

STRATEGIC PLAN

2013-2015

PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE

- 1.7.1. Harmonisation of statistics in accordance with the EU standards
- 1.7.2. Strengthening the coordination of the national statistical system
- 1.7.3. Strengthening the cooperation with providers of data and bearers of administrative data sets
- 1.7.4. Strengthening the cooperation and communication with users, continuous measurement of user needs and satisfaction, and strengthening the confidence in statistics
- 1.7.5. Strengthening the institutional capacity of the State Statistical Office

ADDRESS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE



The Strategic Plan for development of the State Statistical Office for the period 2013-2015 represents an integral document containing the vision and mission of the Office for producing objective, timely and reliable statistical information, and for presenting the institution as the bearer of the primary tasks in the performance of the activities of state statistics.

By adhering to the principles of official statistics of the United Nations and the European Statistics Code of Practice, the State Statistical Office has founded its work on professional independence and neutrality of the institution, strict statistical standards, data confidentiality, care for respondents and for users of statistical data.

This strategic document presents the framework in which the State Statistical Office defines its primary objectives, priorities and programmes for development for the next three-year period.

The ultimate goal is by achieving these programme objectives to enable the development of the State Statistical Office in order to satisfy user needs and to meet European and world standards in statistics.

The Strategy is arranged in 4 sections referring to the projected programmes for sectoral statistics, for upgrading the statistical infrastructure, for strengthening the cooperation and communication with users, continuous measurement of user needs and satisfaction, and strengthening the confidence in statistics, and for strengthening the coordination of the National Statistical System. These four general programmes are further developed into sub-programmes that give an insight into what the State Statistical Office has to accomplish in the next three years.

Some of the planned activities of the State Statistical Office will be realised through the European funds, i.e. through the IPA 2009 National Programme for Pre-Accession Assistance and IPA 2011 Multi-Beneficiary Programme, which, at the same time, will result in an even higher level of harmonisation of national statistics with EU statistics.

By promoting cooperation, innovation and efficiency, the State Statistical Office, as bearer and coordinator of activities in the frames of the national statistical system, aims to encourage all other authorised bearers to contribute in the production of objective, timely and internationally comparable statistical data.

The execution of this strategic document will become tangible by achieving the established goals of the State Statistical Office and by overcoming all challenges on the road to European integration of the Republic of Macedonia.

Sincerely,
Blagica Novkovska, MSc
Director-General of the State Statistical Office

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan 2013-2015 of the State Statistical Office is a document containing the objectives, programmes, sub-programmes and activities which the Office plans to accomplish in accordance with the defined priorities in the process of harmonisation with European and international statistical standards and with the adopted quality management framework.

The objectives, programmes, sub-programmes and activities defined in this Strategic Plan are aimed at:

- executing the Programme for Statistical Surveys, which represents a strategic document referring to the entire statistical system,
- accomplishing the strategic priorities of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (NATO and EU integration of the Republic of Macedonia), i.e. meeting the obligations of the National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA).

The Strategic Plan takes into consideration the recommendations of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) from the regular annual missions to the State Statistical Office for monitoring the progress in the field of statistics, and of the European Commission's Light Peer Review of the progress in the implementation of the Code of Practice. For the purpose of further harmonisation with the European statistical system, new amendments have been prepared for the Law on State Statistics. The objective of these amendments is to further strengthen the role of the State Statistical Office as coordinator of the statistical system of the country.

The structure of this plan is based on the regulations and recommendations of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Therefore, the Strategic Plan of the State Statistical Office, regarding the structure and contents, deviates to a degree from the strategies of other institutions of the European statistical system.

A number of employees from all levels in the Office were involved in the preparation of this plan, which was adopted by the Executive Body of the State Statistical Office and supported by the Statistical Council.

1.2. MISSION

The State Statistical Office produces and disseminates official statistical data on the Macedonian economy and society as a basis for the process of decision making, based on relevant information. Published statistical data must be accurate, timely, unbiased, accessible and easy to use.

1.3. VISION

To be recognised as an institution that provides quality, timely and internationally comparable statistical data.

1.3.1. VALUES

The values that the State Statistical Office upholds and adheres to in practice are those of the European Statistics Code of Practice, which consists of fifteen principles referring to the institutional environment, statistical processes and statistical outputs:

- Professional Independence
- Mandate for Data Collection
- Adequacy of Resources
- Quality Commitment
- Statistical Confidentiality
- Impartiality and Objectivity
- Sound Methodology
- Appropriate Statistical Procedures
- Non-Excessive Burden on Respondents
- Cost Effectiveness
- Relevance
- Accuracy and Reliability
- Timeliness and Punctuality
- Coherence and Comparability
- Accessibility and Clarity

1.4. TASKS AND DUTIES OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE

The Office, within its competences, performs the following expert activities:

- coordinates the activities of state statistics within the national statistical system,
- cooperates with authorised bearers which, within their competences, conduct statistical surveys in the area of state statistics,
- prepares national statistical standards,
- determines the needs for statistical data,
- gives opinion to authorised bearers regarding the methodological bases for surveys under their competence
- gives suggestions and opinions when introducing new and supplementing the existing data sets that can be used as a source of data for state statistics,

- prepares and prescribes instruments for statistical surveys (methodologies, guidelines, forms, etc.),
- collects and processes statistical data,
- establishes, keeps and maintains statistical data sets,
- prescribes organisational and technical measures for protection of confidential data,
- performs analysis of statistical data,
- stores and disseminates statistical data,
- meets international obligations in the area of statistics,
- coordinates the transmission of statistical data to international organisations,
- performs services in the area of statistics for the needs of data users, on their request,
- implements projects in the area of state statistics, independently and in cooperation with other authorised bearers,
- popularises statistics.

