

## Assessment Guidance Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to provide the NSS of the Republic of Armenia with the framework of questions that will be addressed throughout the assessment process and to enable the NSS to prepare the relevant information. The questionnaire should help meeting participants to prepare the documents for the meetings.

Detailed answers are not expected prior to the mission. However, we would very much appreciate it if short answers (where possible) could be provided by Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>.

### 1. LEGAL SETTING

#### 1.1. Law on state statistics

1. Is the mandate to collect information for the production and dissemination of official statistics specified in law?
2. Is the NSS allowed to use administrative sources for statistical purposes by legislation or by other forms of agreement?
3. Are the ministries and institutions allowed to provide data on the basis of their specific legislation?
4. Is the obligation to reply to a survey present in the statistical legislation of your country? If yes for some surveys, which types of reporting units (entities) are included?
5. In case households or enterprises reject the obligation to reply to a survey, is there a system of sanctions in place? If yes, how often do you practice it?
6. What actions you would take to strengthen the NSS mandate for data collection?
7. Does your Statistical Law require user consultation?

#### 1.2. Census-related legislation

8. Please explain Republic of Armenia Law on Population Census.
9. Are there specific legal acts relating to Census 2011?

#### 1.3. Other legislation affecting statistics

10. What other legislation affects the official statistics in Armenia?
11. Is the NSS responsible – through other legislation – for carrying out any non-statistical activities? If yes, please describe these activities and indicate their legal basis.
12. In your opinion, do these non-statistical activities lead to any complications with the core task of official statistics?

#### 1.4. Protection of independence

13. Is the independence of the NSS from political and other external interference in producing and disseminating official statistics laid down in law?

14. Is the hierarchical level of the President of the NSS comparable to minister (or senior political position), top-level non-political public servant, or other authority (please explain)?
15. Is the appointment of the President of the NSS renewable?
16. Is the content and/or timing of statistical press releases subject to Ministerial approval?
17. Is the choice of statistical methods, standards and procedures subject to Ministerial approval?
18. Does the NSS produce and publish an Annual Report on its activities? How is it published and distributed?
19. What procedures are used to ensure objectivity in the content of statistical releases, statements made in press conferences and similar related events?
20. Are statistical releases issued separately from political/policy statements?
21. Have there been any political statements included in statistical releases during the last few years?
22. Does the NSS have a specific policy to intervene publicly on statistical issues, in case of criticism, misuse, or misinterpretation of official statistics? If yes, please explain the policy. Can the NSS publicly intervene without prior clearance by another authority?
23. What actions you would like to take to further promote the NSS professional independence?
24. What actions on national level could lead to promotion of the NSS professional independence?

#### **1.5. Data security and statistical confidentiality**

25. Is statistical confidentiality guaranteed by national legislation?
26. Does the NSS staff sign legal confidentiality commitments when appointed?
27. Are penalties prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality for the NSS employees? For other persons?
28. Do instructions and guidelines exist for the protection of statistical confidentiality for production and for dissemination processes? Are they made known to the public?
29. Do you have procedures in place to guarantee the security and integrity of your confidential data? If yes, please specify the procedures (Legal provisions, special security protection entity within NSS, technical provisions, etc.).
30. Are there limitations to the organisations/institutions to which you can grant access to statistical microdata?
31. Can the NSS be obligated to grant access to statistical microdata to other authorities (for example, law enforcement) by legislation or political/administrative practices?
32. Have there been examples in the past two years of the NSS granting access to confidential data for non-statistical (administrative) purposes? If yes, please describe the authority that was granted the access and the legal/administrative basis permitting this access?

**33.** Does the NSS grant access to statistical microdata for research purposes? If yes, on the basis of legal provisions, protocols, etc.? What are the procedures to release statistical microdata to external users for research purposes?

