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Peer review on the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice

Country visited: Estonia

Date: 6. – 8. November 2006

22 December 2006
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1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Main findings** (including an assessment of the co-ordination role of the National Statistical Institute):

(1) The Peer Review team formed a very good impression of the performance and professionalism of Statistics Estonia. This is a significant achievement particularly in view of the fact that it is a rather young institution that has had to start its work no more than 15 years ago to reorient itself to meet the needs of a modern independent state. The implementation of the European Statistical Programme had to be managed over a relatively short period of time, a task which has kept the statistical offices in the old member states occupied for decades!

(2) The Peer Review was, as agreed, limited to the parts of the Code of Practice dealing with the institutional environment of Statistics Estonia and its dissemination of statistical information. However, interviews with the users of official statistics in Estonia and the results of the user survey conducted by Statistics Estonia in September 2006 confirmed that substantial progress has been made very quickly in respect of the indicators of good practice covered by all the principles of the Code. Some users would, however, like to see a greater customer focus in taking their needs into account.

(3) Only two institutions produce official statistics in Estonia: Statistics Estonia and the Bank of Estonia. Both institutions co-operate very well; their division of work is laid down by law.

(4) In compliance with the Official Statistics Act, Statistics Estonia produces and disseminates European Statistics respecting in practice the principles of professional independence, impartiality, objectivity and statistical confidentiality. The Team would recommend some improvements in the Act. These would address in particular the need to include an explicit provision to give Statistics Estonia independence in the matter of the timing and content of statistical releases and to remove certain provisions (i.e. approval of the list of data collected and used in conducting statistical surveys) on the adoption of the annual programme that could be deemed to be at variance with the Office’s methodological independence. Furthermore, greater legal clarity around the status and role of the Director General of Statistics Estonia should also be pursued.

(5) Statistics Estonia fully complies with the Principle 2 related to the mandate for data collection. It has very strong provisions regarding the right to use administrative data. However, technical and organisational difficulties still exist with regard to the use of taxation data. Different interpretations of the impact of the Personal Data Protection Act on the way official statistics are carried out lead to problems that should be solved soon.

(6) The resources at present available to Statistics Estonia are considered to be adequate to meet European Statistics requirements. However, there are strong indications that additional resources will be required to ensure that Statistics Estonia can continue to recruit and retain skilled staff in an increasingly competitive labour market environment.

(7) Ensuring the high quality of its output is one of the major objectives of Statistics Estonia. Nevertheless, it is planned to introduce a systematic framework for addressing quality and to
include in such a framework the many existing quality measures.

(8) Users in general have a positive opinion on the accessibility and clarity of the statistical information produced by Statistics Estonia. The planned introduction of a standardised metadata system and the further development of electronic dissemination will greatly enhance the current situation.

(9) The management of Statistics Estonia expressed its clear resolve to further improve compliance with the Code of Practice. The ambitious list of improvement actions described in Chapter 7 of this report was discussed and is fully supported by the Peer Review Team.

2. INTRODUCTION

With the adoption of the European Statistics Code of Practice, the Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) committed itself to adhering to its principles. At its meeting on 25 May 2005, the SPC endorsed a stepwise monitoring procedure for the implementation of the Code over three years during which countries’ self-assessments should be combined with elements of peer review, benchmarking and monitoring on the basis of the explanatory indicators added to each principle of the Code.

During December 2005 / January 2006 the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat have completed their self-assessments, the results have been summarised by Eurostat in a report submitted to the Economic and Financial Committee in May 2006 which has been published on the Eurostat website.

As a next step towards implementation of the Code, the European Statistical System is organising peer reviews to complement the self-assessments starting with 2006. They are considered a vital element for the implementation of the Code of Practice given their capacity to encourage the sharing of best practice and to contribute to transparency in what is, essentially, a self-regulatory approach. This approach is designed to enhance accountability and to help building trust in the integrity of the European Statistical System, its processes and outputs.

The Code of Practice peer reviews follow a common methodology focusing on the institutional environment and dissemination part of the Code comprising the following principles: (1) Professional independence, (2) Mandate for data collection, (3) Adequacy of resources, (4) Quality commitment, (5) Statistical confidentiality, (6) Impartiality and Objectivity and (15) Accessibility and Clarity. In principle, the peer review is limited to the National Statistical Institute and its co-ordination role within a dispersed national statistical system. A short document provided by the National Statistical Institute which summarises key aspects of the functioning of the national statistical system is published together with this report.