1.5. SUMMARY OF THE SPECIFICITY OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE

The State Statistical Office is an independent expert organisation whose competences and scope of work are regulated by the Law on Organisation and Operation of the State Administration Bodies ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 58/00, 44/02 and 82/08) and the Law on State Statistics ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 54/97, 21/07 and 51/11).

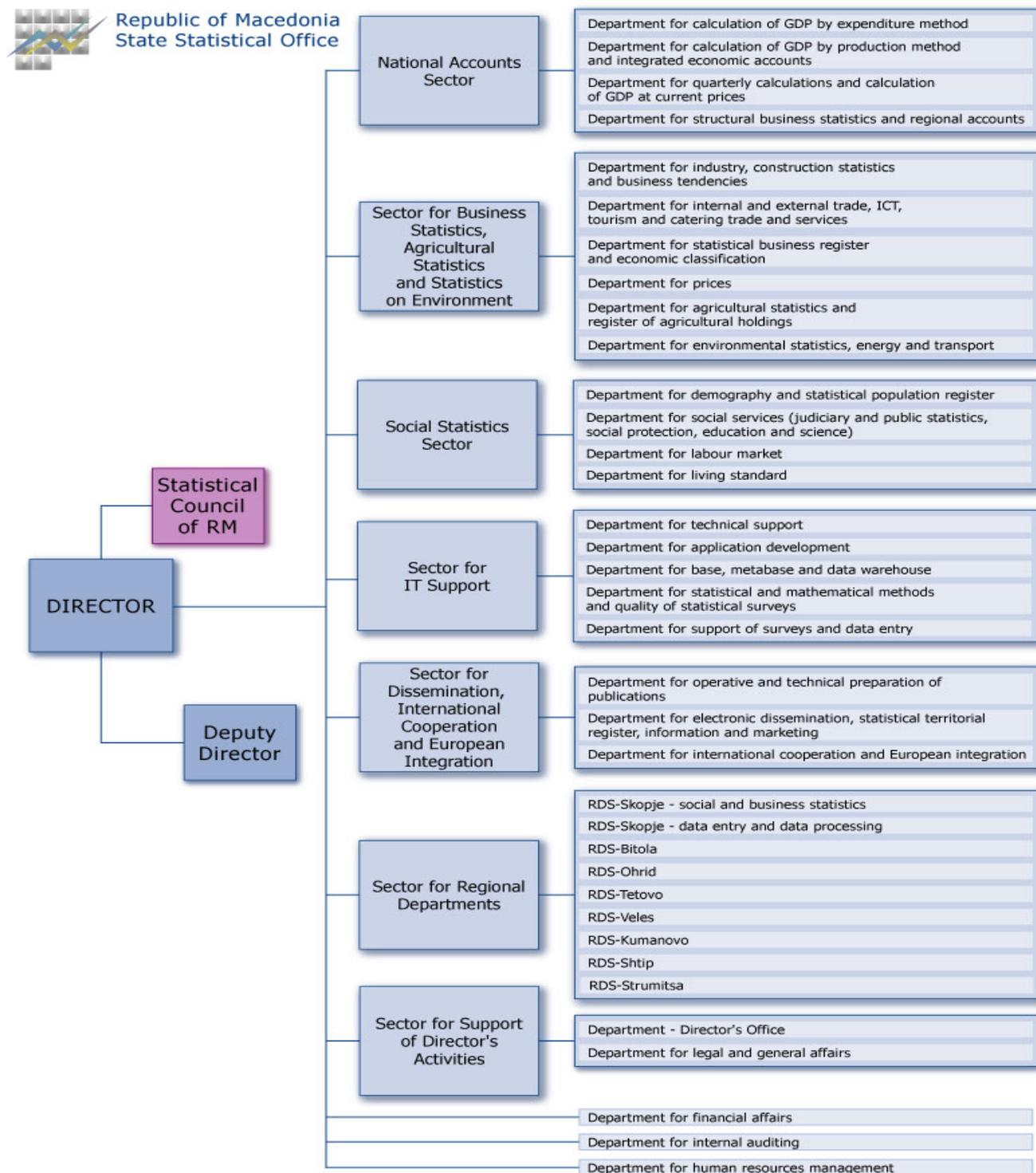
In accordance with the Law on State Statistics, the State Statistical Office, on the basis of professional and scientific methods and knowledge, provides the state administration bodies, local self-government, business entities, public enterprises, public services and other users, with information on the conditions and movements of the national economy, human resources, demography, environment protection and other areas. Official statistical data, as well as the time and content of all forms of dissemination, are protected from any kind of influence, and all users are treated equally.

The State Statistical Office is responsible for producing official statistics in the Republic of Macedonia and, at the same time, is a coordinator of the statistical system in the Republic of Macedonia.

