

STRATEGIC PLAN

2014-2016

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 science of statistics is the chief instrumentality through which the progress of civilization is now measured, and by which its development hereafter will be largely controlled."

S. N. D. North

As the institution responsible for producing official statistics in the country and as coordinator of the entire statistical system, the State Statistical Office achieves its strategic objectives while adhering to the principles of official statistics of the United Nations and the European Statistics Code of Practice, as well as the national Law on State Statistics and the Five-Year Work Programme.

The vision and mission of the State Statistical Office for production and dissemination of objective, timely and reliable statistical data are reflected in the Strategic Plan for development of the State Statistical Office for the period 2014-2016.

The Strategy represents a document that constitutes 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 promote the development of the State Statistical Office in order to satisfy user needs and to meet European and world standards in statistics.

The implementation of the Strategy will be carried out through the planned programmes and sub-programmes, and the accomplishment of the established goals will be a measurable indicator of the performance of the institution and of the ability of the State Statistical Office to overcome any challenges that may arise.

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

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan 2014-2016 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:

- Meeting the obligations pertaining to the State Statistical Office from the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2013-2017, which represents a strategic document for the statistical system of the country;
- 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);
- Preparing the State Statistical Office for the Light Peer Review that will be conducted by the European Commission in the upcoming period.

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, which was carried out in November 2010. For the purpose of further harmonisation with the European statistical system, and for further specifying the definitions and categories used, 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, and to ensure timely submission of quality data by reporting units.

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. The Plan was 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. The State Statistical Office supports the scientific research activity in the Republic of Macedonia by providing access to protected microdata.

1.3. VISION

To be recognised as an institution that provides quality, timely and internationally comparable statistical data, an institution that is mindful of respondent burden and focused on meeting data user needs.

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,
- prepares and prescribes instruments for statistical surveys (methodologies, guidelines, forms, etc.),
- cooperates with authorised bodies 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 bodies regarding the methodological bases for surveys under their competence

- establishes, keeps and maintains statistical data sets,
- 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,
- give initiatives and suggestions for improving the contents of existing and new data sets that are used for statistical surveys in accordance with the law and the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2013-2017;
- collects and processes statistical data,
- 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 bodies,
- supervises the implementation of the provision of the Law on State Statistics;
- popularises statistics,
- performs other tasks prescribed by the Law on State Statistics and other laws.

1.5. SUMMARY OF THE SPECIFICITY OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE

The State Statistical Office is an independent professional 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, 82/08, 167/10 and 51/11) and the Law on State Statistics ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 54/97, 21/07, 51/11 and 104/13).

In accordance with the Law on State Statistics, the State Statistical Office, on the basis of scientific methods, provides users (legal and natural persons) with data on the economy, demography, social life, environmental 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.