During a three days visit on-site and on the basis of information material provided by the National Statistical Institute and Eurostat prior to the review, peer reviews yield a report assessing compliance with the Code of Practice at indicator level and by principle following a four point assessment scale. The report includes a refined set of improvement actions covering all principles of the Code which are being used to feed the monitoring process of the implementation of the Code in the European Statistical System.
While the peer reviewers will undertake to base their assessment to the extent possible on factual information, it is worth noting some of the limitations of the peer review process. For example, peer reviewers are dependent upon the resources made available to them (though experienced reviewers can be expected to identify where appropriate information is not forthcoming). In addition these reviews are conducted on a strategic, organisation-wide and system wide basis. Accordingly it is not straightforward to ascertain that certain practices or behaviours or systems operate in all statistical domains.

3. **Findings per Principle**

**Principle 1: Professional Independence**

*The professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European Statistics.*

Overall assessment: Statistics Estonia is professionally independent in practice. This is supported in general by legislation but this should be improved in a number of specific respects, namely: explicit reference to independence in the content and timing of releases; greater clarity around the role and status of the Director General; and the need to have an official multi-annual focus in programme planning. There must also be some concern with the provisions in the law whereby the government approves not only the list of official statistical surveys but also "the list of data collected and used in conducting statistical surveys" while the Minister of Finance must approve the official statistical questionnaires as these provisions would appear to conflict with Statistics Estonia’s independence in respect of statistical methodology. Finally consideration might also be given to the establishment of a Statistical Advisory Council.

**Indicator 1.1: The independence of the statistical authority from political and other external interference in producing and disseminating official statistics is specified in law.**

Largely met

Comments: The Official Statistics Act of Estonia grants independence in the choice of statistical methods to Statistics Estonia and lays down that official statistics shall conform to the principles of impartiality, reliability, relevance, cost-effectiveness, confidentiality and transparency. However, it does not explicitly provide for other major aspects of the professional independence of Statistics Estonia: independence in the content and timing of releases, the role and status of the Director General and a multi-annual focus in programme planning. Two very specific provisions in the Official Statistics Act, in respect of the powers of the Government and Minister of Finance in regard to the specification and implementation of the statistical programme, would also appear to have the potential to conflict with Statistics Estonia’s independence in respect of statistical methodology.
Indicator 1.2: The head of the statistical authority has sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. He/She should be of the highest professional calibre.

Largely met
Comments: The position of the Director General of Statistics Estonia is comparable with that of Directors General of other governmental agencies. The special role of the Director General of Statistics Estonia, particularly in regard to his or her responsibility to guarantee the professional independence of the office and the qualifications needed for the position, is not explicitly addressed and might usefully be clarified in the statistical legislation.

Indicator 1.3: The head of the statistical authority and, where appropriate, the heads of its statistical bodies have responsibility for ensuring that European Statistics are produced and disseminated in an independent manner.

Fully met
Comments: All interview partners during the peer review underlined that Statistics Estonia, which is headed by the Director General, produces and disseminates its statistics in practice in a professionally independent manner.

Indicator 1.4: The head of the statistical authority and, where appropriate, the heads of its statistical bodies have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.

Fully met
Comments: All interview partners during the peer review underlined that Statistics Estonia in practice can decide independently on the choice of statistical methods, standards and procedures as well as on the content and timing of statistical releases.

Indicator 1.5: The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.

Partly met
Comments: Each year Statistics Estonia draws up a list of official statistical surveys, together with a list of data collected and used in conducting statistical surveys, which is approved by the government. In addition the Office has an annual activity plan that is published on its website. It is planned to elaborate a multi-annual working plan for the first time in the near future.

Indicator 1.6: Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.

Fully met
Comments: Statistics Estonia publishes its own press releases which are clearly labelled as coming from Statistics Estonia and which are never mixed with any political statements.
Indicator 1.7: The statistical authority, when appropriate, comments publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of official statistics.

Fully met
Comments: Statistics Estonia intervenes in case of substantial misuses or misinterpretations of its statistics publicly. This was clearly confirmed in the interviews with the representatives of the media. It intends nevertheless to develop and implement a more precise policy in that field which will be communicated to all employees.

Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection

Statistical authorities must have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.