The State Statistical Office performs its role in cooperation with other entities-authorised bearers that are also responsible for producing official statistics in the frame of their defined competences. In performing its functions, the State Statistical Office pays special attention to statistical data confidentiality. The data gathered from the reporting units represent confidential data, used for statistical purposes only and published as aggregated data. Within the system of official statistics, the Office acts as a coordinator in the frames of international statistical cooperation. In performing the international obligations, the Office, in cooperation with other authorised bearers, ensures the comparability of data with other European countries, observes and implements international standards, and actively participates in the development of official statistics at the international level.

1.6. STRUCTURE OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE

The State Statistical Office adopted a new Rulebook on Internal Organisation of the Office in November 2011 in accordance with its competences defined by law and the Regulation on Internal Organisation of the State Administration Bodies ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 93/00 and 14/02). According to the Rulebook, the Office performs its competences through seven sectors and 36 departments, of which 9 are distributed on the territory the Republic of Macedonia. The organisational setup of the Office allows optimal management and monitoring of work processes and human resources management. The Office is managed by a Director appointed by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Serving in an advisory role is the Statistical Council, composed of 15 members, of which 14 are appointed by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, while the Director of the Office is an ex-officio member.



1.7. PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE

1.7.1. Harmonisation of statistics in accordance with the EU standards

Objectives:

- Further harmonisation of statistical surveys with EU methodologies.
- Increasing the volume of integrated statistical data that are relevant for measuring the progress of the economy and the social phenomena.
- Implementation of the ESA 2010 and SNA 2008 methodologies in the statistical system.
- Implementation of the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice, including the recommendations from the Light Peer Review by Eurostat.
- Data transmission to Eurostat by using the tools and forms prescribed by Eurostat.
- Establishing and maintaining a centralised metadata warehouse.

Planned deadline for priority realisation: 2015

1.7.2. Strengthening the coordination of the national statistical system

Objectives:

- Further strengthening the role of the State Statistical Office as coordinator of the national statistical system, giving opinions on the methodological bases for collecting data in the statistical surveys that are conducted by other authorised bearers in accordance with the Programme for Statistical Surveys, giving opinions when introducing new and supplementing the existing data sets, coordinating the application of statistical classifications and nomenclatures for statistical production purposes.
- Preparing an annual report on the obligations met under the Programme for Statistical Surveys for all authorised bearers.
- Support for strengthening the capacity of authorised bearers in the national statistical system through trainings in certain areas of common interest.
- Signing memoranda and protocols of cooperation, participation in joint projects and more efficient distribution of competences with other authorised bearers in the national statistical system.
- Cooperation with other institutions in performing tasks related to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the International Monetary Fund, and in meeting other obligations towards international institutions.

Planned deadline for priority realisation: 2015

1.7.3. Strengthening the cooperation with providers of data and bearers of administrative data sets

Objectives:

- Raising awareness of the significance of official statistics.
- Inclusion of the State Statistical Office in the process of updating the administrative data sources.
- Reducing respondent burden
- Signing agreements for cooperation and data exchange with bearers of administrative data sets.

Planned deadline for priority realisation: 2015

1.7.4. Strengthening the cooperation and communication with users, continuous measurement of user needs and satisfaction, and strengthening the confidence in statistics

Objectives:

- Easy user access to official statistical data.
- Increasing the amount of published data and providing data with longer time series.
- Reducing the time period from data collection to data publishing.
- Implementation of the policy for access to anonymised microdata for scientific and research purposes.
- Conducting a User Satisfaction Survey.

Planned deadline for priority realisation: 2015

1.7.5. Strengthening the institutional capacity of the State Statistical Office

Objectives:

- Sustainability and improvement of the capacities of human and technical resources.
- Strengthening of the capacities for work process management.
- Strengthening the capacities for EU negotiations.
- Rational utilisation of available financial assets, including the pre-accession funds.

Planned deadline for priority realisation: 2015

1.8. OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVED RESULTS OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE IN 2011

The programmes and results planned for 2011 were defined in the Strategic Plan 2011-2013. The following programmes were defined: Sectoral statistics; Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011; Upgrading the statistical infrastructure; Improving the cooperation with users; and Strengthening the coordination of the National Statistical System.

The activities in the defined programmes were performed with the support of the projects in which the State Statistical Office participated in 2011:

- 1. IPA 2007 National Programme** – Within the National Programme, the following important results were achieved in 2011: a Strategy has been created for developing a metainformation system; documents have been prepared for regulating the access to microdata for scientific and research purposes; a Manual has been drawn up for protection against statistical disclosure; skills have been developed for implementing statistical disclosure software; guidelines have been drafted for dissemination of statistics; experimental calculations have been made of Laeken poverty indicators; sets of tables for the joint questionnaire in the area of education are transmitted to Eurostat via eDamis; the Continuous Vocational Training Survey has been prepared and conducted; the Structure of Earnings Pilot Survey has been conducted, as well as the regular survey; progress has been made in compiling sector accounts; excessive deficit (EDP) tables have been drawn up; supply and use tables have been compiled; knowledge of the European System of Accounts – ESA 95 has been improved; methodological bases, quality reports have been prepared; construction cost indices for new residential buildings and industrial producer prices on the non-domestic market have been calculated and published for the first time, etc.

