and the correlation coefficient of the trade turnover at the level of all strata, using Horwitz Thomson assessor and Ratio assessor when using auxiliary information from administrative sources from the PRO and the Register of Business Entities;
- Use of auxiliary informations in sample design for better coefficients of variation;
- Processing of the data for the Vacancy Survey using administrative data from ESA for 2018 with full scope and comparative analysis with the data from the sample survey from 2018;
- Using the final accounts for the calculations in the Structural Business Statistics (SBS) 2018;
- Survey on domestic travel, sample selection, weighting, processing, data analysis, sending aggregated data and microdata to Eurostat;
- Crop production survey, sample selection, weighting, processing, data analysis;
- Survey for foreign visitors at the border crossings TU16, sample selection;
- Survey for foreign tourists in accommodation facilities TU13, sample selection;
- The change of source data initiates changes in the process of reading and processing data in the field of foreign trade. (Change of the format of the shipment (txt-> XML), the name and format of the variables, separate the input data into working, cumulative, for correction, etc.)

1.2.6. Metainformation system and electronic data collection

The SSO applies the recommendations of Eurostat for the production and publication of reference metadata on its website in accordance with the Single Integrated Metadata Structure standard, v2.0. For that purpose, the information system, developed in the Office, is used for documenting and publishing reference metadata in a standardised way in the three structures (ESMS, ESQRS and SIMS), as prescribed in the regulation.

The system is actively functioning and, as at the end of 2019, it included 29 statistical surveys from different areas and with different frequency. Its application abides by the criteria and principles of the Quality Policy:

- Improving timeliness
- Improving data accuracy
- Rational use of available resources

1.2.7 Data security and statistical confidentiality

The implementation of statistical disclosure protection methods continued in 2019. Custom software protection solutions were developed using the most appropriate methods to control the possibility of statistical disclosure of the microdata with which the researchers worked in the safe room in order to obtain a data file in which there is minimal information loss.

Regarding aggregated data, external trade and structural business statistics data are regularly protected. The method of control from statistical disclosure, except for linked tables from foreign trade, has been applied to linked tables from structural business statistics and further improvement is being done.

1.3 Information infrastructure

1.3.1 Development of the IT system to support the statistical business process

Within IPA 2017, a project for development of an information system for supporting the implementation of statistical surveys was launched. This project arose from the need to increase the quality and efficiency of the use of information technology in support of statistical processes and the introduction of rationalisation and standardisation in the work. During 2019, intensive work was done on identification and analysis of statistical processes in the SSO related to the phases of SBPM. All surveys from the Five-Year Statistical Survey Program conducted at the SSO were reviewed, except those included in the Data Warehouse for national accounts. The type and manner of data collection and tools used were analysed. A specially designed questionnaire collected information on various statistical processes related to validation, imputation, editing, weighting and aggregation of collected data, as well as the use of various tools. The summary result of the analysis of the collected information was the basis for describing the required functionalities and for defining the architecture of the system. The work on the specification of the IT system which should be developed started in 2019, and continued in 2020.

1.3.2 Technical infrastructure

In 2019, a procedure for renewal of the information infrastructure in the SSO started, a project supported by IPA funds. Two tender procedures were initiated: one for the procurement of equipment for the computer center and another, part of the national contribution, for the reconstruction of the

computer network. The project for the reconstruction of the computer network was completed in November, and in terms of the procurement of equipment for the computer center, by the end of 2019 an agreement was signed with the selected economic operator. For the first time in the regional statistical departments were put into operation personal computers with similar performance as those in the SSO and thus all employees have the same technical and technological working conditions: Windows 10 and MS Office 365. In order to unify the used software, migration of data from DB2 to MS SQL server database was performed, as well as migration of data from the SAS repository for national accounts on the SQL Server platform.

1.4 Dissemination

1.4.1. Data dissemination

The main goal of dissemination is to provide SSO products and services that meet the modern needs of users of official statistics.

The website is the main channel for dissemination of statistical data and information. During 2019, great efforts were made by SSO employees for preparing new data tables and for updating the existing data tables with longer time series in the MakStat database.

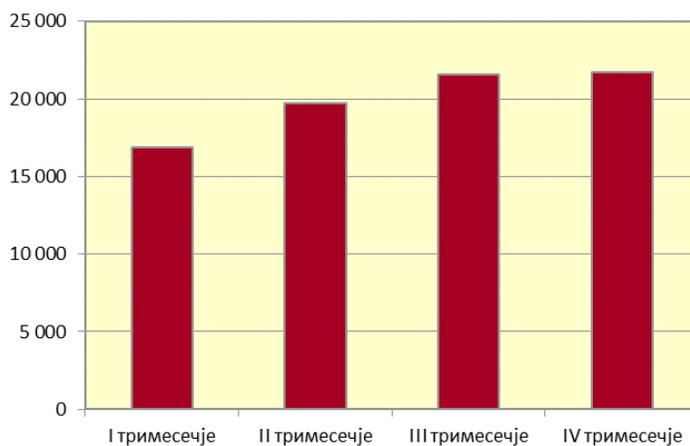
From the second quarter of 2019, the website of the State Statistical Office became available in a third language - Albanian. The basic contents of the page were translated, and the most numerous edition – News Releases - is published daily in three languages - Macedonian, English and Albanian.

1.4.2. Statistical data available online – more data and more users

The website of the State Statistical Office is the primary source of official statistics. Through the website, users have access to the publications issued by database, which contains data from several thematic areas and data by regions and municipalities. In 2019, the website of the SSO was visited 1 226 978 times.

The website of the State Statistical Office has been designed according to user needs and in line with European standards. The MakStat database is becoming the main channel for data dissemination and provides access, possibility for selection and outputs in different formats (xlsx, csv, json, etc.), as well as automated access to data in it via API. The number of visits to the MakStat database in 2018 was 79 837, an increase of 18% on the previous year. Visit statistics show that active business entities by sectors of activity, external trade according to the basic economic categories, tourists and nights spent and industrial producer prices were the most visited data tables in 2019.