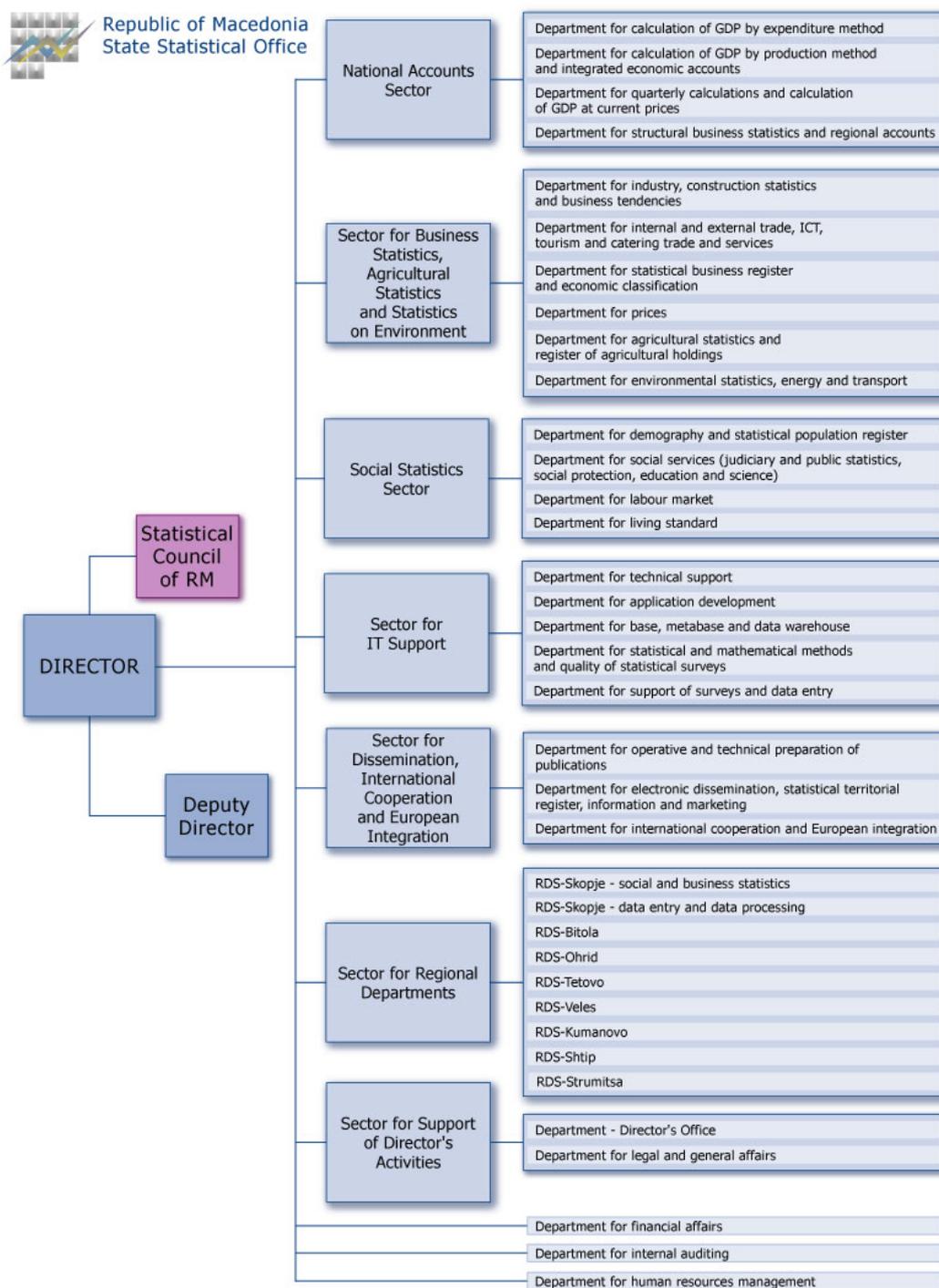
The State Statistical Office is responsible for producing official statistics in the Republic of Macedonia and, at the same time, is a coordinator of the statistical system in the Republic of Macedonia.

The State Statistical Office performs its role in cooperation with other entities - authorised bodies that are also responsible for producing official statistics in the frame of the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2013-2017 and which in the collection, processing and dissemination of data apply statistical standards, methods and techniques. In performing its functions, the State Statistical Office pays special attention to statistical data confidentiality. The data gathered through statistical surveys or indirectly, from administrative and other sources, represent confidential data, used for statistical purposes only, i.e. for development and production of official statistics, and are published as summary (aggregated) data. Within the system of official statistics, the Office acts as a coordinator regarding international statistical cooperation. In performing the international obligations, the Office, in cooperation with other authorised bodies, ensures comparability of data with other European countries, observes and implements international methodologies and 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 formats prescribed by Eurostat.
- Establishing and maintaining a centralised metadata warehouse.
- Publishing reference metadata according to a standardised structure along with the disseminated data.

Planned deadline for priority realisation: 2016

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 bodies in accordance with the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2013-2017, coordinating the application of uniform statistical classifications and nomenclatures for statistical production purposes.
- Support for strengthening the capacity of authorised bodies 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 bodies 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: 2016

1.7.3. Strengthening the cooperation with providers of data and holders of data sets

Objectives:

- Inclusion of the State Statistical Office in the process of creating and amending the data sets.
- Reducing respondent burden
- Signing agreements for cooperation and data exchange with holders of data sets.

Planned deadline for priority realisation: 2016

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 statistical data.
- Modernising the manner of disseminating 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: 2016

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 the capacities for business process management.
- Strengthening the capacities for EU negotiations.
- Cost-effective use of available financial resources.