2. IPA 2008 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme – The implementation of the programme finished in September 2011. Within this project, the following important activities were accomplished: submitting the inventories of the economic accounts for agriculture to Eurostat, transcodification of data from the first Farm Structure Survey, conducting the Job Vacancy Survey, improvement of data on gross fixed capital formation of small entities, calculation of the exhaustiveness of data on tourism, etc.

3. IPA 2009 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme. Within this programme, the following results were achieved in 2011: preparing and submitting comparative statistics on foreign trade to Eurostat, conducting a pilot survey on health care prices, starting the survey on real estate agencies, procurement of technical equipment for conducting the computer-assisted Labour Force Survey, etc.

4. Macedonian-Swedish partnership in statistics 2009-2011. The following IT equipment was purchased in 2011:

- data modelling software licences (2) and NET application development software licences (7),
- 2 database servers,
- software for statistical disclosure control of tabular data.

1.8.1. In the programme Sectoral statistics, the following results were planned:

1. Reducing respondent burden
2. Providing regional data
3. Providing rural development indicators
4. Providing agro-environmental indicators
5. Introducing quality reports for statistical surveys
6. Improving the volume and quality of statistical data in accordance with EU standards
7. Increased utilisation of administrative data sources

Realised activities:

- As regards reducing respondent burden and increased utilisation of administrative data sources, the State Statistical Office in 2011 signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia (CR) for submitting data from the administrative registers maintained by the CR. The data collection forms for certain statistical surveys have been simplified, and the introduction of new interviewing methods in the Labour Force Survey has significantly reduced the duration of the survey.
- In order to meet user demands, the amount of produced regional data from various areas has been increased.
- The improvement in the quality and volume of statistical data in accordance with EU standards in 2011 was achieved through the following activities:
 - Regular calculation of the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) has been established

- The National Classification of Activities NKD Rev.2 was applied in: the survey on employees and wages, the Labour Force Survey, GDP calculations for 2009 and 2010, the calculation of gross fixed capital formation for 2010, and in the preparation of structural statistical data on industry for 2009 and 2010.
- Activities have begun for introducing new interviewing methods: CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) and CAPI (computer-assisted personal interviewing) in the Labour Force Survey.
- The second wave of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) was realised (including methodological improvements).
- Regular harmonisation of the statistical surveys in the area of business, agricultural and environmental statistics with respect to the methodological bases, introduction of new variables, seasonal adjustments, etc.
- Transcodification matrices have been prepared for data from the 2007 Census of Agriculture and the 2010 Farm Structure Survey.
- Calculations have begun of a series of data on quarterly GDP by the expenditure approach, at constant prices, according to the chain-linking method, for the period 2004-2011.
- New sustainable development indicators have been calculated.
- A Structure of Earnings Survey was conducted.
- A Job Vacancy Pilot Survey was conducted.
- The Continuing Vocational Training Survey was conducted as a regular survey (the pilot survey was conducted in 2010).
- A survey was conducted regarding waste from the sector Energy, mining and quarrying.
- A monthly survey on turnover in trade was conducted in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics.
- New variables were introduced for the quarterly construction cost indices for new residential buildings (total costs, material costs and labour costs), in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics.
- Statistical data were prepared regarding the typology of agricultural holdings according to the type of farming and their economic size, as well as data on the structure of agricultural holdings.
- The volume of data transmission to Eurostat, by using the tools and formats prescribed by Eurostat, has increased compared to last year. Data from the E-Road Traffic Census and the E-Rail Traffic Census have been submitted to Eurostat. Sets of tables for the joint questionnaire in the area of education are transmitted to Eurostat.

1.8.2. In the programme Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011, the following results were planned:

1. Training Census participants
2. Conducting the Census
3. Publishing preliminary and final Census results

Realised activities:

- Based on the adopted methodological bases and instruments for conducting the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011, the Office completed all organisational and technical preparations for conducting the Census in the period 1-15 April. After the postponement of the Census until 1-15 October, all necessary methodological adjustments were performed for conducting the Census on the new date, and training was organised for all participants in the Census. A programme was also prepared for ensuring quality in the data processing phase of the Census.
- As part of the preparations for the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011, five missions were held by the European Commission for assessing the progress in the preparations for the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011. In the period 1-15 October 2011, the European Commission conducted its sixth mission for monitoring and assessing the execution of field activities in the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings.
- The census field activities were terminated with the adoption of the Law on Cessation of the Validity of the Law on Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011.

1.8.3. In the programme Upgrading the statistical infrastructure, the following results were planned:

1. Development of a Statistical Register of Agricultural Holdings
2. Maintenance and development of a Statistical Business Register and a Statistical Population Register
3. Development of a Statistical Territorial Register
4. Revision of classifications
5. Standardisation and integration of statistical processes
6. Amendments to the Law on State Statistics
7. Sustainability of the capacities of the Office
8. Established policy for access to microdata
9. Implementation of the statistical disclosure control methods.

Realised activities:

- The State Statistical Office continuously works on improving the quality and contents of statistical registers it maintains. Monitoring of changes in agricultural holdings has been introduced in the Register of Agricultural Holdings and updating procedures have been implemented.