Graph 4. Visits to the MakStat database on the website of the SSO, 2019

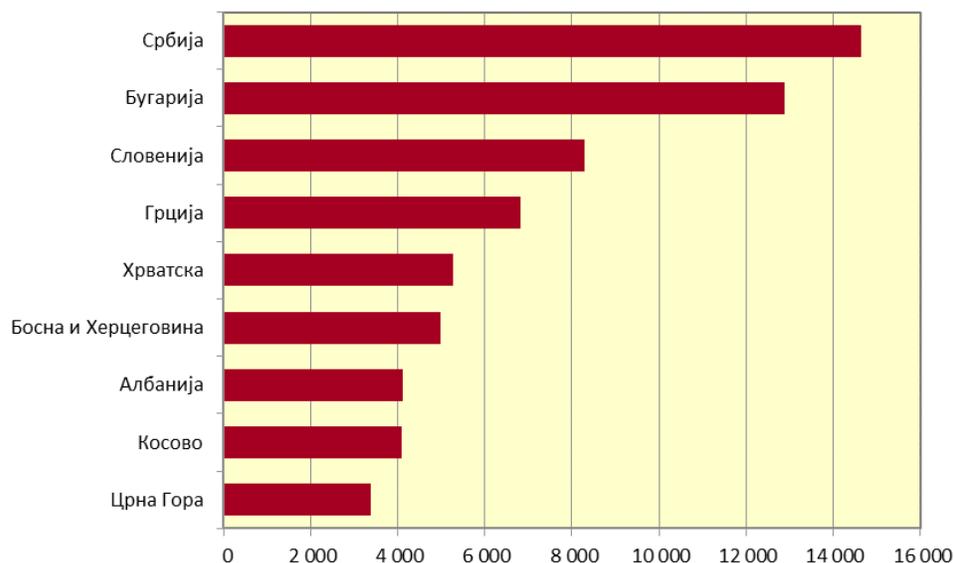


New data tables and time series are constantly added to the MakStat database. The amount of data organised in Excel spreadsheets is steadily growing, and data users can access tables of the statistical reviews and the Statistical Yearbook in Excel format. Information about the statistical products and activities of the SSO is regularly published on Twitter.

The practice of phasing out publications from the Statistical Reviews edition continued and the data from the statistical surveys are available in the MakStat database.

Graph 5. Visits and sessions by countries of the region

Statistics on visits by countries of the region show that the website is visited the most by data users from Serbia and Bulgaria, and the least by users from Albania and Montenegro.



1.4.3. Publication activity of the institution

The results from the statistical surveys are available to both domestic and international users in the form of statistical publications.

Dissemination statistics show that the following results were achieved in 2019:

- 329 issues were published in the "News Releases" edition
- 5 issues were published in the "Statistical Reviews" edition
- 7 multi-domain publications were issued
- 12 issues of the Monthly Statistical Bulletin were published, separately in Macedonian and English language
- the MakStat database was improved with new data

The following were published by the SSO in 2019: "Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of North Macedonia" – a publication containing statistical data on the demographic, social and economic situation in the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as data for a longer period of time. A separate chapter contains data comparable with other countries in Europe and the world.

"North Macedonia in Figures" – a small statistical yearbook, containing tables and charts with data about the Republic of North Macedonia from all the areas covered by the surveys conducted by the State Statistical Office.

"Sustainable Development" – publication by which the SSO succeeded in the efforts to calculate and unite in one place the available indicators of sustainable development in the Republic of North Macedonia. The indicators have a multi-domain character and reflect the economic, social, environmental and the institutional dimension of sustainable development.

"Sustainable Development" - in 2019 the SSO published an electronic publication for the purpose of sustainable development, different from previous editions. Adhering to the principles of Agenda 2030 for policy-making leading to the eradication of all forms of poverty, inequality, environmental protection, prosperity and peace, the SSO has produced a set of indicators that provide statistical support for monitoring the implementation of the concept of sustainable development. In this publication, the indicators are defined in accordance with the European Strategy for Sustainable Development and are calculated according to the standards of European statistics, which ensures their international comparability. Through this edition, users have a visual overview of the progress of North Macedonia is making on the path to achieving the global goals for sustainable development.

"Regions of the Republic of North Macedonia" – ninth edition (2018) of the State Statistical Office, which contains the latest economic and socio-demographic data about the regions in the country. Statistical data about the regions contribute to the fulfilment of the obligations of the Republic of North Macedonia in the context of the regional policy of the European Union. Through clear and simple tables, maps and charts, this publication presents the statistical regions in several statistical areas, while the short comments allow for easy identification of the characteristics, differences and similarities between the regions.

"MakStat Selection" – issued for the first time in 2016. It presents in a different way some of the data available at the Office that should be interesting for data users. The publication is divided into 20 areas with tables, graphs, infographics and short comments that show the trends in some of the phenomena observed by statistics. The pages of this publication are filled with visual data describing the socio-economic developments in the Republic of North Macedonia and presenting a snapshot of what the country is today.

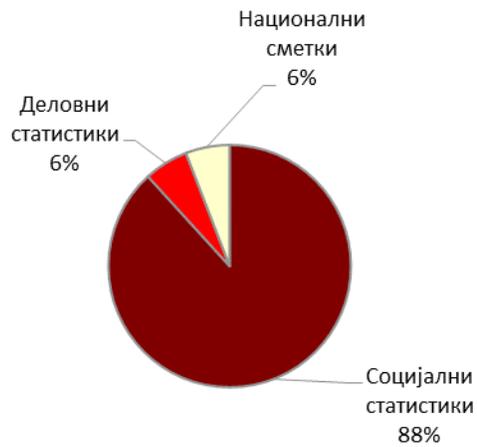
"Women and men in the Republic of North Macedonia" – eleventh edition of the publication, containing gender indicators that are used for monitoring the process of providing equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men in various areas of life: education, employment, judiciary, culture, social protection, etc.

"Environmental Statistics" – seventh edition of the State Statistical Office; it is published every two years. This publication covers a particular set of indicators that show a comprehensive picture of the state of the environment. It is prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning.

The State Statistical Office is constantly making efforts to develop and improve its dissemination products in order to reach a larger number of users and raise awareness of the significance of statistical data and their use. For that purpose, from September 2019, the SSO opened its Facebook page where in

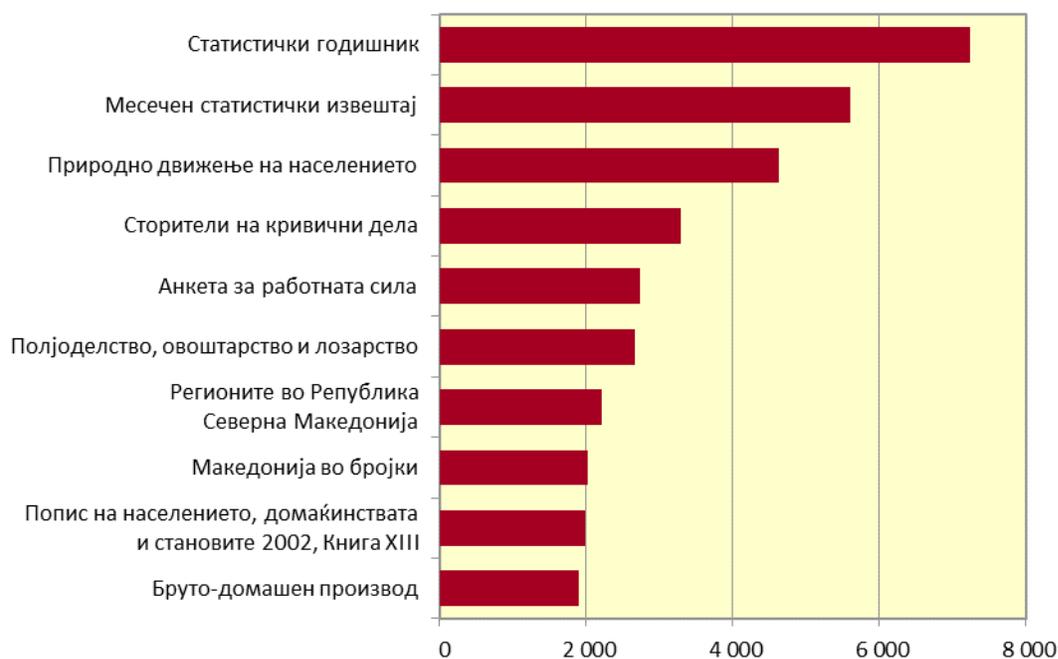
Macedonian and Albanian, publishes interesting data from its surveys that in a visually pleasing way attracts the attention of users.