Planned deadline for priority realisation: 2016

1.8. OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVED RESULTS OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE IN 2012

The planned programmes and expected results for 2012 were defined in the Strategic Plan 2012-2014. The following programmes were defined: Sectoral statistics; Upgrading the statistical infrastructure; Strengthening the cooperation and communication with users, continuous measurement of user needs and satisfaction and strengthening the confidence in statistics; 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 four priority 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.
 - Improved business statistics by familiarising with the main principles for preparing quality structural statistics. In accordance with European regulations, greater amount of data on economic trends have been provided.
 - Improved social statistics in the areas of 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, Statistical Farm Register, 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. The implementation of **IPA 2011 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme** was supposed to start on 1 September 2012, but due to financing problems the programme started later than planned. The problems occurred as a consequence of the debts of the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Culture to the European Commission. As a result, the Commission collected these debts by withdrawing most of the funds from the first tranche of the project that were to be transferred to the account of the SSO for the next 12 months.
 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 was submitted for approval to the EU Delegation to the Republic of Macedonia in 2012.

1.8.1. 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:

- For reducing respondent burden and greater utilisation of administrative data sources, Memorandum of Cooperation and data exchange has been signed with the Institute of Public Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy for the operation of the farm accountancy data network, and with the Agency for Electronic Communications.
- In order to meet user demands, the amount of produced regional data from various areas has been increased. 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.
- The improvement in the quality and volume of statistical data in accordance with EU standards in 2012 was achieved through the following activities:
 - The Programme of Statistical Surveys 2013-2017 has been prepared. The catalogue of statistical surveys was revised and an application was developed for preparation of the Programme.
 - In national accounts, the statistical surveys planned in the Programme of Statistical Surveys have been carried out, GDP data have been prepared in accordance with the National Classification of Activities Rev.2, and the activities for preparation of sector accounts and for calculation of consumption of fixed capital have been intensified.
 - The statistical surveys in the field of business, agricultural and environmental statistics that are planned in the Programme of Statistical Surveys have been carried out, and a methodology has been prepared for construction cost indices for new residential buildings.
 - In social statistics, the following activities were carried out:
 - Implementation of the regular job vacancy survey in the first quarter of 2012.
 - Data were published from two new surveys carried out by the SSO: the Structure of Earnings Survey (conducted in 2011) and the Job Vacancy Survey.
 - Microdata from the Structure of Earnings Survey have been transmitted to Eurostat.
 - Regarding the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), which is a source of data on the distribution of income and for calculation of Laeken indicators of poverty, social exclusion, pensions and material deprivation, during 2012 for the first time, Laeken indicators were published for 2010, as internationally comparable indicators.
 - In cooperation with the International Labour Organisation, a School-to-Work Transition Survey was carried out for persons aged 15 to 29 years.
 - Regular computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) has been introduced in the Labour Force Survey.
 - For the first time, transmission of the quality report for the Labour Force Survey was performed through the National Reference Metadata Editor – NRME.

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

1. Development of the Statistical Farm Register
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. During 2012, analyses have been made of the available data from administrative sources for updating the Statistical Farm Register. Besides the statistical surveys, data on cattle obtained from administrative sources are also used for updating the Statistical Farm Register.
- 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. The development of the Statistical Business Register is aimed at providing data on business demography according to the National Classification of Activities NKD Rev.2 (enterprise births, deaths, and survival).
- Regarding the Statistical Population Register, one of the most important conditions for its functioning is the existence of the administrative register, and until its establishment, the SSO works on the methodological bases for updating the Statistical Population Register with administrative data, and data from existing relevant statistical surveys.
- The Statistical Territorial Register is constantly updated in accordance with the changes in the territorial units.
- 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.
- For ensuring the sustainability of its capacities, 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 2012, 62 employees took part in 55 meetings of Eurostat working groups, and 291 persons took part in 105 external training courses. In 2012, 2 traineeships were approved by Eurostat. In accordance with the training plan, the SSO continued with the practice of organising lectures given by the employees themselves. During 2012, a total of 46 internal trainings were held, which were attended by a total of 811 persons, or 18 persons per training on average. Of these, 41 were generic and 5 were specialised trainings.
- 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.