- The development of the Statistical Business Register continued in 2011 with the efforts for introducing the statistical unit - enterprise group, in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 177/2008 (data provided from administrative sources for establishing the enterprise group as a statistical unit, analysis of obtained data and their adjustment); data have been published on newly born enterprises and enterprise deaths, and the population of surviving enterprises has been calculated in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 295/2008. Regarding the Statistical Population Register, activities could not be performed as planned due to the setback in the development of the Administrative Population register.
- Regarding the Statistical Register of Territorial Units, based on the revision of the documents on the territorial units for the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011, and in accordance with the Manual prepared by the State Statistical Office and the Real Estate Cadastre Agency, auxiliary instruments were prepared for the census field activities.
- As regards the revision of classifications, the National Classification of Occupations (NKZ 2008) was prepared (Official Gazette No. 37/11), and the List of Energy Commodities was harmonised with the Classification of Products by Activity and the Combined Nomenclature.
- The statistical business process model has been implemented in the preparation of the Annual Work Programme. Activities have begun for application of statistical and mathematical procedures for data validation and imputation.
- The amendments to the Law on State Statistics have been adopted for the purpose of further harmonisation with European regulations.
- The third self-assessment was conducted by using the CAF tool.
- In 2011, the State Statistical Office continued to pay particular attention to external and internal training of employees, for the purpose of developing key skills in employees. As part of the external trainings in 2011, 32 employees took part in 29 meetings of Eurostat working groups, and 451 persons took part in 98 external training courses. Furthermore, one person worked as a trainee in Eurostat. Within the institution, a total of 77 employees participated in 4 internal training courses regarding the operation and future activities of the Library of the State Statistical Office (2 trainings with different target groups), in the area of the statistical register and typology of agricultural holdings, and MS Access.
- A Strategy has been prepared for development of the metainformation system of the SSO, and documents have been prepared for regulating the access to microdata for scientific research purposes.
- A Manual has been drawn up for protection against statistical disclosure, skills have been developed for using software for statistical disclosure control, and activities have started for implementing statistical disclosure control methods.

1.8.4. In the programme Strengthening the cooperation and communication with users, continuous measurement of user needs and satisfaction, and strengthening the confidence in statistics, the following results were planned:

1. Redesign of the web page of the Office
2. Redesign of statistical publications
3. Defined forms of regular communication with users

Realised activities:

- The new web page of the State Statistical Office became operational in May 2011. It has been designed according to user needs and requirements and in accordance with European standards. Information about news releases, publications, classifications and other information is arranged by themes. The advance release calendar is dynamic, contains information about publication dates of news releases for the entire year, and offers the possibility to search by different criteria. Several tools have been introduced: consumer price index calculator, Europe 2020 indicators, possibility to choose a set of gender statistics data, possibility to search by municipalities and settlements and visualisation of statistical data on industry, consumer prices, unemployment and gross domestic product.
- A "User Support" section has been added to the web page, in Macedonian and in English. An RSS (Really Simple Syndication) channel has been implemented both on the web page and the Intranet. A user opinion poll has also been posted on the web page.
- The amount of disaggregated data available in the web database has increased.
- The web page has had 1250000 hits, while the web database has been visited 43000 times.
- 306 issues have been published in the "News Releases" edition
- 33 issues have been published in the "Statistical Reviews" edition
- 9 other publications have been published
- From January to November 2011, there have been 569 data requests both from domestic and international users.
- The SSO was covered in 622 statistics-related articles in print media.
- With the aim of promoting the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice, the SSO published the Code in Macedonian language on the web page.
- The policy on access to microdata for scientific and research purposes has entered into force.

1.8.5. In the programme Strengthening the coordination of the National Statistical System, the following results were planned:

1. Strengthening the cooperation with providers of data and bearers of administrative data sources (by signing new agreements and revising the existing ones)
2. Strengthening the cooperation with authorised bearers for meeting the obligations within the National Statistical System

Realised activities:

- In November 2011, the Republic of Macedonia became part of the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the International Monetary Fund. The State Statistical Office, as coordinator, the National Bank and the Ministry of Finance successfully passed the observing period for subscribing to IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standard and provided updated information for creating the National Summary Data Page. This standard serves to guide countries that have, or that might seek, access to international capital markets in the dissemination of economic and financial data to the public. The national metadata for the SDDS have been updated and verified and posted on the IMF's Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board – DSBB website.

- Regarding the use of the tools and formats prescribed by Eurostat for transmission of statistical data, there is regular support to other participants in the official statistical system (upon direct request or through occasional trainings).
- The State Statistical Office actively participated in the process of monitoring and updating the National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis, regarding the objectives and activities that were planned to be achieved in 2011. In 2011, the employees of the SSO took part in all inter-institutional working groups, both within and outside the National Statistical System.
- The assessment of the Republic of Macedonia in the Statistical Management Information System (SMIS+), where the SSO reports on the entire National Statistical System, was submitted and confirmed on time.

1.9. OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVED AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE IN 2012

The programmes and results planned for 2012 were defined in the Strategic Plan 2012-2014. The following programmes were defined: Sectoral statistics; Upgrading the statistical infrastructure; Improving the cooperation with users; and Strengthening the coordination of the National Statistical System.