Graph 6. Issued publications in 2019, by theme



All publications are available on the website of the State Statistical Office: www.stat.gov.mk

Graph 7. Number of visits to the Publications edition



Of the issued publications, according to website visitor statistics, the Statistical Yearbook was the most visited publication in 2019.

Graph 8. Number of visits to the News Releases edition



In 2018, the most visited news release was "Average monthly net wage paid per employee", followed by "Gross domestic product", "Natality in the Republic of North Macedonia", "Primary, lower secondary

and upper secondary schools at the beginning of the school year " and "Active population in the Republic of North Macedonia".

1.4.4. Simple delivery of data to users

In addition to the data and information available on the website, users may also submit requests for data and information. In 2019, the SSO responded to 920 requests for statistical data, most of which via e-mail, and to around 550 data queries via telephone.

1.4.5. Greater representation of statistical data in the media

Media constitute a very important segment of users of official statistics, because through the media statistical data are available to the general public. The "News Releases" edition is the most often used medium by the journalists. The State Statistical Office keeps track of its coverage in print media and web portals, and according to the available data, 737 articles were published in electronic media in 2019, most of which referring to the interpretation of statistical data on incomes, expenditures and prices, population, tourism and economic indicators.

Cooperation with the media - one of the main channels for dissemination of statistical data - was carried out through communication of the responsible persons with all the media, which significantly increased the interest in the statistical products.

1.4.6 Using the collaborative infrastructure of Eurostat – data transmission through the “Single Entry Point”

Data transmission to Eurostat by using eDamis tools through the Single Entry Point was carried out regularly as part of the established practice and within deadlines set by Eurostat.

In 2019, there were a total of 1041 data transmissions with 621 data sets transmitted.

Data sets are delivered along with reference metadata using the National Reference Metadata Editor, as a tool for their transmission.

During 2019, an analysis of a possible solution to support data transmission in Eurostat in accordance with the SDMX standard was made. SDMX Reference Infrastructure (SDMX-RI) was implemented using tools developed by Eurostat and ISTAT. Data sets in the field of macroeconomic statistics were successfully prepared and sent in this format. In addition, in the future the same infrastructure and SDMX-oriented storage database for sending to Eurostat will be used for other statistical areas.

1.4.7 Special data dissemination system, SDDS plus

On January 28, 2019, the Republic of North Macedonia became part of the Special Data Dissemination Standards Plus of the International Monetary Fund (SDDS Plus - Special Data Dissemination Standards Plus).

The State Statistical Office, as coordinator, jointly with the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Ministry of Finance, successfully completed the preparatory period for inclusion in

the IMF Special Data Dissemination System Plus and provided updated data for creating a national data page. The whole process was monitored, commented and approved by the IMF.

2. STATISTICS BY SECTOR

2.1. Social statistics

2.1.1 Preparations for the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 2021

In the framework of the preparations for the upcoming Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 2021, the following activities have been realised:

- Due to the early parliamentary elections scheduled for April 2020, the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings for 2021 was postponed.
- The Draft-Law on Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 2021 was not adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- In the period from 14 to 30 June 2019, the Pilot Census of the population, Households and Dwellings was successfully conducted by applying the new combined census method. For that purpose, the SSO prepared a pre-census database of six available administrative datasets and the application solution for the application of the CAPI method using a laptop for data collection. In November, a Regional Conference was organised with the countries in the region for sharing experiences from the conducted Pilot Census.
- In order to improve the pre-census database as a precondition for the application of the new combined methodological approach for conducting the Census, the following was continued:
 - examination of the quality and the possibility for using new available administrative data collections, such as the data from the Population Register under the competence of MISA,
 - improvement of the application solution through GIS visualization.

2.1.2 Activities in other areas of social statistics:

- The Multicluster Survey for 2019 in Macedonia was prepared and conducted (MIX 6). This research was organised by the SSO in cooperation with the UNICEF Office in Skopje;
- Detailed analyses of the administrative data were performed, which are the basis for establishing the Statistical Register of Employees and the surveys related to salaries and earnings;
- Regarding the Gender Equality Index, taking into account the updated methodology, a review was made that was submitted to the European Institute for Gender Equality and which contains the indicators available at the SSO and the indicators available from other sources.

- The Survey on Earnings Structure for 2019 was conducted and data were published. The research was conducted using data, for most of the variables, from the Statistical Register of Employees and from administrative sources;
- Preliminary calculations were made for the labor price index and the wage gap between men and women;
- In 2019, activities for implementation of the CATI and CAPI method for data collection in the Labor Force Survey continued and improved;
- Activities have started for the implementation of the CAPI method for collecting retail prices for the survey Consumer Price Index and Retail Price Index, as well as for the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices;
- Publications for primary and secondary schools at the beginning and at end of the school year were published for the first time in the MakStat database (87 tables in total);
- In the field of higher education, tables for teachers and associates in higher education institutions were issued for the first time in the MakStat database.

Planned and conducted statistical surveys:

1. Sector of Social Statistics

Periodicity – area	Number of surveys in 2019	Number of surveys in 2018
Department of Living Standard		
monthly	1	1
annual	2	2
analytical	1	1
five-yearly	-	-
total	4	4
Department of Social Protection, Judicial and Public Statistics		
annual	27	27
biennial	1	1
three-yearly		1
five-yearly	-	-
total	28	29
Department of Education and Science		
annual	19	20
biennial	-	-
three-yearly	-	-

Periodicity – area	Number of surveys in 2019	Number of surveys in 2018
five-yearly	-	-
ten-yearly	-	-
total	19	20
Department of Population Statistics		
annual	7	7
ten-yearly (Pilot-Census)		1
total	7	8
Department of Labour Market		
monthly	1	1
annual	1	1
quarterly	2	2
four-yearly	1	1
five-yearly	-	-
total	5	5
Total Sector of Social Statistics	64	66

2.2. National accounts

In 2019, the State Statistical Office dedicated itself to activities in the field of macroeconomic statistics, with special emphasis on Government Finance Statistics (GFS) and Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP notification table).

