

# Improvement Actions Statistics Estonia

## I. Strengthening the system of official statistics including perceptions of its independence

<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>1. The Government should increase budgetary funding for Statistics Estonia in the light of new activities and to avoid the institution having to cut back on its work programme and on output quality – even though some relief could also come from internal efficiencies and additional resources outside the main budget. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)</b></p> <p><b>2. Contingent on available funding, Statistics Estonia should adjust salary levels for staff categories that are difficult to attract and retain. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1 and 7.5)</b></p>
<b>Current situation:</b>	<p>Salary levels at Statistics Estonia are generally low, and for some categories of staff, notably those with high-level skills in analysis and data science, recruitment and retention pose serious challenges. Among the factors that have put and are putting pressure on the funding of Statistics Estonia are new activities related to its role in data governance, additional statistical demands arising from EU legislation, and internal modernisation efforts in areas such as communication, data collection and data processing.</p>
<b>Improvement Actions:</b>	<p>1.1. Viime SA eelarve vastavusse kuludega, mida on vaja, et saaks efektiivselt toota riikliku statistikat ja täita lisanduvaid ülesandeid. Selleks</p> <p>1.1.1. SA teeb ameti jätkusuutliku rahastusmudeli ettepaneku statistikanõukogule ja RM-ile</p> <p>1.1.2. SA viib sisse muudatused kulumudeli läbipaistvamaks muutmiseks</p> <p>1.1.3. SA lepib avalike huvide esindajatega kokku toimetamudeli riikliku statistika tegemiseks ja rahastamiseks</p> <p>1.1.4. SA esitab statistikanõukogu poolt läbi arutatud ja toetava arvamusega läbipaistva ja optimaalse lisataotluse asutuse jätkusuutlikuks toimimiseks</p> <p>1.2. SA lisataotluse esitamisel on arvestatud vajadusega viia ameti palgatase vastavusse avaliku sektori keskmisega ning võtmeametikohtadel konkurentsivõimeliseks.</p>
<b>Timeline:</b>	<p>1.1. 2023</p> <p>1.1.1. 2022 III kv</p> <p>1.1.2. 2022 II kv</p> <p>1.1.3.2023 III kv</p> <p>1.1.4. 2023 IV kv</p> <p>1.2. 2027</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>3. The Government should consider ways to enhance the reputation of the Statistical Council in terms of its independence e.g. by reconsidering its membership and responsibilities for its servicing. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Principle 1)</b></p> <p><b>4. The Government should consider ways of setting up the programme for official statistics that involve less direct influence from the political level e.g. by devolving responsibility to the Statistics Council. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Principle 1)</b></p>
<b>Current situation:</b>	<p>As foreseen in the Statistics Act, the Statistical Council contributes to fulfilling the purpose of official statistics by giving advice and delivering opinions to the producers of statistics (Statistics Estonia and Eesti Pank) and to the Ministry of Finance. The Statistical Council is set up by order of the Government of the Republic for a mandate of four years following the proposal of the minister responsible for the area.</p> <p>Vastavalt Riikliku statistika seaduse § 16 ja § 17 koostab Statistikaamet statistikatööde programmi ja esitab selle Rahandusministeeriumile iga aasta 01.juuliks. Rahandusministeerium esitab programmi kinnitamiseks Vabariigi Valitsusele ning programm kinnitatakse VV korraldusega.</p>
<b>Improvement Actions:</b>	<p>3/4.1. Teeme analüüsi statistikanõukogu rolli ja ülesannete vastavuse hindamiseks EL statistikasüsteemi tegevusjuhisele ning vajadusel esitame ettepanekud RStS muutmiseks</p> <p>3/4.1.1. SA tellib õigusliku analüüsi riikliku statistika programmi kehtestamise mõjudest ning Statistikanõukogu ülesannete muutmise võimalikkusest</p> <p>3/4.1.2. SA teeb ettepaneku Rahandusministeeriumile RStS muutmiseks</p>
<b>Timeline:</b>	<p>3/4.1.1. 31.12.2023</p> <p>3/4.1.2. 2024 IV kvartal</p>