The activities in the defined programmes were performed with the support of the projects in which the State Statistical Office participated in 2012:

- 1. IPA 2009 National Programme** – The implementation phase of the twinning project “Support to the State Statistical Office” began on 18.08.2012, and it will last until 17.08.2014.
- 2. IPA 2007 Technical Assistance to the State Statistical Office**, which ended in March 2012, covered 4 areas where the following results were achieved:
 - Developed system of quality for all processes in the production of statistics, by applying the following principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice: Principle 4 – Commitment to Quality, Principle 5 – Statistical Confidentiality; Principle 7 – Sound Methodology, Principle 8 – Appropriate Statistical Procedures, and Principle 15 – Accessibility and Clarity.
 - Further harmonisation of national accounts and other economic statistics, with particular focus on the area of national accounts and implementation of the European System of Accounts (ESA) 1995. Experts did practical work on implementing the ESA 95 methodology, which provided an opportunity to assess the available data in every institution and their influence in compiling the accounts and the quality of calculations.
 - Improved business statistics. A series of activities gave an insight into the main principles for preparing quality structural statistics, and data users in the Republic of Macedonia were provided with data on the trends in the economy in accordance with EU regulations.
 - Improved social statistics in the following areas: education, culture, crime statistics, research and development. New surveys have been introduced as well, such as the Job Vacancy Survey.

3. The **Macedonian-Swedish partnership in statistics 2009-2011** ended in February 2012. In the frames of this partnership, technical assistance was provided in the development of statistics on the structure of agriculture, prices of agricultural products and economic accounts for agriculture, statistics on private forests, environment statistics, training for using PC Axis, training for documentation of statistical variables, and procurement of IT equipment.
4. Within the **IPA 2009 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme**, all planned activities for all 7 pilot projects (external trade statistics, purchasing power parity, national accounts, energy statistics, harmonised index of consumer prices, agro-monetary statistics, and Labour Force Survey) have been completed, and final reports have been submitted to Eurostat for each pilot project. With Eurostat's approval the duration of the Programme was extended by one month, until 31.12.2012, due to problems with financing the IPA 2011 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme.
5. **IPA 2011 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme was supposed** to start officially on 1 September 2012, but due to financing problems the programme has not yet begun. The State Statistical Office prioritises the activities that could be financed through this programme; however, it can only finance the participation of SSO representatives in Eurostat working group meetings and other meetings organised by Eurostat. Pilot-project activities have not started yet.
6. Planned projects. The State Statistical Office is a potential beneficiary in the **IPA 2012/2013 National Programme**, in the frames of the sector fiche on Private Sector Development. The draft version of this fiche has been submitted for approval to the EU Delegation to the Republic of Macedonia.

1.9.1. In the programme Sectoral statistics, the following results were planned

1. Reducing respondent burden
2. Providing regional data
3. Preparing quality reports for statistical surveys
4. Improving the volume and quality of statistical data in accordance with EU standards
5. Increased utilisation of administrative data sources

Realised activities:

- As regards reducing respondent burden, the State Statistical Office in 2012 started activities in the frames of the twinning project with the Federal Statistical Office of Germany for establishing a system of electronic data collection, by developing electronic questionnaires which will significantly reduce the burden on reporting units.
- The publication "Regions of the Republic of Macedonia, 2012" has been published, containing the latest economic and socio-demographic data on the regions of the country.
- For the first time, transmission of the quality report for the Labour Force Survey was performed through the National Reference Metadata Editor – NRME.
- The Programme for Statistical Surveys 2013-2017 has been prepared. The catalogue of statistical surveys was revised and an application was developed for preparation of the programme.
- The improvement of the volume and quality of statistical data in accordance with EU standards in 2012 was achieved through the following results:

- A methodology has been prepared for construction cost indices for new residential buildings.
 - Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) has been introduced in the Labour Force Survey, thereby improving and simplifying the telephone interview.
 - STATA software has been purchased in cooperation with the World Bank and applied in the analysis of data from the Labour Force Survey.
 - Laeken indicators of poverty, social exclusion, pensions and material deprivation were published in November 2012.
 - Data have been published from the Structure of Earnings Survey, which was conducted for the first time in 2011.
 - Activities have continued for compiling sector accounts.
 - Activities have continued for calculating the consumption of fixed capital.
 - A regular quarterly Job Vacancy Survey has been introduced.
 - As part of the Labour Force Survey, an additional School-to-Work Transition Survey was conducted.
- For the purpose of greater utilisation of administrative data sources, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia, while a cooperation agreement is being prepared with the Public Revenue Office.

1.9.2. In the programme Upgrading the statistical infrastructure, the following results were planned:

1. Development of the Statistical Register of Agricultural Holdings
2. Development of the Statistical Business Register
3. Development of the Statistical Population Register
4. Development of the Statistical Territorial Register
5. Established policy for revision of statistical data, classifications and nomenclatures
6. Standardisation and integration of statistical processes
7. Sustainability of the capacities of the Office
8. New Law on State Statistics
9. Adoption of an information security policy.

Realised activities:

- The State Statistical Office continuously works on improving the quality and contents of the statistical registers it maintains. The Statistical Business Register is developed by continuous work on introducing the statistical unit - enterprise group in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 177/2008 (a base with groups of enterprises has been created and enterprise groups have been defined for 2010, analysis of legal units of the enterprise groups for 2010 has started in order to determine the method of updating the groups). A quality report has been prepared for the Statistical Business Register, which represents a good basis for quality improvement. Development of the Statistical Business Register for providing data on business demography according to the National Classification of Activities NKD Rev.2 (enterprise births, deaths, and survival)
- A Nomenclature of products of agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing and related services has been prepared.
- A Nomenclature of types of constructions and construction works has been prepared.