In April and October 2019, the NDP notification tables for the period 2015-2018 were prepared and sent. The request (questions) of Eurostat for confirmation of the data sent in April has been answered.

For the first time in the transmission in October were included data on taxes on an accrual basis included in the item "Other receivables (+)" in table 2 of the set of notification tables. The data are revised for the entire reporting period.

Within the pilot project for GFS NDP (IPA MBP 2015), the transmission tables for the State sector and the National Tax List were prepared and sent to Eurostat. A methodological document was prepared for the sources and methods for compiling the annual national accounts for the State sector by sub-sectors and NDP statistics in accordance with the ESS 2010.

During 2019, within the project for sector accounts, the sector accounts were transmitted through the SDMX-NA transmission standards for the period 2014-2016 on an experimental basis. A methodological document on the sources and methods for compiling the set of sector accounts (ASA Inventory) was prepared.

As a result, several methodological improvements were made in accordance with EU methodologies and they were included in the current calculations.

In November 2019, the project "Development of dedicated software and database for economic statistics" was completed, which upgraded the data warehouse for national accounts and supply and usage tables. All activities were completed according to the planned deadlines. Part of this upgraded warehouse are:

- Annual sectoral accounts,
- Supply and usage tables,
- Categories of GDP according to the expenditure method,
- Regional accounts and
- Structural business statistics.

During 2019, as a result of the realised activities within the multi-user program IPA 2015, the method of calculation for regionalisation of GDP, employees and investments in fixed assets has been improved. The "Top-down" method used for regionalisation has been replaced by the "Bottom-up" method depending on the available administrative and statistical data at the regional level.

GDP was calculated by regions at constant prices for the time series 2000-2017 and the data were published together with the revision of the data by regions with the new calculation method.

Preliminary data for 2018 for GDP were prepared, published and sent to Eurostat. The activities within the National Multi-User Program and IPA 2017 have started.

In 2019, the Customs Administration launched the new system for processing customs declarations and excise documents (CDPS). Prior to the implementation of the CDPS, the consolidated version of the Rulebook on the Manner of Completing the Customs Declaration and the Code of Codes used in Completing the Customs Declaration was published in the "Official Gazette of RNM" no. 105 from 27.05.2019. In the consolidated version of the Rulebook, Box 24 Nature of the transaction is fully harmonised with the EU Regulation on EXTRAST no. 113/2010. In order to provide up-to-date and quality data, the SSO rearranged and reorganised its data processing system in accordance with the concept of CDPS.

In 2019, the TEC data (commodity exchange according to the economic characteristics of the companies) for the reference 2017 were prepared and published in a news release, respecting all methodological rules for processing and active confidentiality. The data is available in the Makstat database.

For the External Trade survey according to invoiced currency, during April 2019, the previous data for 2018 were prepared according to the methodological rules and recommendations of the EU and were submitted to Eurostat. At the same time, a series of data for the period 2013-2017 was published in the Makstat database. The ESMS 2.0 metadata reference structure is completed and sent to Eurostat.

In order to bring the national statistical system closer to the EU, data control has been improved by introducing new controls and an adequately updated data control guideline has been prepared. The unit value indices, final data for 2017, were processed and published in the Makstat database in compliance with the new data controls.

Planned and conducted statistical surveys:

Periodicity – area	Number of surveys in 2019	Number of surveys in 2018
annual	2	2
quarterly	1	1
monthly	1	1
according to Eurostat’s survey programme	8 ¹⁾	7 ¹⁾
analytical	39	39
Total Sector of National Accounts	51	50

2.3. Business statistics, agricultural statistics and environmental statistics

In 2019, the SSO resumed the activities for improving business statistics, agricultural and environmental statistics and for harmonisation with European regulations.

2.3.1. Business statistics

In the area of statistical surveys in the field of business statistics (collection, processing and dissemination), in 2019 the following was carried out:

- The IFATS population was defined for the period 2016-2017 and the IFATS data were published for the first time.
- A new questionnaire was prepared on the number and capacity of waste disposal facilities created during recovery or disposal, in order to meet the requirements for regular reporting to Eurostat (Data Set 3) under Regulation 2150/2002.
- As part of IPA 2015, the project for development of production and dissemination of tourism demand statistics was finalised in accordance with Annex II of Regulation 692/2011. All planned activities were successfully implemented as planned, the expected results were achieved and from the beginning of

2019, the SSO established a regular survey on the travel of the domestic population. In August 2019, the results were confirmed and accepted by Eurostat. In September 2019, the ESMS report was sent to Eurostat.

- Within the IPA 2015, the project for short-term business statistics (STS) was finalised. All planned activities were successfully implemented as planned, and the final report was sent to Eurostat. The data on the turnover indices in services were published for the period 2013-2017. Seasonally adjusted retail turnover data were first sent to Eurostat via Edamis (2010 data from February 2019). All STS indicators for January 2019 were submitted to Eurostat in SDMX format from 2019.
- Within the IPA 2017, the activities related to the subcomponent 2B: Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) started. In the last quarter of 2019, three missions were held (28.10-01.11.2019; 11.11-15.11.2019 and 16-20.12.2019). During the missions, the availability of sources for compiling the TSA was discussed, the data from the tourism statistics and national accounts were evaluated, the compilation of the TSA tables 1,2,3,4 and 5 was started and the open issues were discussed. The preparation of the draft version of the TSA Compilation Manual in North Macedonia has also started.

2.3.2. Agricultural statistics

The statistics in the area of crop and livestock production, fisheries, prices and economic accounts in agriculture and forestry were continuously harmonised with the EU regulations.

- In the field of agriculture, two projects were finalised under IPA 2015 MBP. In the annual crop statistics project, two pilot sample surveys were conducted covering about 10,000 farms (each of them). In June, a survey of agricultural areas and crops was conducted at the end of spring and in November / December, a survey on agricultural production was conducted. The data editing procedure was also tested and the skills and professional knowledge of the staff in this area were improved, which can be used in other sample surveys conducted in the SSO. Experience from conducting sample surveys in crop statistics will be used in SSO plans to replace data collection with statistical estimators by collecting data from sample surveys in the near future. In order to achieve the main goals of the Livestock Production Statistics Project, GIP forecasting and estimation models were developed for slaughter outside the slaughterhouses, for cattle, pigs and sheep. Regarding the monthly data for raw cow's milk and the received dairy products in the dairies, after analysing the data, the SSO prepared and sent data sets to Eurostat.
- Within the IPA 2017 service contract, a Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) was completed and submitted to the experts engaged in the project.
- Preparations for FSS 2020 (sample review) have started. Based on the new regulation (EU) 2018/1091 on integrated farm statistics, the preparation of the draft questionnaire has started.

