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

Country visited: Estonia

Date: 6. – 8. November 2006

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1.	Executive Summary	3
2.	Introduction	4
3.	Findings per Principle	5
	Principle 1: Professional Independence.....	5
	Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection.....	7
	Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources.....	8
	Principle 4: Quality commitment	9
	Principle 5: Statistical confidentiality.....	10
	Principle 6: Impartiality and objectivity.....	11
	Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity.....	13
4.	Co-ordination role of the National Statistical Institute	14
5.	Good practices to be highlighted	15
6.	Recommendations of the peer review team	15
7.	List of improvement actions by principle of the Code	16
8.	Annex A: Programme of the visit	19
9.	Annex B: List of participants	20

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

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 wilful 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

Improvement actions

	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	ongoing
★Development of a multi-annual work programme 2008 to 2011	2007
★Development and implementation of a policy to intervene publicly on statistical issues in the case of misuse or misinterpretation of official statistics	2006/2007

Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection

Improvement actions

	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	2006/2007
★Improving the use of administrative data, with particular emphasis on deriving business statistics based on taxation data	2007 ongoing
★Drafting an amendment to the Population and Housing Census Act	2006/2007
★ Implementation of a fast-track fining system for imposing penalties in the case of non-response in obligatory business surveys	2008

Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources

Improvement actions

	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)	2008/2009

Principle 4: Quality commitment

Improvement actions

	Timetable
★Implementation of a quality management system by using the EFQM excellence model as a framework	2006 - 2010
★Implementation of an internal training programme on quality issues	2008
★Development of a system of recommendations, guidelines and handbooks; establishment of an action plan for compiling them	2008
★Development and implementation of process monitoring, assessment and improvement system	2008/2009
★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	2007 - 2009

Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality

Improvement actions

Timetable

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

Timetable

2007 ongoing

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

Timetable

2007 - 2012

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

Timetable

2006 - 2010

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

Timetable

2006 - 2008

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)

Timetable

2008 - 2009

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

Timetable

ongoing

Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability

Improvement actions

★Establishment of a system for communicating appropriate accuracy indicators to users

Timetable

2009

Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality

Improvement actions

Timetable

Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality
Improvement actions

Timetable

Principle 14: Coherence and Comparability
Improvement actions

Timetable

Principle 15: Accessibility and clarity
Improvement actions

Timetable

★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
09.30 – 10.00	Welcome and introduction of programme, organisational matters
10.00 – 11.30	Meeting with management and senior staff, Principles 1, 2, 3
11.30 – 12.15	Meeting with management and senior staff, Principle 5
12.15 – 12.30	Coffee break
12.30 – 14.00	Meeting with management and senior staff, Principles 6, 15
14.00 – 15.00	Lunch break
15.00 – 16.00	Interview with DG and Quality manager, Principle 4
16.00 - 16.15	Coffee break
16.15 – 17.15	Meeting with representative from Scientific Committee of Social Statistics
07.11.2006	Discussion with external stakeholders
09.00 – 10.30	Meeting with main users (Ministries, National Central Bank)
10.30 - 10.45	Coffee break
10.45 – 11.45	Meeting with other national data producers (representatives from Central Bank.)
11.45 – 12.45	Meeting with main users (representatives from banks)
12.45 – 13.45	Lunch
13.45 – 14.45	Meeting with main users (representatives from university and other research companies)
14.45 – 15.45	Meeting with media
15.45 - 16.00	Coffee break
16.00 – 17.00	Meeting with junior staff, principles 1-6, 15
08.11.2006	Conclusions
09.30 – 11.30	Meeting with management to sum-up and detailed review of list of improvement actions for all principles
11.30 - 11.45	Coffee break
11.45 – 13.15	Meeting with top management: conclusions, recommendations and follow-up (improvement actions)
13.15 – 14.15	Lunch
14.15 – 15.30	Meeting with management to review additional issues on request of NSI: analysing the agreement of new Data Protection Act of Estonia with European legislation

9. ANNEX B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Statistics Estonia:

Mr Priit Potisepp	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 Kuulpak	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 Külaviir	Social Statistics Department, Leading Statistician
Ms Aili Maanso	Head of the Agricultural Statistics Department
Ms Eve Valdvee	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

Ms Riina Rae	Ministry of Finance	Economic Analysis Department, Economic Policy Service, National Accounts Service, Analyst
Ms Eha Lannes	Ministry of Social Affairs	Social Policy Information and Analysis Department, Analyst
Mr Rein Vöörmann Mr Kalev Katus	Tallinn University Tallinn University	Head of Department Of Social Stratification Head of Institute of Demography
Ms Maris Lauri	Hansabank	Hansabank Markets, Macroanalyst
Mr Raul Eamets	University of Tartu	Professor of Macroeconomics
Mr Villu Zirnask	<i>Eesti Päevaleht</i> - daily newspaper in Estonia Editor of <i>Ärileht</i> - business news	
Mr Ain Köster	Baltic News Service	Chief Editor
Mr Harry Tuul	<i>Äripäev</i> - daily business newspaper in Estonia	Journalist
Mr Ain Toots	<i>Eesti Raadio</i> - Radio Estonia	Reporter
Mr Ingvar Bärenklau	<i>Postimees</i> - daily newspaper in Estonia	Reporter