- The Office adopted the Statistical Data Revision Policy.
- The Office works continuously on standardisation and integration of statistical processes, where the following improvements have been made:
 - The existing IT systems have been harmonised with the new catalogues of statistical surveys and activities in accordance with the adopted statistical business process model of the State Statistical Office.
 - The implementation of the statistical disclosure control methods started by using Argus software.
 - Access to microdata has been allowed for scientific and research purposes.
 - The volume of data transmission to Eurostat, by using the tools and formats prescribed by Eurostat, has increased compared to last year.
- In order to ensure the sustainability of the capacities of the Office, continuous efforts are made for strengthening the human and technical capacity of the institution:
 - In 2012, the State Statistical Office continued to pay particular attention to external and internal training of employees, for the purpose of developing key skills in employees. As part of the external trainings in the period January – October 2012, 55 employees took part in 42 meetings of Eurostat working groups, and 201 persons took part in 55 external training courses. In 2012, 2 traineeships were approved by Eurostat, of which one has been completed, while the other is still ongoing. It is of particular importance that 4 persons in total will be included in the traineeship programme of Eurostat in 2013. In the period January – September 2012, a total of 67 employees participated in 3 specialised training courses, and 519 employees in total participated in 31 in-house trainings within the institution.
 - The results of the third CAF self-assessment were analysed.
- New amendments have been prepared for the Law on State Statistics for further harmonisation of the fundamental principles of official statistics in the Republic of Macedonia with the principles of European Statistics. Also, the objective of the adoption of this Law is to further specify the definitions and categories used in the Law, and to create legal preconditions for increasing the scope and coverage of statistical data collected from reporting units. At the same time, further specifying the role of the Office as coordinator of the statistical system of the country strengthens the confidence of the public in the quality of data produced not only by the Office, but by other authorised bearers as well.

1.9.3. In the programme Strengthening the cooperation and communication with users, continuous measurement of user needs and satisfaction, and strengthening the confidence in statistics, the following results were planned:

1. Further improvement of the web page of the Office
2. Redesign of statistical publications
3. Defined forms of regular communication with users
4. Development of a User Registry

Realised activities:

- Since it became operational in 2011, the new web page of the Office is constantly developed and improved. The following activities have been undertaken:

- Updating the database with new data and including time series by areas.
 - The amount of data organised in excel tables is constantly increased in order to meet user demands.
 - Interactive browsing through first and last names in the Republic of Macedonia.
 - Regular use of Twitter for posting information about the statistical products and activities of the Office.
 - In 2012, the SSO started using Google Analytics for monitoring traffic on the web page. According to the latest data (12.11.2012), the web page has had 900000 hits, while the web database was visited 40000 times.
- The publications are continuously redesigned for the purpose of harmonisation with European standards.
 - The Office publishes editions with statistical data in a timely manner, in accordance with the Advance Release Calendar, and pays particular attention to including new indicators and data for comparison with European countries in new publications. In 2012, the following were published:
 - 232 issues have been published in the "News Releases" edition (for the period January – October 2012)
 - 21 issues have been published in the "Statistical Reviews" edition (for the period January – October 2012)
 - 7 other publications have been published:
 - Statistical Yearbook
 - Monthly Statistical Bulletin (Macedonian and English editions)
 - Short-term economic indicators
 - Macedonia in Figures (Macedonian and English editions)
 - Sustainable Development
 - Regions in the Republic of Macedonia
 - Women and Men in the Republic of Macedonia
 - For establishing better forms of regular communication with users, a User Satisfaction Survey was conducted.
 - In 2012, the Office was host to students from the International Balkan University and high-school students from Bitola and Gevgelija. During the visits, the students were introduced to the primary goals and tasks of official statistics.
 - The Office is a user-oriented institution and in order to improve the communication with users, it regularly updates the User Registry.

1.9.4. In the programme Strengthening the coordination of the National Statistical System, the following activities were planned:

1. Strengthening the cooperation with providers of data and bearers of administrative data sources
2. Strengthening the cooperation with authorised bearers for meeting the obligations within the National Statistical System

Realised activities:

- Further strengthening the cooperation with providers of data and bearers of administrative data sources:
 - Having working meetings with data providers and users in the process of preparing the Programme for Statistical Surveys 2013-2017;
 - Having working meetings with bearers of administrative data sets for defining the required standards for using administrative data for statistical purposes;
 - Strengthening the cooperation by active participation in workshops organised at the Office in various statistical areas (agricultural statistics, labour market statistics, etc.)
- Further strengthening the cooperation with authorised bearers for meeting the obligations within the National Statistical System:
 - In February 2012, a "Seminar on the new European and international standards for national accounts – ESA 2010 and SNA 2008" was organised, with the aim of providing assistance in the process of harmonisation of the System of National Accounts, particularly in the adoption of the SNA 2008 and ESA 2010 methodologies. Besides the State Statistical Office, the Seminar was also attended by representatives of the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, and the Faculty of Economics of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University.
 - A Seminar on financial institutions and insurance companies was also organised with representatives of the State Statistical Office, the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Finance, the Insurance Supervision Agency, and representatives of the insurance companies.
- In 2012, employees of the State Statistical Office actively participated in the process of monitoring and updating the National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA)
- A presentation on Eurostat's tool – National Reference Metadata Editor, which will be used for transmission of reference metadata, was held at the Office. The presentation was attended by representatives of the institutions that send data sets via eDamis, and by members of the Working Group on Statistics within the NPAA.
- The State Statistical Office submitted and confirmed on time the assessment of the Republic of Macedonia in the Statistical Management Information System (SMIS+), where the SSO reports on the entire National Statistical System.
- The State Statistical Office actively participates and provides support in the execution of other institutions' projects.