1.8.3. 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. To that end, the following activities were undertaken in 2012:
 - 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.
 - 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, and the web page has had a total of 1025000 hits. The web database was visited 35000 times in 2012.
 - A web-based application has been developed for searching names and surnames in the Republic of Macedonia, at country level and by region. A link has been established to the local DevInfo database, and the Macedonian translation of the System of National Accounts 2008 has been published on the web page.
- The publications are continuously redesigned for the purpose of harmonisation with European standards. 291 issues have been published in the "News Releases" edition, 27 issues in the "Statistical Reviews" edition, as well as 5 other publications.
- For improving the communication with users, a User Satisfaction Survey was conducted.
- In 2012, the Office continued to improve the cooperation with universities and high schools, and it 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.

1.8.4. 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 holders of administrative data sources
2. Strengthening the cooperation with authorised bodies for meeting the obligations within the National Statistical System

Realised activities:

- Having working meetings with data providers and users in the process of preparing the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2013-2017.
- Organising meetings with holders of administrative data sources to define the standards for using administrative data for statistical purposes and to strengthen cooperation through active participation in the workshops that were held at the Office for various statistical areas (agricultural statistics, labour market statistics, etc.)
- Further strengthening the cooperation with authorised bodies 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 March 2012, a training was held at the SSO for the National Reference Metadata Editor, which was attended by representatives of the authorised bodies of the national statistical system: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Employment Service Agency, the National Bank, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the Institute for Public Health, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.
- 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 actively participates and provides support in the execution of other institutions' projects.

1.9 OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVED AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE STATE STATISTICAL OFFICE IN 2013

The planned programmes and expected results for 2013 were defined in the Strategic Plan 2013-2015. The following programmes were defined: Sectoral statistics; Upgrading the statistical infrastructure; Strengthening the cooperation and communication with users, continuous measurement of user needs and satisfaction and strengthening the confidence in statistics; 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 2013:

- 1. IPA 2009 National Programme – Support to the SSO.** This Project is composed of three contracts: Twinning Contract, Procurement Contract and Service Contract. The implementation of the twinning project "Support to the State Statistical Office for capacity building and improving compliance of statistics with EU standards" started on 18 August 2012 and will end on 17 August 2014. In the first year of implementation, i.e. the first four quarters of the duration of the Project, 49.4% of the planned activities have been accomplished. This project covers several components: National accounts, Sectoral statistics, Capacity building and Electronic data collection. The Procurement Contract for which the technical specification was prepared at the end of 2012 in cooperation with experts engaged in the twinning project, is still in the process of tendering. The Service Contract for developing an IT system for metadata-driven data collection via Internet was signed in December 2012, and implementation began in January 2013. Two documents were prepared and accepted by the company that won the Contract: Analysis of required functionalities of the system and Logical design of the IT system. The application development is in the final stage, and all four software modules are currently being tested.
- 2. IPA 2009 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme.** Final reports (narrative and financial) on the implementation of planned activities and spent funds for the entire duration of the IPA 2009 Multi-Beneficiary Programme have been submitted to and approved by Eurostat on 2 September 2013.
- 3. IPA 2011 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme.** Interim reports on the implementation of planned activities were submitted to Eurostat in June 2013, for the following projects: regional gross value added, annual sector accounts, annual government accounts, agro-monetary statistics, annual crop production statistics, livestock production statistics, labour force survey, statistics on income and living conditions, household budget survey, business register, external trade, structural business statistics, and farm structure survey. The interim report (narrative and financial) on the implementation of planned activities and spent funds has been submitted.
- 4. IPA 2012/2013 National Programme.** The project fiche was approved by the European Commission, and a Financing Agreement was signed between the Republic of Macedonia and the European Commission. This Programme will be implemented through the following contracts: Twinning Contract, Service Contract, and Procurement Contract. The Twinning Contract fiche is currently being prepared. The activities planned with this Programme are: support to the SSO for further improvement of the methodologies for collecting and processing economic and social statistics, harmonisation of administrative and statistical processes in terms of definitions, concepts, coverage, etc., and improvement of other relevant processes and methodologies. Expected results:
 - Improved quality and availability of administrative data for statistical purposes, in accordance with the European Statistics Code of Practice;
 - Improved statistical methods in the field of social, agricultural, business, and price statistics;

- Speeding up the implementation of the ESA 95 methodological recommendations and transition to ESA 2010;
- Creating a common data warehouse for economic statistics;
- Establishing a data warehouse for agricultural statistics, including the compilation of economic accounts for agriculture;
- Signing a contract for procurement of IT equipment for supporting the development of the common data warehouse and its utilisation. This Project will be implemented through the following contracts: Twinning Contract, Service Contract, and Procurement Contract.