2.3.3. Statistics on environment, energy and transport

- In the field of environmental statistics, the project for compiling environmental accounts within the IPA 2017 MBP has started. The activities were aimed at compiling air emission accounts (AEA) and physical energy flow accounts (PEFA).

In the field of transport statistics, data were regularly prepared and submitted to Eurostat. Within the IPA 2015, the project Passenger and Freight Transport was worked on. The deliverables defined in the project were prepared and the final project report describing the work done, improvements and results achieved, was submitted in July 2019.

The main result is the achieved harmonisation with the EU legislation, and the SSO will continue to submit reports and micro-data to Eurostat within the deadlines set by the regulation, in a format provided by Eurostat, respecting the quality criteria, with special attention to the validation rules.

Methodological improvements in statistical surveys

- The survey on the travel of the domestic population is fully harmonised with Annex II of Regulation 692/2011.
- A regular quarterly statistical survey of Turnover Indices in Services was introduced, in accordance with Annex D of Regulation 1165/98 and for the first time the indices for the period 2014 to 2018 were published, and it was started with the regular quarterly publication of the indices for 2019. The first IFATS data for 2016 and 2017 were published.

Planned and conducted statistical surveys:

Sector of Business Statistics, Agricultural Statistics and Environmental Statistics

Periodicity - area	Number of surveys in 2019	Number of surveys in 2018
Department of Construction Statistics, Energy and Transport		
Energy		
annual	12	12
monthly	11	12
semi-annual	2	2
Transport	-	-
annual	11	11
five-yearly	-	
monthly	1	1
quarterly	3	3
Construction		
annual	5	5
semi-annual	1	1
quarterly	1	1
monthly	2	2
Total	49	49
Department of Agricultural Statistics and Environmental Statistics		
Agriculture – general		
three-yearly		-
annual	2	2
monthly	2	2
Crop production		
annual	7	7
Livestock production		
annual	3	3
monthly	2	2
Forestry		
annual	7	7
quarterly	1	1
Hunting and fishing		
annual	2	2

Agricultural prices		
monthly	2	2
quarterly	1	1
Economic accounts for agriculture		
annual	3	3
Water Economy		
three-yearly		
annual	3	3
Environment		
biennial	1	1
annual	4	4
Total	40	40

2.4. Sector for Regional Departments

In accordance with the Rulebook on Internal Organisation, the State Statistical Office comprises the Central Office in Skopje and eight regional departments throughout the country (Skopje, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Veles, Stip, Bitola, Ohrid and Strumica).

The main role of the regional departments is collecting data, coding and preliminary control of the statistical forms collected from reporting units. For some statistical surveys (in the field of demography), data entry and processing are also performed in the regional departments. In addition to these responsibilities, the regional departments also have an important role in developing and updating the network of interviewers. The regional departments are instrumental in the process of registration and selection of candidates for interviewers that make up the SSO network of interviewers, as well as in maintaining daily contact with them in carrying out the surveys.

Given that the reporting units are still the primary sources of data collected in the field via statistical forms, despite the growing importance of administrative data sources (for 35 surveys), the SSO regional departments will still have a major role in collecting statistical data from the field.

3. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

3.1. European integration

The process of European integration of the Republic of North Macedonia in the field of statistics is carried out in close cooperation with Eurostat, which provides aid and support to the SSO, as the national coordinator of the statistical system of the country, in the process of harmonisation of national statistical standards and data with international statistical standards and data, especially from EU Member States.

The SSO, as coordinator of the Working Group 18 – Statistics, continuously organises and coordinates the activities of the Working Group for the purpose of regular, quality and timely monitoring and reporting about the progress in adopting the Acquis.

On 12 and 13 February 2019, in Luxembourg, at the headquarters of the European Statistical Office - Eurostat, an explanatory meeting was held for Chapter 18 - Statistics, at which Eurostat presented all the necessary elements whose fulfillment is a necessary condition for setting the negotiating positions of the country in relation to Chapter 18 - Statistics. On March 27, 2019, the regular annual mission to evaluate the work of the State Statistical Office, conducted by Eurostat, was held. The representative of Eurostat first had a meeting and talks with the director of the SSO. In addition, the representative was acquainted with the activities of the Office in the past period, as well as with the future priorities in order to improve the work, improve the quality and modernise the procedures for collecting and accessing the Office data. Working meetings were also held with employees from all departments in the Office, who in more detail presented their work and their achievements in the field of harmonisation of the national with the Acquis in the field of statistics.

Furthermore, on March 28, 2019, a meeting of the management of the State Statistical Office was held with the representatives of Eurostat, Mr. Eduardo Baredo Capello, Director of the Directorate "B" - Methodology, dissemination, Cooperation in the European Statistical System, Ms. Avis Benes, Head of Section B3 - Enlargement, Neighborhood and Development Cooperation; Thorbjorn Karlqvist, team leader for the enlargement section. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Alessandro Zanotta, representative of the Delegation of the European Union, in charge of monitoring the harmonisation of statistics. The meeting discussed the remarkable progress of the national official statistics in harmonising with the statistics of the European Union, the strengthened coordination role of the State Statistical Office in the National Statistical System, the upcoming Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 2021, as well as the future plans of the Office for Harmonisation with the Acquis as a driving force. The meeting discussed the remarkable progress of national official statistics in harmonizing with the statistics of the European Union, the strengthened coordination role of the State Statistical Office in the National Statistical System, the upcoming Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 2021, as well as future plans. of the Office for Harmonization with European Legislation as a driving force. The Eurostat delegation also met with Mr. Bujar Osmani, Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European Affairs, on which the were opened the topics of Eurostat cooperation with the Republic of North Macedonia, especially in anticipation of the forthcoming Census.

SCREENING

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Economic and Financial Affairs and Statistics, held in 2019, the European Commission, as in the previous year, highlighted the progress made by the SSO in the period between meetings.

The National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia and the State Statistical Office jointly marked the European Statistics Day on October 28, 2019, under the motto "Better data. Better lives."

The cooperation between Eurostat and the SSO in the process of implementation of the Acquis was realised through constant consultations, assessments and recommendations from Eurostat.

3.2. International projects where the SSO was included

3.2.1. Ongoing projects of the European Commission

3.2.1.1 National projects

- **IPA 2013 National Programme**

The State Statistical Office is beneficiary of the IPA 2013 National Programme as part of the sector fiche for private sector development.

The State Statistical Office, together with the contractor Comtrade System Integration, on November 15, 2019 marked the successful completion of the 22-month project "Development of dedicated software and database of economic statistics", funded by the European Union.

- **IPA 2017 National Programme** (<http://www.stat.gov.mk/Proekti.aspx>)

On March 29, 2019, an event was organised at the EU InfoCentre to mark the official start of the EU-funded project "Improving the production and dissemination of statistical data".