1.10. PROGRAMMES

For achieving the planned priorities and objectives of the Strategic Plan 2013-2015, the following programmes have been defined: Sectoral statistics; Upgrading the statistical infrastructure; Improving the cooperation with users; and Strengthening the coordination of the National Statistical System. The implementation of all programmes requires the engagement of appropriate human and financial resources, and the schedule for their implementation is defined in the Plan for Implementation of the Statistical Programme, which is part of this document.

1.10.1. Sectoral statistics

The implementation of this programme means fulfilling the basic function of the institution and refers to the execution of the Programme for Statistical Surveys.

Sub-programmes:

- Reducing respondent burden, increased utilisation of administrative data sources.
- Providing regional data.
- Publishing quality reports for statistical surveys.
- Improving the volume and quality of statistical data in accordance with EU standards.
- Activities on approved grants for implementation of the IPA 2011 Programme.
- Implementing and supporting activities of the IPA 2009 National Programme.

Success indicators:

- Increased number of surveys that use administrative data sources.
- Increased number of surveys in which data are collected directly in electronic form.
- Redesigned questionnaires and introduction of electronic questionnaires.
- A series of regional data provided.
- Number of prepared survey quality reports.
- Adopted regulations and published statistical data from new surveys and from additional analyses and calculations.
- Increased amount of data transmitted to Eurostat by using the standards and formats prescribed by Eurostat.
- Harmonisation of official statistics with EU standards.

1.10.2. Upgrading the statistical infrastructure

In order for the SSO to fulfil its basic function, it is necessary to invest continuously in strengthening the institutional capacity. For that purpose, plans have been made to improve the human resources as well as the technical capacity of the institution.

Sub-programmes:

- Further development and improvement of the quality of the Statistical Register of Agricultural Holdings.
- Further development and improvement of the quality of the Statistical Business Register.
- Further development of the Statistical Population Register.

- Further development of the Statistical Territorial Register.
- Implementation of the Statistical Data Revision Policy.
- Revision of classifications.
- Sustainability of the development of the capacities of the State Statistical Office.
- Implementation of the statistical disclosure control methods.
- Standardisation and integration of statistical processes.
- Implementation of the Metainformation Development Strategy.
- Improvement of the IT infrastructure in order to increase information security.
- Preparing a Quality Policy.
- Certification of the State Statistical Office for harmonisation with the ISO-9001 quality standard.

Success indicators:

- Implementation of the established procedures for updating the register of agricultural holdings from administrative sources and statistical surveys.
- Establishment of a new statistical unit – enterprise group, and production of data on enterprise demography from the Statistical Business Register in accordance with Annexe IX of the Regulation, introduction of an identification number for each statistical unit separately.
- Improvement of the Statistical Population Register in accordance with the changes and the development of the Administrative Population Register based on the defined programme of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.
- Establishment of procedures for updating the Statistical Territorial Register by using the Administrative Territorial Register (which is maintained by the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre) and other administrative sources.
- Number of revisions to statistical data.
- Number of revised classifications.
- Employee Satisfaction Survey and self-assessment conducted according to CAF (Common Assessment Framework).
- Analysis performed on the basis of the records of costs for 2013 and 2014. Defined objective indicators for measuring the efficiency of resources used in separate surveys.
- Implementation of the statistical disclosure control methods. Publication of the procedures for access to microdata and list of surveys for which access is granted.
- Implementation of the Statistical Business Process Model and description of statistical variables from the statistical surveys.
- Publication of reference metadata.
- Implementation of the automatic backup and archiving system. Adoption of guidelines, procedures and templates for improving information security.
- Adoption of a Quality Policy, guidelines, procedures and templates
- ISO-9001 quality certificate awarded.

1.10.3. Strengthening the cooperation and communication with users, continuous measurement of user needs and satisfaction, and strengthening the confidence in statistics

The ultimate objective of statistical data production is meeting users' needs for official statistical data, thus supporting the democratic processes of the country.

Sub-programmes:

- Further improvement of the web page of the Office.
- Process of further redesign of statistical publications.
- Establishing forms of regular communication with users.

Success indicators:

- Increased amount of statistical data available on the web page.
- Redesigned publications.
- Increased number of users of the products and services of the State Statistical Office.

1.10.4. Strengthening the coordination of the National Statistical System

The State Statistical Office has a legal obligation to coordinate the national statistical system. In the period covered with this Strategic Plan, the institution will invest more resources in strengthening its coordinating role and in ensuring consistency of the Macedonian statistical system.

Sub-programmes:

- Strengthening the cooperation with providers of data and bearers of administrative data sets.
- Strengthening the cooperation with authorised bearers for meeting the obligations within the National Statistical System.

Success indicators:

- Number of organised working meetings and signed agreements for cooperation with bearers of data sets.
- Number of organised trainings and activities in certain areas of common interest.