5. **IPA 2012 Multi-Beneficiary Statistical Cooperation Programme.** The SSO applied for the grant for this Programme, including 15 pilot projects, and implementation is expected to start at the beginning of 2014.

1.9.1. In the programme Sectoral statistics, the following sub-programmes 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. Activities on approved grants for implementation of the IPA 2011 Multi-Beneficiary Programme.
6. Implementing and supporting the activities of the IPA 2009 National Programme.

Realised activities:

- For reducing respondent burden, activities began in 2013 for developing an IT system for electronic data collection over the Internet under the Service Contract, while in the Twinning Project work is underway for quality control of the products delivered by an external (outsourcing) company. The Project, which will end at the beginning of 2014, is expected to significantly facilitate the manner of reporting by respondents. For the purpose of greater utilisation of administrative data sources, the following have been signed: Annexe to the Memorandum of Cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia, the Memorandum of Cooperation in the area of organic production with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Data Exchange Agreement with the National Bank and the Ministry of Finance for the purposes of financial system statistics, Agreement for electronic data exchange with the Ministry of Interior, Memorandum for data exchange with the Public Revenue Office, Cooperation Agreement with the Employment Service Agency of Macedonia, Cooperation Agreement with the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of Macedonia, and Cooperation Agreement with the Health Insurance Fund of Macedonia.
- The publication "Regions of the Republic of Macedonia, 2013" has been published, containing the latest economic and socio-demographic data on the regions of the country.

- The improvement of the volume and quality of statistical data in accordance with EU standards in 2013 was achieved through the following results:
 - In national accounts, the statistical surveys planned in the Programme of Statistical Surveys 2013-2017 have been conducted, and activities have been carried out for preparation of sector accounts and for calculation of consumption of fixed capital. Further improvements have been made in the calculations for compiling the supply and use tables.
 - In business, agricultural and environmental statistics, several activities have been carried out:
 - Industrial producer price indices on the non-domestic market and total (including the domestic market) have been calculated. The groups of monthly indices in the field of industrial producer prices have been harmonised with the manner of their publication in Eurostat. The industrial production index, adjusted for working days in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No. 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics, was published. Data have been provided for calculation of the turnover index in industry by using a deflator of industrial producer prices on the domestic and non-domestic market. Annual harmonisation with the European Classification of industrial products has begun, as well as transmission of data to Eurostat by using the same Classification.
 - Data have been prepared by changing the base year for short-term statistics in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No. 1165/98 concerning short-term statistics, and a series of data has been produced with the new base year.
 - Monthly construction cost indices have been calculated for the period 2005-2013. Data have been provided for calculation of the construction production index by using a construction cost deflator.
 - Statistics in the field of energy, transport, tourism and trade are continuously harmonised with EU regulations.
 - Data on natural gas and electricity have been provided at monthly level. Full harmonisation has been achieved with the Directive on transparency of natural gas electricity prices charged to end users.
 - Further harmonisation has been made with Regulation (EC) No. 471/2009 by introducing a pilot survey for a new module for import-export by economic characteristics of enterprises.
 - Agricultural price statistics, being one of the best sources of quality data for calculation of economic accounts for agriculture, have been improved. The base year for agricultural price statistics has been changed, and agricultural price indices have been calculated at quarterly and annual level with the new base year (2010). Data on economic accounts for agriculture have been provided at the regional level for the period 2009-2011, and revision has been made of data on the economic accounts for agriculture in the field of labour force, for the period 1998-2011.
 - The Farm Structure Survey has been carried out in accordance with European regulations. An inventory of animal production statistics has been prepared.
 - The following pilot surveys have been conducted: organic production, environmental costs, passenger mobility, import-export prices, and sample-based pilot survey on crop production.