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>5. The Government, jointly with Statistics Estonia, should reflect on the administrative anchoring of Statistics Estonia in the light of potential effects on perceptions of professional independence and consider its role in whole-of-government data governance. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Principle 1)</b>
Current situation:	Statistics Estonia is a governmental authority, operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance, which produces official statistics, coordinates data governance, leads the system of classifications, provides data sharing services and exercises state and administrative supervision
Improvement Actions:	<p>5.1. Teeme analüüsi statistikaameti sõltumatuse hindamiseks vastavalt EL statistikasüsteemi tegevusjuhisele ning hindamaks, kas ameti uute ülesannete täitmine on Eesti seadusandluses piisavalt reguleeritud ning institutsionaalselt optimaalselt korraldatud. Analüüsi tulemustest lähtudes esitatakse vajadusel ettepanekud RStS muutmiseks.</p> <p>5.1.1. SA tellib õigusliku analüüsi riikliku statistika programmi kehtestamise mõjudest ning Statistikanõukogu ülesannete muutmise võimalikkusest</p> <p>5.1.2. SA teeb ettepaneku Rahandusministeeriumile RStS muutmiseks</p>
Timeline:	<p>5.1.1. 2023</p> <p>5.1.2. 2024 IV kvartal</p>

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>6. The Government should take action to ensure that statistics from the NIHD are included as part of official statistics, to ensure conformity with the ES CoP and to avoid duplication of work. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.1 and 1bis.2 but also a vast number of other indicators on which little is known for statistics produced by the NIHD)</b>
Current situation:	There is a need to correct the situation of statistics produced by the National Institute of Health Development (NIHD). Some of these are submitted as European statistics without belonging to the body of official statistics and hence without the requisite quality assurance.
Improvement Actions:	<p>6.1. Viime riikliku tervisestatistika tegemise vastavusse EL statistikasüsteemi tegevusjuhisega</p> <p>6.1.1. Teeme ettepanekud olukorra lahendamiseks lähtuvalt mõjude analüüsist.</p> <p>6.1.2. Elluviimine lähtuvalt Vabariigi Valitsuse langetatud otsustest.</p> <p>Variant 1: TAI nimetamine riikliku statistika tegijaks, vajab RStS muutmist</p> <p>Variant 2: Tervisestatistika liitmine SA organisatsiooni struktuuriüksuseks. SA põhimääruse muutmine, ei vaja RStS muutmist.</p>
Timeline:	<p>6.1.1. 2023 IV kv</p> <p>6.1.2. 2024 IV kvartal</p>

## II. Making the most of the evolving data landscape

<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>7. Statistics Estonia should continue to prepare the ground for increased use of administrative data sources in statistics production, including by pushing forward with the initiative on data governance. In this regard, Statistics Estonia should build on its work together with administrative data owners to increase the transparency on the quality of administrative data to develop a vision and a prioritisation for use of these data. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.2 and 10.3)</b></p> <p><b>8. Statistics Estonia, together with relevant institutions, should jointly build on increased transparency on the quality of administrative datasets and put in place mechanisms, such as peer reviews, that could add further impetus to efforts to boost data quality, e.g. in terms of convergent standards and classifications. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.7 and 10.3)</b></p> <p><b>9. To help strengthen the quality of administrative datasets, the Government could clarify the definition of different actors' responsibilities in data governance. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.7 and 10.3)</b></p>
Current situation:	<p>The Official Statistics Act also identifies Statistics Estonia as the body in charge of coordinating the Data Governance System and leading the system of classifications. The Official Statistics Act gives Statistics Estonia the right to access administrative datasets from other parts of the public administration for use in statistical production. The Act also specifies that administrative data should have primacy as a source of data for statistics production, provided that statistical quality criteria can be fulfilled in this manner. Cooperation with owners of registers and other statistics producers is governed by a substantial set of formalised and well-structured Memorandum of Understanding.</p> <p>Against this background, use of administrative data for statistics has increased substantially but it remains a minority share of statistics (some 30%), that are based exclusively on administrative data. There are many reasons for that, including that the information contained in administrative records may not conceptually match the statistical needs. However, a reason has also been insufficient quality of administrative datasets or just absence of information on quality and metadata describing the contents of administrative datasets.</p>

Improvement Actions:	<p>7.1 Digiriigi reformi "Andmehalduse ja avaandmete oivakeskuse loomine ja väljaarendamine" ellu viimine</p> <p>7.1.1. Andmehalduse tiimi (oivakeskuse) loomine</p> <p>7.1.2. Andmete taaskasutamise parendamiseks on projektid ellu viidud</p> <p>7.1.3. Avaandmete avalikustamine riiklikus avaandmete portaalis</p> <p>7.2 Riiklikus statistika arendustöodes lähtuda "once only" põhimõttest, rakendada andmeteadust riikliku statistika tegemisel ning seeläbi vähendada andmekogumise mahtu.</p>
	<p>7.1 2025 IV kv</p> <p>7.2 2027 IV kv</p>