Overall assessment: The Official Statistics Act provides Statistics Estonia with a very clear mandate for the collection of data and in particular it has very strong provisions regarding the right to use administrative data. However, different interpretations of the impact of the Personal Data Protection Act on the extent to which certain individual data may be collected or used for the production of official statistics has given rise to problems of a methodological nature that need to be resolved at an early date.

Indicator 2.1: The mandate to collect information for the production and dissemination of official statistics is specified in law.

Fully met
Comments: The Official Statistics Act, in particular Articles 3, 4 and 7, provides Statistics Estonia with a clear mandate to collect the data needed for the production of official statistics. However, different interpretations of the impact of the Personal Data Protection Act on the way official statistics is carried out has enabled the Data Protection Inspectorate to forbid the use of the microdata collected for the 2000 Population and Housing Census which is not yet allowed to be used for certain statistical purposes, including as a sample frame for household surveys. This could be interpreted as an interference with the legal mandate to collect statistical data and to use these data for European statistical purposes.

Indicator 2.2: The statistical authority is allowed by national legislation to use administrative records for statistical purposes.

Fully met
Comments: The Official Statistics Act gives Statistics Estonia not only the clear right to use administrative data, but it stipulates in Article 5 that administrative data "shall primarily be used, provided the composition and quality of collected (administrative) data, in the opinion of agencies conducting statistical surveys, conform to the methodology of official statistical surveys". Administrative data are widely used in Estonian official statistics (foreign trade statistics, population statistics, agricultural statistics, general government and financial sector
statistics, etc.); deriving more statistics based on taxation data is one of the improvement actions of the office because of still existing technical and organisational difficulties to use these data. The provisions in the Estonian Official Statistics Act with regard to the use of administrative data can be seen as representing best practice.

**Indicator 2.3: On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authority may compel response to statistical surveys.**

**Fully met**

Comments: Articles 6 and 7 of the Official Statistics Act emphasize that legal persons registered in Estonia, branches of foreign commercial undertakings, state and local government agencies, sole proprietors and natural persons who own immovable property, buildings or parts thereof, or possess agricultural land or farm animals or declare international payments are required at the request of Statistics Estonia to submit data to the extent established in the Official Statistics Act. Natural persons submit data concerning themselves on a voluntary basis unless otherwise provided by law. Statistics Estonia has not up to now used this possibility to impose fines in the case of non-response. However, it plans together with the Bank of Estonia to implement a fast-track fining system for imposing penalties in the case of non-response in obligatory surveys.

**Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources**

*The resources available to statistical authorities must be sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.*

**Overall assessment:** In general, despite some difficulties, the resources available at present are considered to be adequate. However, there are strong indications that additional resources will be required to ensure that Statistics Estonia can continue to recruit and retain skilled staff in an increasingly competitive labour market environment.

**Indicator 3.1: Staff, financial, and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current European Statistics needs.**

**Partly met**

Comments: In general, despite some difficulties, the resources available at present are considered to be adequate both in magnitude and in quality to meet current European Statistics needs. However, in the discussions with the management and major users it became obvious that the rather low level of the salaries (in particular for experienced specialists) - compared with other institutions in the public sector and even more so in the private economy - is already leading to quite a high turnover in skilled staff which, if not addressed, will cause problems for the accomplishment of the tasks of the Office. Though salaries in Statistics Estonia increased significantly during the last two years there is still a substantial gap to the level in other public services. Further increases would therefore appear to be necessary.


**Indicator 3.2: The scope, detail and cost of European Statistics are commensurate with needs.**

For European level reply

**Indicator 3.3: Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new European Statistics against their cost.**

For European level reply

**Indicator 3.4: Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all European Statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.**

For European level reply

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**Principle 4: Quality commitment**

*All ESS members commit themselves to work and co-operate according to the principles fixed in the Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System.*

Overall assessment: Most of the elements necessary for ensuring the quality of statistical outputs are present in Statistics Estonia already. However, there is a need to introduce a systematic framework for addressing quality on a consistent basis throughout the organisation.

**Indicator 4.1 Product quality is regularly monitored according to the ESS quality components.**

Partly met

Comments: While there is no overall systematic framework for monitoring quality, it is clear that many of the ESS quality components are taken into account in the production of statistics in Statistics Estonia.

**Indicator 4.2 Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics.**

Partly met

Comments: Systematic processes are not in place but quality is monitored to a certain extent at the individual statistical production and dissemination stages.