- In social statistics, the following activities were carried out:
 - In March 2013, data from the Job Vacancy Survey were transmitted to Eurostat for the first time, while the first quality report from the Structure of Earnings Survey was delivered to Eurostat in February 2013. The publications Structure of Earnings and Laeken Indicators have been prepared on the basis of the Survey on Income and Living Conditions.
 - In cooperation with the International Labour Organisation, the Analytical Report on the results from the School-to-Work Transition Survey was prepared and published in July 2013.
 - Implementation began of the labour cost survey, which will provide data on salaries and other costs, as employer costs and not as employee incomes.
 - Implementation began of the survey on innovation activity of business entities in the period 2010-2012. The survey is harmonised with the international recommendations for this area – the Oslo Manual, 3rd edition, 2005.
 - In order to modernise and facilitate the method of collecting data from higher education institutions, the SSO launched an initiative for electronic data collection from faculties and other higher education institutions. Meetings were held with universities and they were given materials regarding the electronic data collection for the statistical survey on enrolled students.
 - In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, the national education system was aligned with the International Standard Classification of Education – ISCED 2011.

1.9.2. In the programme Upgrading the statistical infrastructure, the following sub-programmes were planned:

1. Further development and improvement of the quality of the Statistical Farm Register.
2. Further development and improvement of the quality of the Statistical Business Register
3. Further development of the Statistical Population Register
4. Further development and improvement of the quality of the Statistical Territorial Register
5. Implementation of the statistical data revision policy
6. Revision of classifications
7. Sustainability of the development of the capacities of the State Statistical Office
8. Implementation of the statistical disclosure control methods
9. Standardisation and integration of statistical processes
10. Implementation of the Strategy for Development of a Metainformation System
11. Improvement of the IT infrastructure in order to increase information security
12. Preparing a Quality Policy.
13. Certification of the State Statistical Office for harmonisation with the ISO-9001 quality standard

Realised activities:

- In 2013, efforts were made for development of the statistical registers maintained by the State Statistical Office in order to improve their quality. Continuous efforts are made for developing the procedures for updating the Statistical Farm Register.
- The scope and quality of the Statistical Business Register have been improved by conducting a statistical survey on local units. A database with groups of enterprises has been created and enterprise groups have been defined for 2010 and 2011.
- Determining the necessary preconditions for updating the existing population records (data from the Ministry of Interior) with data from statistical surveys, which should be gradually transformed into a statistical population register with the development of the administrative population register.
- Analysis has been made of the methodological bases for maintaining the Statistical Territorial Register, and changes have been prepared for the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics NUTS in accordance with the changes in the territorial organisation of the local self-government of the Republic of Macedonia.
- The changes in the economic classifications are regularly monitored. The National Nomenclature of Industrial Products – NNIP has been harmonised with the European nomenclature at the annual level.
- 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.
 - The cooperation with the scientific research community was deepened by allowing access to the microdata available at the SSO.
 - 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 2013, the State Statistical Office continued to pay particular attention to external and internal training of employees, in order to develop key skills in employees for producing statistics in accordance with international standards. As part of the external training, in the period January – October 2013, 33 employees took part in 50 meetings of Eurostat working groups, and 397 persons took part in 76 external training courses. In 2013, 7 traineeships were approved by Eurostat, of which 4 have been completed, 2 are still ongoing, and 1 should start in January 2014. In the period January – October 2013, a total of 27 in-house trainings were organised in the institution, of which 6 were specialised training courses attended by 97 employees, and 21 generic courses attended by 402 employees. Some of the trainings were also attended by representatives of other authorised bodies for carrying out statistical surveys within the national statistical system.
 - The results of the third CAF self-assessment were analysed.
- In July 2013, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia passed new amendments to the Law on State Statistics. The amendments to the Law are aimed at aligning Macedonian statistics with the principles of European statistics and at further specifying the definitions and categories used in the Law. Particular emphasis should be put on the introduction of the category "supervision" in the Law, for the purpose of strengthening the penal policy towards respondents regarding the delivery of timely and quality statistical information.