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>10. The Government should ensure that sectoral laws do not impinge on the access rights of official statistics producers to privately held data in particular sectors, such as mobile network operators and credit institutions. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.4 and 9.4)</b>
Current situation:	The Official Statistics Act provides Statistics Estonia with access to 'data generated or collected in the course of the activities[...] of legal persons in public law and private law'. Given the practical difficulties of accessing what are often weakly structured datasets and the gains from a cooperative process, Statistics Estonia has applied this mandate in the context of negotiated agreements. Going forward, privately owned data may become increasingly important for statistics producers for a number of reasons. They often shed light on new activities not covered by other existing data collections, and they often allow the production of high-frequency indicators. To that should be added that traditional survey data collection is increasingly challenged. Hence, having access to privately held data is set to become ever more important. Against that background, it is a concern that although the Official Statistics Act and the Electronic Communication Acts are specific laws, some specific laws do not contain the right of data access for producers of official statistics.
Improvement Actions:	10.1. Statistikaamet teeb ettepaneku Rahandusministeeriumile väljatöötamiskavatsuse tegemiseks.
Timeline:	10.1. dependent on timeline of Data Act in EC

<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>11. Statistics Estonia should pursue its efforts on experimental statistics, with a focus on their exploitation in regular statistics production. In due course, experiments with new data sources should be embedded in a more strategic approach. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 11.1)</b></p> <p><b>19. Statistics Estonia should take initiatives to spread knowledge in-house of outcomes of research projects and experimental statistics. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 7.6)</b></p>
Current situation:	Statistics Estonia has been very active in developing and presenting experimental statistics with the aim to seek and test new ways of producing statistics and, in particular, to provide users with interesting novel or fast information beyond the traditional and regular statistical production. New data sources have been acquired, new methods have been applied, data have been linked and combined, and modern visualisation solutions have been used for presentation. This kind of work requires necessary competencies and conditions, and therefore a special unit was created for this purpose, presently consisting of seven experts (four scientists and three analysts).
Improvement Actions:	11/19.1. Jätkame eksperimentaalstatistika tegevustega fookusega kasutada neid teadmisi ka riikliku statistika tegemisel
	Planeerime ameti iga-aastast tegevuskava koostades oluliste projektide meeskondadesse eksperimentaalstatistika eksperte ning eelistame projekte, mis panustavad ka põhitootmisprotsessi, seda nii statistikaprogrammi täitmiseks kui ka statistikategemise arendamiseks.
Timeline:	Pidevalt

### III. Further strengthening cooperation with stakeholders

<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>12. Statistics Estonia needs to build on the generally good, albeit unequal and often person dependent, relations with academia to both achieve a higher degree of relations with institutions and a strengthening in areas where such relations are currently relatively weak. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 7.7)</b></p> <p><b>15. Statistics Estonia could usefully consult stakeholders more widely in the preparation of its official five-year work programme, allowing more input, e.g. from the general public and academia. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 11.1)</b></p> <p><b>16. Statistics Estonia should make use of its increased interactions with ministries to obtain an early sense of upcoming policy needs for statistics to help anticipate future demands on the official statistics programme. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 11.1)</b></p>
Current situation:	Overall, Statistics Estonia enjoys good relations with academia but possibly reflecting the small size of the country, these relations have been built and maintained over time through personal contacts. This entails a certain fragility in the relationships and may also partly explain why the intensity of cooperation diverges somewhat across different topics.

Improvement Actions:	12/15.1. Teeme analüüsi statistikanõukogu rolli ja ülesannete vastavuse hindamiseks EL statistikasüsteemi tegevusjuhisele (sh otsime parimat institutsionaliseeritud lahendust süsteemse koostöö korraldamiseks teadlaskonnaga) ning vajadusel esitame ettepanekud RStS muutmiseks (vt parendusülesannet 3-4.1.)  12/15/16.2. Jätkame regulaarse riikliku statistika tööühma eestvedamist (sinna on kaasatud ministriumite esindajad, teadusnõunikud) ning loome huvirühmadele keskkonna andmealase teabe jagamiseks
Timeline:	12/15.1 vt parendusülesannet 3-4.1.  12/15/16.2. pidev

