

## Survey of using output indicators in ministries

Statistics Estonia, in cooperation with ministries, organised a survey to determine the bottlenecks in the methodology of statistical actions significant for the ministries, by field of activity, in order to determine the needs of the users. The survey took place in February and March of 2015. The survey covered statistical actions based on state orders and international agreements which are not regulated by EU legislation.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the following:

- Output indicators used (essential part of statistical action);
- Which ministries use these output indicators (dissemination of statistical action);
- Presence of statistical actions performed or output indicators produced by Statistics Estonia that are not used by the ministries and that could be left out to allow performing other actions.

National statistical actions were included in the survey in order to allow instant discontinuation of the production of an output indicator if it appears that nobody uses it. This is not a possibility in the case of actions performed under EU regulations.

In addition to examining whether and how output indicators are used by the ministries, the survey also included a comparative study of the user statistics of the Statistics Estonia database. For that purpose, the number of all downloads of database tables related to the relevant statistical action was summed and the average of three years (2012–2014) was calculated. Statistics on database use is necessary for showing the links between the use of the database by the ministries and the public because the information published by Statistics Estonia is used by other persons besides the ministries.

A total of 49 state ordered statistical actions and 24 statistical actions performed under international agreements were examined; they accounted for 30% of the statistical works performed in 2015, the indicators of these actions accounted for 40% of output indicators and the budgets formed 9% of the statistical actions budget for 2015.

Options describing the use of output indicators were the following:

- Used as an indicator in strategic framework documents (i.e. all development plans, implementation plans, structural funds plans, State Budget Act, support programmes, etc.);
- Used when providing a situation overview when preparing strategic framework documents (i.e. all development plans, implementation plans, structural fund plans, State Budget Act, etc.), developing legislation, analysing impact, preparing reports to the government, etc.;
- Used for other purposes (e.g. operative management, preparing *ad hoc*-decisions, replying to requests by international organisations, media queries and requests for information, etc.).

In the case of statistical actions deriving from international agreements, the output indicators of 10 statistical actions were used in strategic documents, the output indicators of 22 statistical actions were used when providing a situation overview and the output indicators of 24 statistical actions were used for other purposes. In strategic documents, 44% of output indicators of statistical actions deriving from international agreements are used as indicators and 85% of output indicators of statistical actions are used when providing a situation overview and for other purposes. Statistical actions, where at least 50% of output indicators show significant<sup>a</sup> use and are used<sup>b</sup> by more than five ministries, were “Research and development” (21701) and “Housing” (20801). In the Statistics Estonia database, these actions had 2,929 and 1,691 downloads a year, respectively. The most

<sup>a</sup> Use is deemed significant if output indicator is used by at least three ministries.

<sup>b</sup> Use of statistical action includes the cases where the ministry indicates the use of at least one indicator in the statistical action, regardless of the purpose of use.

used statistical actions, used by up to five ministries, were statistical actions related to vital events (“Vital events. Marriages” (30201), “Vital events. Divorces” (30202), “Vital events. Abortions” (30203)), with respectively 5,402, 2,172 and 1,496 downloads from the statistical database, on average.

Statistical actions with significant use of less than 50% of indicators and used by more than five ministries, were “Innovation in enterprises” (21702) and “Communications” (20507). In a year, these actions had 739 and 396 downloads from the Statistics Estonia database. The most popular statistical actions, used by up to five ministries, were “Forestry” (21001) and “Water transport” (22031) with 3,694 and 2,900 downloads from the statistical database, on average.

The users of the greatest number of output indicators of all statistical actions derived from international agreements<sup>a</sup> were the Ministry of Rural Affairs with 432, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications with 347 and the Ministry of the Environment with 237 indicators.

Out of output indicators of statistical actions arising from domestic needs, the output indicators of 28 statistical actions were used as indicators in strategy documents, the output indicators of 47 statistical actions were used for giving an overview of the situation and the output indicators of 48 statistical actions were used for other purposes.

16% of output indicators of statistical actions derived from domestic need are used as indicators in strategic documents, 74% are used for providing a situation overview and 97% of output indicators are used for other purposes. Statistical actions, where at least 50% of output indicators show significant use and are used by six or more ministries, were “Estonian regional development” (50101) and “Working Life Survey” (40901). These actions had 19,100 and 2,295 annual downloads from the Statistics Estonia database. The most used statistical actions which were used by up to five ministries were “Public library” (40410) and “Printed matter” (40415) with on average 2,045 and 1,189 annual downloads from the statistical database.

Statistical actions with significant use of less than 50% of indicators and which are used by six or more ministries were “Annual economic indicators of industrial enterprises” (20326) and “Annual economic indicators of construction enterprises” (20320). These actions were downloaded from the Statistics Estonia database 4,109 and 4,570 times a year, respectively. As for statistical actions used by up to five ministries, the most used statistical actions were “Annual economic indicators of trade enterprises” (20321) and “Annual economic indicators of real estate” (20322). These actions had 3,022 and 517 downloads from the statistical database in a year.

The users of the greatest number of output indicators of statistical actions derived from domestic need were the Ministry of Rural Affairs with 1,457, the Ministry of Culture with 617, the Ministry of Social Affairs with 404 and the Ministry of the Interior with 399 indicators.

No information was received concerning methodological problems. The survey revealed that Statistics Estonia does not produce any indicators that are not used by the ministries. Thus, it is difficult to find indicators that could be left out in order to free up resources.

<sup>c</sup> If the indicator was used simultaneously for multiple purposes, it was necessary to indicate all used options.