The aim of the Project is to improve the quality and the availability of statistical data in the Republic of North Macedonia and to promote their use in the development and the coordination of public policies.

The project consists of 4 components:

- **Component 1:** Additional alignment with EU standards in the field of macroeconomic statistics
- **Component 2:** Additional alignment with EU standards in the field of business statistics
- **Component 3:** Further alignment with EU standards in the field of social statistics
- **Component 4:** Further Improved Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure.

The project is funded by the European Union under the IPA II Program 2017. It will last three years and it will end in February 2022. The budget is 1 648 500 euros. The project is conducted by the Consortium of BIM Consulting and the National Statistical Institute (NSI) of Bulgaria.

3.2.1.2 Multi-user projects

- **Multi-user programme for statistical cooperation IPA 2015**

On October 31, 2019, the implementation of the Multi-User Programme for Statistical Cooperation IPA 2015 was completed.

The main goal of the project has been realised. Within 14 pilot projects, as part of the grant agreement with Eurostat, about 80 results were submitted to Eurostat and about 170 activities were realised.

- **Multi-user programme for statistical cooperation IPA 2017**

The programme started on May 1, 2019 and will last 30 months.

The main goals of this project are:

- To support the process of harmonisation of the production of statistics in the beneficiary countries for the future EU membership by harmonising their current methodologies and results with the EU legislation and approximating their integration in the European Statistical System;
- Intensify the efforts to improve the quality of statistical information and to strengthen the confidence in methods and professionalism, which will provide reliable statistics for policy makers and the international community.

3.2.1.3 Regional projects

- **Encouraging the innovative capacity of small and medium enterprises**

Equipment was procured within the project (10 computers and 30 laptops) and a survey was conducted on the innovative capacity of small and medium enterprises. The results were presented at the Innovation Summit in June in Skopje. The project will end on 31.07.2020 and will encourage the transnational innovative capacity of small and medium enterprises and their support to form sustainable networks and innovative clusters with other small and medium enterprises in the Balkan-Mediterranean region, in order to exchange knowledge. and develop innovation by finding partners and providing SMEs with relevant data, tools and systems.

- **Regional cooperation project**

In 2019, the initiative for signing separate memoranda of cooperation between Statistics Sweden and each Statistical Office beneficiary of the programme was launched in order to enable the exchange of the experts from the beneficiary countries in certain domains.

3.2.2 Planned projects

Increased availability and use of official statistics in the Republic of North Macedonia - Partnership between Statistics Sweden and the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia - 2020-2022.

4.3. Communication and cooperation with other institutions

In order to determine the framework in which the cooperation was realised based on the use of internal potentials for achieving common interests, memoranda of cooperation were signed between the State Statistical Office and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, as well as with the Chamber of Commerce for Information and Communication Technologies. A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed with the International Labor Organization in the field of data and information exchange in the framework of statistical surveys in the field of labor market.

4. CHALLENGES THAT THE SSO WAS FACING

The challenges faced by the SSO in 2019 can be located in four specific areas:

- Preparations for conducting the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Northern Macedonia in 2020 (Census)
- Human resources management and
- The condition of the SSO premises.

Implementation preparation activities of the Census have been going on for a long time. The basic precondition for the realisation of this activity is the adoption of the Law on Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in 2020. The law was prepared by the Office and adopted by the Government, and in June 2019 was referred to the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia for adoption. The law was not adopted by the end of the year, which put the Office in a position to not be able to carry out all the necessary preparatory activities necessary for the implementation of the Census in 2020. The non-adoption of the Law also meant that the Census could not be conducted during the spring of 2020 and must be postponed for the next period.

State Statistical Office, at the beginning of 2019, although it had an approved New Employment Plan, for which financial means were provided for salaries and allowances for the newly employed persons, failed to realise the plan because the complex administrative procedures for the implementation of the employment plan prevented its implementation, especially because there was no consent from the new Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations, which took over the responsibility for approving employment plans for administrative staff by the Secretariat for Implementation of the Framework Agreement.

In 2019, the State Statistical Office continued with the realisation of the long-term plan for reconstruction of the building where the central Office is located, at st. Dame Gruev no. 4 in Skopje. Thereby, the stairwell of the Office was completely reconstructed and the glass part of the large hall of the Office was changed. The mentioned activities have significantly improved the working conditions of the employees of the Office, but the problem remains with the realisation of other activities such as the reconstruction of the central heating system, the roof of the large hall, replacement of the elevators and the construction of a new facade.

Another problem which remains is the provision of new work space for the employees of the Regional Department in Skopje, which is located in completely non-functional barracks in the City Park, within the City Hall.

A complete solution to the problem regarding the working space is expected with the taking over of the working premises from the Ministry of Transport and Communications and with relocation of the staff and equipment from ROS Skopje to the Central Office, while for ROS Tetovo activities are undertaken in the coming period to solve the problem in that regional department.

5. COORDINATION OF THE STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND AUTHORISED BODIES

In accordance with Article 21 of the Law on State Statistics, the SSO, as coordinator of the statistical system, in cooperation with the authorised bodies, prepares a report on their activities in relation to the implementation of the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2018-2022. The entities that have the status of authorised bodies are determined in the Law on State Statistics and the Five-Year Programme of Statistical Surveys. In addition to the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia, other authorised bodies are: Ministry of Finance, Employment Agency, Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Hydrometeorological Service and Institute of Public Health.

In 2019, with a Decision of the Government, a Coordination Committee was constituted and held one session.

Upon the request submitted to the authorised holders to prepare reports on their activity related to the Statistical Survey Programme, reports were received from all authorised holders, except from the Ministry of Justice – the Department for Execution of Sanctions.

5.1. National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia

In 2019, the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia conducted a total of 27 statistical surveys, of which 10 monthly, 14 quarterly and 3 semi-annual, the same number of surveys as in the previous year.

Number of National Bank employees working on statistical surveys

A total of 51 National Bank employees work on statistical surveys, as follows:

- 6 employees work on the inflation expectations survey, bank lending survey and real estate prices;
- 3 employees work on calculation of financial soundness indicators;
- 40 employees work on statistical surveys in the field of monetary and financial statistics, as well as external statistics;
- 2 employees work on statistical surveys in the field of payment statistics.

Methodological improvements in statistical surveys

Regarding the statistical surveys in the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2018-2022 pertaining to monetary statistics, OFI statistics and interest rate statistics" (item: 2.04.6.5.00 / 01; 2.04.6.5.00 / 02; 2.04.6.5.00 / 03; 2.04.6.5.00 / 04; 2.04.6.5.00 / 05; 2.04.6.5.00 / 06; 2.04.6.5.00 / 07 and 2.04.6.5.00 / 08), in 2019, the activities continued within the long-term project for establishing an integrated reporting system for the needs of statistics and supervision (ISIDORA), which would significantly reduce the reporting burden and provide a much richer database of existing statistical requirements. Numerous activities were undertaken to design the data structure, attributes, dimensions and financial instruments required for reporting in the new system. For proper information of the rapporteurs, regular meetings were organised with the banks in order to get acquainted with the course of the activities and their introduction in the new project.