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>13. Statistics Estonia should take initiatives to increase the user-friendliness of researcher access to microdata. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 15.4)</b>
Current situation:	Microdata can be used for research purposes by researchers working on approved projects and from approved institutions, which may be legal persons or agencies (including analysis departments of ministries). Students pursuing a master's/PhD degree can also be considered researchers. Currently, the user base consists of more than 200 researchers and over 40 research institutions. The researchers are working on dedicated local workstations, located in the safe centre of Statistics Estonia (six workplaces), if data are more sensitive, or remotely (via VPN), an option for less sensitive data.  There is demand from researchers for more efficient and user-friendly access to microdata and reducing the time needed before granting access to data. There is also a need to strengthen IT infrastructure, including server capacity.
Improvement Actions:	13.1. Parendame teadlaste keskkonda esmalt ligipääsude ja töökorralduse optimeerimise kaudu ning seejärel sobiva IKT lahenduse arendamise ja juurutamise kaudu.
Timeline:	13.1. 2025

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>14. Statistics Estonia should build on the success of the Eight Statistical Services programme to expand the delivery of statistical services against payment. The purpose would be, not least, to address demand from government ministries. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 11.1)</b>
Current situation:	The Official Statistics Act stipulates that Statistics Estonia can undertake statistical work under commission outside the scope of the official statistics programme, provided that such activities do not interfere with the programme and are undertaken under the same principles and quality criteria. On this basis, eight statistical services have been identified in 2020 for potential contract work, including obtaining more detailed data and information in different statistical domains than is available in news releases, in the statistical databases or in different other applications, as well as obtaining data that require additional processing or analysis of data.
Improvement Actions:	14.1. SA töötab välja tellitavate teenuste hinnakirja ning avaldab selle klientidele hiljemalt kaks kuud enne järgmise aasta algust  14.2. SA lepib avalike huvide esindajatega toimumudelil kokku sh ka komponendi adhoc vajaduste katteks
Timeline:	14.1. 2022  14.2. 2023 III kv

#### IV. Strengthening internal processes and information flows

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>17. Statistics Estonia should ensure that in-depth quality assessments cover all statistics at regular intervals, hence giving a view external to the production process on individual statistics, and possibly including input by experts from outside the institution e.g. academia and other National Statistical Institutes. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicator 4.4)</b>
Current situation:	To improve the quality of products and to strengthen internal processes and information flows, Statistics Estonia has in 2020 developed a system of quality assessments of statistical activities and products based on two main pillars: light assessments and in-depth assessments. Both assessments are carried out by statisticians responsible for statistical activity or output.
Improvement Actions:	17.1. SA viib läbi hindamise auditid ning selgitab välja parenduskohad protsessis ja hindamise läbiviimistel.  17.1.1. SA rakendab hindamise põhimõtted ja rakendab hindamisi regulaarselt.  17.2. SA kaasab väljundi hindamisse ja meetodika arendamisse nii kodu- kui ka välismaised teadlased ja eksperdid.
Timeline:	17.1. Due date 31.12.2022  17.2. 2024

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>18. Statistics Estonia needs to continue efforts to standardise and automate data processing and to update software and questionnaires used in data collection. (Improvement related: ES CoP, Indicators 9.3, 10.2 and 10.4)</b>
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Current situation:	<p>Statistics Estonia relies significantly on administrative data sources and efforts are made to continue in this direction. Nonetheless, statistical surveys remain an important activity of Statistics Estonia. While approximately 30% of statistical activities are based exclusively on administrative data sources, most other activities use a combination of administrative and survey data. Most questionnaires are intended for businesses, substantially less for households. The main complaint in the continuous respondent satisfaction survey relates to the tool used and has confirmed the need to redesign the data collection service which is taking place during 2020-2024. Internal modernisation of processes has been focused on standardisation and automation, respectively data processing and calculations of output.</p> <p>Further progress on data processing would consist mainly in automating these processes and requires demanding and skill-intensive preparatory work in the form of methodological developments, such as defining precise rules for selective editing, including automating certain logical checks, validation, imputation, aggregation, quality measurement etc. As regards the calculation of output, standardisation and automation at present covers approximately 35% of output variables.</p>
Improvement Actions:	<p>18.1. SA viib läbi analüüsi selgitamaks välja vajalikud ressursid käsitsi parandamiste vähendamiseks ning uue töötlusrakenduse vajaduse väljaselgitamiseks.</p> <p>18.2. SA rakendab andmeteadust riikliku statistika tegemisel ning seeläbi vähendab andmekogumise mahtu.</p> <p>18.3. SA jätkab andmekogumise teenuse uuendamist, et tagada suurem kasutajamugavus vastajatele. (Statistics Estonia continues modernizing data collection service with a goal to increase the users' satisfaction with the service.)</p>
Timeline:	<p>18.1. 2024</p> <p>18.2. pidevalt</p> <p>18.3. 31.12.2024</p>