**Indicator 4.3 Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations, including trade-offs within quality, and to guide planning for existing and emerging surveys.**

Partly met

Comments: There is an awareness of these quality considerations by the management of Statistics Estonia but formal processes are not generally in place.
Indicator 4.4 Quality guidelines are documented and staff are well trained. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.

Partly met
Comments: It is acknowledged that the documentation of quality guidelines needs to be significantly improved and that arrangements must be put in place to communicate the guidelines to a wide audience both internally and to users in general.

Indicator 4.5 There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using external experts where appropriate.

Partly met
Comments: Again this is an area that needs to be addressed as part of a more systematic approach towards quality assurance throughout Statistics Estonia.

Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality

The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes must be absolutely guaranteed.

Overall assessment: Very clear and strong arrangements are in place.

Indicator 5.1 Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.

Fully met
Comments: Statistical confidentiality is comprehensively guaranteed in Estonian law (Articles 8, 9 and 11 of the Official Statistics Act).

Indicator 5.2 Statistical authority staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.

Largely met
Comments: While no specific document called commitment on statistical confidentiality is signed on appointment, it is clear that appropriate documentation is signed before staff have access to individual or confidential data. The written job description, signed individually by each employee, includes clauses on treating microdata. Also the internal Security Rules are introduced to each employee by his or her supervisor and the employee signs the document to confirm that he or she will keep following these rules.

Indicator 5.3 Substantial penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality.

Fully met
Comments: Substantial penalties are prescribed in the Official Statistics Act (Article 11) for any willful breach of statistical confidentiality.

**Indicator 5.4** Instructions and guidelines are provided on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.

**Fully met**
Comments: This indicator is fully met in Statistics Estonia (see Government of the Republic Regulation No 41 of 29 January 2001 "Procedure for Protection of Data Collected and Processed by the Statistical Office"; the document can be found on Statistics Estonia's website together with a broad description of the principles underlying Statistics Estonia's detailed internal security rules).

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

**Fully met**
Comments: Security is a priority issue in Statistics Estonia and appropriate physical and technological provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases.

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

**Fully met**
Comments: Access is given to statistical microdata to external users subject to precise procedures and conditions that ensure that the risk of disclosure is managed satisfactorily to a high degree (see Government of the Republic Regulation No 253 of 23 December 1997 "Approval of Procedure for Transmission of Data that Permit Identification of the Data Subject without the Consent of the Data Subject for the Purposes of Scientific Research"; the document can be found on Statistics Estonia's website together with a broad description of the principles underlying Statistics Estonia's detailed internal security rules).

**Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity.**

Statistical authorities must produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.

Overall assessment: There is strong evidence that the requirements are being met to a high degree. The practice in ensuring equality of access in dissemination is exemplary.
Indicator 6.1: Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.

Fully met
Comments: The objectivity of official statistics was confirmed in all interviews.

Indicator 6.2: Choices of sources and statistical techniques are informed by statistical considerations.

Fully met
Comments: Statistics Estonia has a clear policy in place stating that data sources and statistical techniques are determined by statistical considerations only. This is confirmed in Article 4 of the Official Statistics Act. The cooperation between Statistics Estonia and the Bank of Estonia, which have a shared responsibility for official statistics (incl. the choice of statistical methods), functions very well in practice as there is a clear division of responsibilities.

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

Fully met
Comments: There is a clear policy line on how to deal with errors which includes the requirement to correct major errors - defined as errors "entailing a realistic possibility that the larger public will interpret the statistical data incorrectly" - as quickly as possible. There is, however, no recent experience with this policy since no serious errors have occurred over the past few years.

Indicator 6.4: Information on the methods and procedures used by the statistical authority are publicly available.

Largely met
Comments: For more than 75% of statistical outputs information on methods and procedures is published on the web. However, this information is not regularly updated and therefore does not always fully correspond to the methods and procedures that are actually used.

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

Fully met
Comments: The release calendar is published annually for the year ahead and, in addition, is publicly confirmed at the end of each week before release. Users confirmed that they are fully aware of this procedure. In practice pre-announced publication dates are changed very rarely and only in the case of unexpected non availability of primary data or technical difficulties.
**Indicator 6.6:** All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time and any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements should be revised so as to ensure impartiality.

**Fully met**

Comments: All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. There is a clear policy that no privileged access can be granted. This appears to be generally accepted and no pressures have occurred in recent years to provide privileged access. There is also a clear policy in place to prevent leaks and no leaks are known to have occurred in recent years.