Regarding the item 2.04.6.9.00 / 01: "Financial accounts" of the Programme, as a result of the improved methodology and the improved coverage of certain financial instruments and sectors, in April and October 2019, detailed data on the flows of the financial accounts of the State sector by sub-sectors for the period 2014-2018 were submitted to the SSO.

In the statistical survey in the field of external statistics (included in the chapter of the Programme for SI 2018-2022 item no.: "2.06 - International trade and balance of payments"), in addition to improving the scope and quality of data, work was done and on enriching available data. The most numerous were the activities for adaptation of the data processing system for foreign trade in the NBRNM to the new system of the Customs Administration. Also, activities were undertaken and analyses were made related to the adjustment of data sources in conditions of further liberalisation of capital transactions with non-residents (January 2019).

Novelties in statistical surveys

What marked 2019 in the field of statistics are the activities related to the improving of the transparency and availability of statistical data, which, in addition to the regular publication of standard statistical data and press releases, was achieved through:

- The official accession of the Republic of North Macedonia to the latest IMF Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS plus), on January 28, 2019. Thus, the country is among the 18 countries in the world that at that time met the requirements for statistical reporting in accordance with this standard. A joint promotional event was organised with the Ministry of Finance and the State Statistical Office for proper information of the data users;
- Commissioning of the new statistical web portal "NBStat" on the website of the National Bank, in the section "Statistics", on December 18, 2019. The launch of the new statistical portal "NBStat" is a modern statistical tool created by proactive use of the possibilities of information and communication technology and modern channels for interactive communication, which increased the usefulness of the published data, as the number of user categories and their specific requests for official statistics, while reducing the time required to search the data. As a follow-up to the MAKStat platform of the State Statistical Office, NBStat provides a significant improvement in the dissemination approach to our overall national statistics, giving the overall statistical system a unified, much more modern format, more suited to today's data needs of

users. For proper affirmation of the tool, a short video material has been prepared, available on the NBRNM website;

- The regular journalist workshop in 2019 was dedicated to statistics, with a special focus on the new statistical portal "NBStat", in order to properly introduce the journalists to the advantages offered by this portal. The workshop discussed in more detail the methodological bases of the foreign direct investment statistics and payment statistics and the manner of their interpretation.

Dissemination of statistics

- Data from the statistical surveys of the National Bank are published on the website of the National Bank in accordance with the periodicity and publication deadlines set out in the Programme.
- The list of indicators for financial stability is published on the website of the National Bank regularly (on a quarterly basis), in accordance with the Calendar for publishing the data which is available on the website of the National Bank.
- Regarding the communication with the users, press releases are regularly published for the basic statistical datasets whose publication is in the competence of the NBRM, simultaneously with the publication of the data.
- In order to increase the availability and improve the access of external users to the statistical data, in December 2019, on the website of the National Bank, in the section "Statistics", the new statistical portal "NBStat" was successfully set up. With the establishment of NBStat, the activities started in November 2016 within the project funded by the EU "Building Tools for Internal Data Analysis and a Statistical Internet Web Portal for External Users" were completed.

International activities and foreign assistance

In 2019, the National Bank continued to improve its capacity in the field of statistics through projects and technical missions organised in cooperation with international and European institutions, as well as through bilateral cooperation with central banks of EU Member States. More specifically, the following activities were carried out:

- Twinning project of IPA 2017 "Strengthening of the institutional capacity of the National Bank in the process of its accession to the European System of Central Banks", within which from November 2019, with experts from the Croatian and Romanian central banks, initial activities related to the improvement of financial accounts statistics have been realised.
- The implementation of this project represents further alignment with the ESCB / ECB standards (implementation of ESA 2010), with the main focus on quarterly and annual flows for the financial accounts;

- The IPA 2017 project “Strengthening the Central Bank Capacities in the Western Balkans with a view to the Integration to the European System of Central Banks”, within which from November 2019, with experts from the Central Bank of Portugal initial activities related to the project for establishing an integrated reporting system for the needs of statistics and supervision have been realised;
- To mark the European Statistics Day in 2019, the National Bank and the State Statistical Office organized a joint event, promoting mutual cooperation as a main precondition for improving the national statistical system. An expert from the European Central Bank was the main lecturer and he gave a lecture on the role of the European Central Banking Community in providing European statistics;
- A workshop on international trade of goods and services, within the joint project of the IMF and the EU to strengthen the external statistics of the Western Balkan countries, was held in May 2019 in Budva, Montenegro.

5.2. Ministry of Finance

In 2019, the Ministry of Finance conducted a total of 20 statistical surveys, of which 12 monthly and 8 quarterly, the same number of surveys as in 2018.

Number of Ministry of Finance employees working on statistical surveys

The Ministry of Finance has five employees engaged in conducting statistical surveys.

Novelties

In accordance with the amendments to the Public Debt Law, from May 2019 the unguaranteed debt of the public enterprises and joint stock companies established by the state or by the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje is calculated in the public debt.

Dissemination of statistics

Data from the surveys are published according to the Release Calendar.

International activity and foreign assistance

International activities and foreign assistance are implemented within the Regional Project of the IMF and the GFS/ESA methodology.

Information about the methodological improvements, the publishing activity and the problems the Ministry faced in 2019 was not delivered to the SSO as requested in Form 1 concerning the surveys and activities carried out in 2019 in accordance with the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2018-2022.

5.3. Pension and Disability Insurance Fund

In 2019, the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund implemented 9 statistical surveys, of which 4 monthly and 5 annual, same number of surveys as in 2018.

Number of Fund employees working on statistical surveys

Two employees of the Fund work on statistical surveys.

Dissemination of statistics

Data from the statistical surveys are regularly published on the website of the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund.

Information about methodological improvements, novelties in statistical surveys, international activity and foreign assistance and about the problems the Fund faced in 2019 was not delivered to the SSO as requested in Form 1 concerning the surveys and activities carried out in 2019 in accordance with the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2018-2022.

5.4. Ministry of Interior

In 2019, in accordance with the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2018-2022, the Ministry of Interior carried out a total of 6 statistical surveys, of which 1 monthly and 5 annual surveys, the same number of conducted statistical surveys as in 2018.

Number of Ministry of Interior employees working on statistical surveys

The Ministry has 109 employees engaged in conducting statistical surveys. This number includes all employees who fill in the statistical forms, process the data and prepare the questionnaires and requests for the statistical surveys of the State Statistical Office.

Dissemination of statistics

Data from the statistical surveys are regularly published on the website of the Ministry of Interior, and submitted to the State Statistical Office on monthly and annual basis.