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 sub-programmes were planned:

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

Realised activities:

- During 2013, the web page was improved continuously. The following activities were undertaken:
 - Updating the database with new data and including time series by areas.
 - The tables of the Statistical Yearbook and the Statistical Reviews have been made available to users in Excel format.
 - The State Statistical Office took part in the International Year of Statistics by posting a logo with a link to the web site of the International Year of Statistics 2013, and by including the logo in the editions of the Office.
 - On its web site, the Office has published guidelines in the area of dissemination (Guidelines for the preparation of publications and Guidelines for updating the web site of the SSO), which familiarise users with the basic procedures of the Office in this area.
 - For improving the visualisation of statistical data and information, in several major areas on the website there are tools for displaying animated graphs of the main data in these areas.
 - Regular use of Twitter for posting information about the statistical products and activities of the Office.
 - According to the latest Google Analytics data, the web page has had 1411853 hits (status 31 October 2013). In 2013, the web database was visited 43065 times (status 31 October 2013).
- The statistical 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 the introduction of new indicators and data for comparison with European countries in new publications. In 2013, the following were published:
 - 270 issues have been published in the "News Releases" edition (for the period January – October 2013)
 - 28 issues have been published in the "Statistical Reviews" edition (for the period January – October 2013)
 - 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

- In 2013, regarding the forms of regular communication with users, several activities were carried out:
 - The cooperation with higher education institutions in the country continues. A second lecture was organised for students of economics from the International Balkan University, and this cooperation will continue in the future. There was a lecture on population censuses for students of the Institute of Demography at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and a lecture on the work of the Library of the State Statistical Office for students from the Institute of Library Science at the Faculty of Pedagogy in Skopje.
 - Each month, texts by experts from the SSO are published in the Newsletter of the Economic Chamber of Macedonia, and this practice will continue in the future.

1.9.4 In the programme Strengthening the coordination of the National Statistical System, the following sub-programmes were planned:

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

Realised activities:

- Further strengthening of the cooperation with providers of data and holders of administrative data sets has been achieved by:
 - Signing memoranda and agreements of cooperation and data exchange with some of the holders of administrative data sets.
 - Signing a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Economic Chamber of the Republic of Macedonia.
- In order to further strengthen the cooperation with other authorised bodies for meeting the obligations in the National Statistical System under the IPA 2009 National Programme, the State Statistical Office and the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia held a joint mission for calculation of aggregates for insurance and reinsurance units in accordance with the methodological recommendations of ESA 2010.
 - In 2013, employees of the State Statistical Office actively participated in the process of monitoring and updating the National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA).
- 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 2014-2016, the following programmes have been defined: Sectoral statistics; Upgrading the statistical infrastructure; Strengthening 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 of Statistical Surveys 2013-2017.

Sub-programmes:

- Reducing respondent burden, increased utilisation of administrative data sources.
- Publishing quality reports for statistical surveys.
- Improving the volume and quality of statistical data in accordance with EU standards.

Success indicators:

- Increased number of surveys that use administrative data sources.
- Number of redesigned questionnaires and number of web-based questionnaires.
- 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.

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 of statistical registers.
- Implementation of the policy for revision of statistical data, classifications and nomenclatures.
- Sustainability of the development of the capacities of the State Statistical Office.
- Implementation of statistical disclosure protection methods.
-
- Improvement of the IT infrastructure in order to increase information security.
- Implementation of the Quality Policy of the SSO.
- Certification of the State Statistical Office for harmonisation with the ISO-9001 quality standard.

Success indicators:

- Implementation of the established procedures for updating the Farm Register from administrative sources.
- Introduction of a new statistical unit – enterprise group, and production of data on enterprise demography from the Statistical Business Register.

- Analysis of the possibility of establishing a procedure for updating the existing population records with data from statistical surveys and from administrative data sources.
- Establishment of procedures for updating the Statistical Territorial Register with data from the Administrative Territorial Register and other administrative sources.
- Number of revised classifications, nomenclatures and data.
- CAF self-assessment and analysis of self-assessment.
- Analysis of data from the system for daily registration of activities for 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- Defined objective indicators for measuring the efficiency of resources used in separate surveys.
- Prepared guidelines for microdata protection, and prepared secure microdata sets for selected statistical surveys.
- Percentage of completed activities under the Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for Development of the Metainformation System in the SSO.
- Adopted guidelines, procedures and templates for implementing the Quality Policy.
- Full readiness of the SSO for the next cycle of the Light Peer Review.
- ISO-9001 quality certificate awarded.

1.10.3. Strengthening the cooperation with users

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:

- Modernising the manner of disseminating statistical data.
- Maintaining regular communication with users.

Success indicators:

- Increased number of users of the products and services of the Office.
- Greater amount of used statistical data.
- Updated User Register.

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 holders of administrative data sets.
- Strengthening the cooperation with authorised bodies for meeting the obligations within the National Statistical System.

Success indicators:

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