**Indicator 6.7:** Statistical releases and statements made in Press Conferences are objective and non-partisan.

**Fully met**

Comments: Procedures are in place to ensure objectivity in the content of statistical releases and statements made in Press Conferences. Press releases are prepared under the responsibility of the Press Officer in cooperation with the competent subject matter department.

**Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity**

*European Statistics should be presented in a clear and understandable form, disseminated in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.*

Overall assessment: While there are clear areas for improvement (e.g. metadata and the further development of electronic dissemination), the overall approach in this area is satisfactory.

**Indicator 15.1:** Statistics are presented in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.

**Largely met**

Comments: Generally there is agreement that Statistics Estonia presents its statistics well although some users see room for improvement in the website presentation. The website does not at present comply with the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

**Indicator 15.2:** Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy.

**Fully met**

Comments: More than 75% of Statistics Estonia’s output is available via the internet and the Office’s policy is to further increase the amount of statistical information made available on the web. Flagship publications, such as the Statistical Yearbook, continue to exist in hard copy.
Indicator 15.3: Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and are made public.

Fully met
Comments: Statistics Estonia provides tailor-made statistical analyses. These results are made public where relevant in the judgement of the expert statistician(s).

Indicator 15.4: Access to microdata can be allowed for research purposes. This access is subject to strict protocols.

Fully met
Comments: Clear procedures are in place for allowing access to microdata for research purposes. Please refer also to the comment made under 5.6.

Indicator 15.5: Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems.

Partly met
Comments: A large variety of metadata exists in national language as well as in English but is not documented to a standardised metadata system.

Indicator 15.6: Users are kept informed on the methodology of statistical processes and the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the ESS quality criteria.

Partly met
Comments: Users report that the information provided on methodology and statistical techniques is not always satisfactory. Certain users find it incomplete while others mention that it is too complicated. Information provided to users does not include many elements related to the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the ESS quality criteria.

4. Co-ordination role of the National Statistical Institute

In Estonia at present only two institutions are mandated to produce official statistics: Statistics Estonia and the Bank of Estonia. The statistical areas that are in the responsibility of the Bank of Estonia are laid down in the Bank of Estonia Act. The Official Statistics Act designates both institutions as "main agencies" conducting official statistical surveys and states that they are independent in their choice of statistical methods and that they shall co-ordinate such methods with one another. This seems to work very well in practice.

In principle the Estonian Parliament could mandate other state agencies by law to produce official statistics and then the Government should include official statistical surveys to be conducted by these agencies in the yearly list of official statistical surveys. In such a case,
however, the relevant state agency would have to co-ordinate its methods of data collection, processing and dissemination with Statistics Estonia.

Some users mentioned that a few ministries produce statistical data that are not considered to be official statistics but for which a co-ordinating role of Statistics Estonia would nevertheless be desirable.

5. **GOOD PRACTICES TO BE HIGHLIGHTED**

The Peer Review Team would like to highlight as good or best practices:

- the regulation in the Official Statistics Act of Estonia concerning the use of administrative data for statistical purposes; and
- the strict procedures in place at Statistics Estonia for ensuring equality of access in the dissemination of statistics to all users.

(1) Use of administrative data

Article 4 of the Official Statistics Act provides Statistics Estonia with an extensive right to use data contained in databases resulting from, or collected in the course of, the activities of state and local government agencies and other legal persons. Article 5 of the law lays down that such data shall be primarily used but with the explicit provision that the composition and quality of the data conform, in the opinion of the agencies conducting the statistical surveys, to the required methodology for the surveys.

(2) Equality of access in dissemination

Statistics Estonia gives equal access to all its statistical releases at the same day and at the same time without any exception. From the interviews with users it appears that users in Estonia are aware of this practice and both accept and value it.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PEER REVIEW TEAM**

The Peer Review Team fully supports the list of improvement actions in chapter 7.
7. **List of Improvement Actions by Principle of the Code**

**Principle 1: Professional Independence**

**Timetable**

- Review of the statistical legislation in regard to: explicit reference to independence in the content and timing of releases; greater clarity around the role and status of the Director General; the provisions in the law whereby the government not only approves the list of official statistical surveys but also the list of data collected and used in conducting official statistical surveys while the Minister of Finance must approve the official statistical questionnaires.