Information about methodological improvements, novelties in statistical surveys, publishing activity, international activities and foreign assistance was not delivered to the SSO. Regarding the problems faced in 2019, the Ministry noted the problem of providing statistical data through a semi-automated process with underdeveloped methodologies and insufficiently specified data-indicators.

5.5. Hydrometeorological Service

In 2019, the Hydrometeorological Service conducted 1 statistical survey, the same number of surveys as in 2018.

Number of Hydrometeorological Service employees working on statistical surveys

A total of 15 employees of the Hydrometeorological Service are engaged in conducting statistical surveys.

Dissemination of statistics

Dissemination is carried out via internal publication of data, preparation of information to the media and various data users.

Methodological improvements and innovations in statistical surveys have not been noted by the Office.

Information about publishing activity, International activity and foreign assistance and about the problems the Hydrometeorological Service faced in 2019 was not delivered to the SSO as requested in Form 1 concerning the surveys and activities carried out in 2019 in accordance with the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2018-2022.

5.6. Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia

In 2019, the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia carried out a total of 4 statistical surveys, 3 with monthly periodicity and 1 annual survey, the same number of surveys as in 2018.

Regarding the methodological improvements in the statistical surveys, we received information from the Agency that the surveys are conducted in accordance with the legal amendments and the Operational Plan for active employment measures and services for 2019.

Information about the number of employees working on statistical surveys, novelties in statistical surveys, publishing activity, international activities and foreign assistance and about the problems the Agency faced was not delivered to the SSO as requested in Form 1 concerning the surveys and activities carried out in 2019 in accordance with the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2018-2022.

5.7. Institute of Public Health

In 2019, the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of North Macedonia conducted a total of 16 statistical surveys with three-year periodicity and 3 surveys with five-year periodicity.

Number of Institute employees working on statistical surveys

In the Institute, 11 are employed in the Sector for Control and Prevention of Infectious Diseases, 9 in the Sector for Health Statistics and Publications, 3 in the Sector for Promotion of Non-Communicable Diseases and 4 in the Sector for Environmental Health.

Dissemination of statistics

The website of the Institute of Public Health is regularly updated with texts related to the prevention of non-communicable and infectious diseases, intended for the professional and general public;

- Annual publication "Health Card of the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Outpatient polyclinic morbidity in the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Network of Hospital Health Institutions";
- Annual publication "Specialist Services in the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Staff in health care institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia";

- Annual publication "Diabetes Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Cancer Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Register for chronic renal failure in the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Hospital morbidity in the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Mental Illness in the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Malignant neoplasms in the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Situation with circulatory diseases in the Republic of North Macedonia";
- Annual publication "Information on the use of hospital facilities";
- Annual publication "Report on the results of the program for early detection of cervical cancer";
- Annual publication "Report on the realised activities related to the screening of breast cancer in women aged 50-69, in RSM";
- Annual publication "Injuries and occupational diseases in the Republic of North Macedonia".

International activity and foreign assistance

- SECID (South East European Center for Infectious Diseases Surveillance and Control) project funded by CDC - **Avian and Pandemic Influenza Surveillance and Response**

(South East European Center of Infectious Diseases Surveillance and Control - SECID, in relation to the project: "Surveillance and response to avian and pandemic influenza", Grant No. 5U51IP000841-03 funded by CDC)

- A survey of knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAPs) related to influenza vaccination among the healthcare workers in the Republic of North Macedonia - funded and supported by SECID and PIVI (The Partnership for Influenza Vaccine Introduction). – **completed**

The purpose of this research was:

- to describe the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the health workers, in order to develop future flu vaccination strategies and to ensure a high coverage of vaccines among the health workers who are in direct contact with patients;
- to identify predictors and describe the barriers to seasonal influenza vaccination of public health workers in North Macedonia and to assess their knowledge and practices for recommending a seasonal influenza vaccine to their patients.

Mapping the "cold chain" maintenance capacity for storage and transport of vaccines used in Republic of North Macedonia - funded and supported by SECID and PIVI (The Partnership for Influenza Vaccine Introduction). – **completed**

- Measles KAP and Vaccination Coverage Survey in North Macedonia - funded and supported by WHO and Robert Koch Institute (RKI). - **continues in 2020**

The aim of the project is to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding the measles vaccination of parents of children from the cohort in 2016 in North Macedonia in order to identify gaps and misconceptions that will help to adapt the communication and education activities in the future and to achieve long-term goals related to the immunity of the population.

- EMSDDA project for the use of psychoactive substances in the adult population
- ESPAD Project 2018/2019 for the use of psychoactive substances in children

Problems the Institute faced

- The planned activities for the current study Measles KAP and Vaccination Coverage Survey in North Macedonia from the beginning of the year have been put on hold as well as most of the planned activities due to the current KOVID-19 pandemic;
- Reduced financial resources for realisation of the health-statistical activity and health promotion;
- Lack of staff - specialists in social medicine;
- Insufficient cooperation between institutions in the area of health data exchange necessary for the creation of appropriate policies.

5.8. Observations of the State Statistical Office

During 2019, several activities related to the relationship of the SSO with the authorised bodies were carried out, of which the following were the most important: The Programme for Statistical Surveys for the period 2018-2022 was implemented. Also in 2019, another amendment to the Law on State Statistics was prepared. The amendment was in function of harmonisation of the penal provisions of the Law with the newly adopted Law on Misdemeanors, which provides a significant reduction in fines for violation of the provisions of the Law on State Statistics. Also with the establishment of the Coordinating Committee of State Statistics it is expected that in the next period the coordination role of the State Statistical Office will be strengthened, but also the professional ability and that it will increase the staffing of the authorised bodies for more comprehensive and better realisation of the obligations which arise from the realisation of the Programme for Statistical Surveys and the competencies given to them by the Law on State Statistics. Having in mind that from 1997 until today the Law has been amended eight times, in the shortest term it is planned to start with the activity of preparing a new text of the Law on State (official statistics), whereby the position of the authorised bodies in the statistical system of the country will be regulated more comprehensively.

Abbreviations:

SSO – State Statistical Office

EU - European Union

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

Eurostat – Statistical Office of the European Union

eStat – IT system for automatic metadata-based generation of web forms for data collection over the Internet.

IMF – International Monetary Fund

ESS – European Statistical System

IT – Information Technology

eDamis – Electronic Data files Administration and Management Information System

ESSPROS – European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics

NKD – National Classification of Activities Rev. 2 2

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

SILC – Survey on Income and Living Conditions

RD – Regional Departments

NBRM – National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia

NPAA – National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis

NRME – National Reference Metadata Editor

PIM – Perpetual Inventory Method

SMIS+ – Statistical Management Information System

SBPM – Statistical Business Process Model

SDDS – Special Data Dissemination Standard

SDMX – Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange

CATI – Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing

CAPI – Computer assisted personal interviewing