- Development of a multi-annual work programme 2008 to 2011

- Development and implementation of a policy to intervene publicly on statistical issues in the case of misuse or misinterpretation of official statistics

**Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection**

**Timetable**

- Active participation in drafting a new Personal Data Protection Act which will give a more explicit and sound basis for the production of official statistics

- Improving the use of administrative data, with particular emphasis on deriving business statistics based on taxation data

- Drafting an amendment to the Population and Housing Census Act

- Implementation of a fast-track fining system for imposing penalties in the case of non-response in obligatory business surveys

**Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources**

**Timetable**

- Establishment of a clear connection in terms of the resources required between the statistical programme and the allocated budget (survey costs calculation based on the recording of working time)

**Principle 4: Quality commitment**

**Timetable**

- Implementation of a quality management system by using the EFQM excellence model as a framework

- Implementation of an internal training programme on quality issues

- Development of a system of recommendations, guidelines and handbooks; establishment of an action plan for compiling them

- Development and implementation of process monitoring, assessment and improvement system

- Development and implementation of the product quality (according to the ESS quality components) monitoring and dissemination system with a common system for editing and imputation
Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality
Improvement actions

Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity
Improvement actions
- Introduction of arrangements to make updated information publicly available on methods and procedures. It is planned to define the concept of a statistical survey more clearly and reorganise the presentation of the description of surveys incl. the description of the methods and procedures used

Principle 7: Sound Methodology
Improvement actions
- Establishment of a Statistical Population Register to enable the production of improved population and social statistics based on a good quality population framework

Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures
Improvement actions
- Development and implementation of a common system for editing and imputation; in 2006 a project for the development of a unified system for the processing of business statistics was launched

Principle 9: Non-Excessive burden on respondents
Improvement actions
- Development of software systems for extracting statistical information from accounting systems of enterprises; it is planned to start the implementation in the field of foreign trade statistics

Principle 10: Cost Effectiveness
Improvement actions
- Development of a system of cost calculation by product to improve programming and budgeting (survey costs calculation based on the recording of working time)

Principle 11: Relevance
Improvement actions
- Introduction of improved processes to consult users and monitor the relevance of existing statistics including the possible establishment of a Statistics Council

Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability
Improvement actions
- Establishment of a system for communicating appropriate accuracy indicators to users

Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality
Improvement actions
Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality
Improvement actions

Principle 14: Coherence and Comparability
Improvement actions

Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity
Improvement actions

- Documentation of metadata according to a standardised metadata system 2008 - 2009

- Redrafting two Government Regulations - "Procedure for Protection of Data Collected and Processed by the Statistical Office" and "Procedure for Transmission of Data that Permit Identification of the Data Subject without the Consent of the Data Subject for Purposes of Scientific Research" - in order to better manage statistical confidentiality and microdata access and to make procedures clearer and more transparent 2007 - 2008
## 8. Annex A: Programme of the Visit

### 06.11.2006 Discussion with internal stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.30 – 10.00</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction of programme, organisational matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 – 11.30</td>
<td>Meeting with management and senior staff, Principles 1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30 – 12.15</td>
<td>Meeting with management and senior staff, Principle 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.15 – 12.30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30 – 14.00</td>
<td>Meeting with management and senior staff, Principles 6, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.00 – 16.00</td>
<td>Interview with DG and Quality manager, Principle 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.00 - 16.15</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.15 – 17.15</td>
<td>Meeting with representative from Scientific Committee of Social Statistics</td>
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### 07.11.2006 Discussion with external stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.00 – 10.30</td>
<td>Meeting with main users (Ministries, National Central Bank)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30 - 10.45</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45 – 11.45</td>
<td>Meeting with other national data producers (representatives from Central Bank.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.45 – 12.45</td>
<td>Meeting with main users (representatives from banks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.45 – 13.45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.45 – 14.45</td>
<td>Meeting with main users (representatives from university and other research companies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.45 –15.45</td>
<td>Meeting with media</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.45 - 16.00</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.00 – 17.00</td>
<td>Meeting with junior staff, principles 1-6, 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 08.11.2006 Conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.30 – 11.30</td>
<td>Meeting with management to sum-up and detailed review of list of improvement actions for all principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.30 - 11.45</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.45 – 13.15</td>
<td>Meeting with top management: conclusions, recommendations and follow-up (improvement actions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.15 – 14.15</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.15 – 15.30</td>
<td>Meeting with management to review additional issues on request of NSI: analysing the agreement of new Data Protection Act of Estonia with European legislation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. ANNEX B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Statistics Estonia:

- Mr Priit Pottistepp  Director General
- Ms Tuulikki Sillajõe  Deputy Director General
- Ms Kaja Sõstra  Head of the Methodology Department
- Mr Remi Prual  Methodology Department, Quality Chief
- Ms Eda Froš  Methodology Department, Principal Methodologist - Mathematician
- Ms Ene-Margit Tiit  Methodology Department, Senior Methodologist
- Ms Kai Kaarna  Methodology Department, Methodologist - Mathematician
- Ms Anne Nuka  Head of the Marketing and Dissemination Department
- Ms Indrek Kask  Marketing and Dissemination Department, Information and Marketing Service, Marketing Chief
- Mr Allan Randlepp  Head of the Information Technology Department
- Mr Hillar Põldmaa  Information Technology Department, Security Chief
- Ms Kai Tasuja  Head of the Data Collection Department
- Ms Ange Uudelt  Data Collection Department, Head of the Data Collection Service
- Ms Heidi Pellmas  Data Collection Department, Head of the Fieldwork Organisation Service
- Ms Viktoria Trasanov  Head of the Price and Wages Statistics Department
- Ms Peeter Kualpik  Head of the Population Statistics Department
- Ms Aira Veelma  Population Statistics Department, Leading Statistician
- Ms Urve Kask  Head of the Social Statistics Department
- Ms Anu Külavir  Social Statistics Department, Leading Statistician
- Ms Aili Maanso  Head of the Agricultural Statistics Department
- Ms Eve Valdevy  Agricultural Statistics Department, Leading Statistician
- Ms Ene Saareoja  Head of the Enterprise Statistics Department
- Ms Merike Põldsaar  Enterprise Statistics Department, Annual Statistics of Entrepreneurship Service, Principal Analyst
- Ms Agnes Naarits  Head of the General Government and Financial Sector Statistics Department
- Ms Ene Kaldma  Head of the Economic Statistics Department
- Mr Andrus Ahven  Economic Statistics Department, Foreign Trade Statistics Service, Leading Statistician
- Ms Katrin Toomel  Head of the Financial Planning and Administration Department
- Ms Riina Süld  Financial Planning and Administration Department, Organisation of Statistics Service, Chief Specialist
- Ms Kadri Ruttas  Head of the Personnel Department

Other institutions and organisations:

- Mr Märten Ross  Bank of Estonia  Deputy Governor
- Mr Jaanus Kroon  Bank of Estonia  Head of Balance of Payments and Economic Statistics Department
- Mr Raul Lättemäe  Bank of Estonia  Economics Department, Head of the Monetary Policy Department
- Mr Eedi Sepp  Ministry of Internal Affairs  Regional Policy Bureau, Adviser
- Mr Mario Lambing  Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications  Economic Development Department, Economic Analyses Division, Expert
- Mr Tanel Steinberg  Ministry of Finance  Economic Analysis Department, Adviser
- Ms Liis Helmik  Ministry of Finance  Economic Analysis Department, Economic Policy Service, Macroeconomics Service, Analyst
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Position/Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Riina Rae</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance</td>
<td>Economic Analysis Department, Economic Policy Service, National Accounts Service, Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Eha Lannes</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Affairs</td>
<td>Social Policy Information and Analysis Department, Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Rein Vöörmann</td>
<td>Tallinn University</td>
<td>Head of Department Of Social Stratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Kalev Katus</td>
<td>Tallinn University</td>
<td>Head of Institute of Demography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Maris Lauri</td>
<td>Hansabank</td>
<td>Hansabank Markets, Macroanalyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Raul Eamets</td>
<td>University of Tartu</td>
<td>Professor of Macroeconomics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Villu Zirnask</td>
<td><em>Eesti Päevaleht</em> - daily newspaper in Estonia</td>
<td>Editor of Ärileht - business news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ain Köster</td>
<td>Baltic News Service</td>
<td>Chief Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Harry Tuul</td>
<td><em>Äripäev</em> - daily business newspaper in Estonia</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ain Toots</td>
<td><em>Eesti Raadio</em> - Radio Estonia</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ingvar Bärenklau</td>
<td><em>Postimees</em> - daily newspaper in Estonia</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
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