**34.** What actions you would like to take to further promote statistical confidentiality in the work of NSS?

**35.** What actions on national level could lead to improvements in the area of statistical confidentiality?

**36.** Do all users get access to statistical releases at the same time? If not, is information about this pre-release access publicly available; also please explain the reasons, specify the user group(s) and situations.

**37.** Do you have procedures in place to prevent leaks (occurrences of information divulged prior to its official release)?

**38.** Have there been any occurrences of information divulged prior to its official release (leaks) during the last two years?

## **2. NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

### **2.1. Structure of the system**

**39.** Please list the providers of official statistics and their areas of responsibility. Are these areas of responsibility reflected in legislation?

**40.** Are producers other than the NSS required to have a special organisational unit for their statistical activities? If yes, is it a legal requirement?

### **2.2. National statistical programming**

**41.** Who is in charge of preparing multi-annual programme? Approving the multi-annual programme? Preparing the annual programme? Approving the annual programme?

**42.** Considering annual and multi-annual programmes, are the statistical activities of all producers considered?

**43.** Are statistical activities based on administrative sources included in the annual and multi-annual programmes?

**44.** Is the data collection for non-statistical purposes included in the annual and multi-annual programmes?

**45.** Are activities financed from other sources than the regular budgets (for example, international donors) included in the annual and multi-annual programmes?

**46.** Are activities not directly related to the collection or processing data (for example, training or information and communication technology infrastructure) included in the annual and multi-annual programmes?

**47.** What is the link between the activities listed in the statistical programmes and the resources?

### **2.3. System coordination mechanisms**

**48.** Do you have formal provisions in place to allow for data sharing among statistical authorities?

**49.** How do you share data amongst statistical authorities and on which level (national versus regional)?

**50.** Who is responsible by law for ensuring coordination between the producers?

**51.** What instruments are foreseen by law to facilitate coordination?

**52.** What kind of national co-ordination mechanism do you have in place to avoid duplication of surveys at national level?

NSS is the only provider of official statistics at national level .....

Strong co-ordination function of the NSS .....

Other (please explain briefly) .....

**53.** Is the NSS consulted before a new questionnaire for administrative purposes is implemented?

**54.** Does the NSS consult other administrations before introducing new statistical classifications?

**55.** What percentage of official statistics in Armenia is produced by the NSS?

## **3. NATIONAL STATISTICAL SERVICE**

### **3.1. Institutional mission**

### **3.2. Organization of the National Statistical Service**

### **3.3. Resource management**

**56.** Please provide the data for the last three years:

a) Total number of full time staff (excluding interviewers), by gender and education levels

b) Total number of full time IT staff

c) Total annual budget including administrative expenses (in AMD)

d) IT expenditures (in AMD)

e) Total annual budget (including administrative expenses) per 100,000 population (in AMD) and in percent of GDP

**57.** In real terms (for example, adjusted for special occurrences or tasks of a specific year and for inflation), is your latest budget (2006, 2007, and/or 2008) compared to the previous years higher/lower/about the same?

**58.** To what extent are your resources adequate to meet current national statistics needs? Please indicate on a scale from 1 = completely adequate to 5 = completely inadequate.

Magnitude of staff resources .....

Quality of staff resources.....

Magnitude of financial resources.....

Magnitude of computing resources .....

Quality of computing resources.....

**59.** Please, evaluate to what extent you consider your resources adequate in order to carry out the current Statistical Programme? Please indicate on a scale from 1 = completely adequate to 5 = completely inadequate.

Magnitude of staff resources .....

Quality of staff resources.....

Magnitude of financial resources.....

Magnitude of computing resources .....

Quality of computing resources.....

**60.** How would you assess the scope of Armenian statistics as compared to user needs (too low/adequate/excessive)?

**61.** How would you assess the detail of Armenian statistics as compared to user needs (too low/adequate/excessive)?

**62.** How would you assess the costs (production costs and respondents' burden) of Armenian statistics as compared to users' needs (too low/adequate/excessive)?

**63.** How would you evaluate the procedures in place to assess the continuing need for all existing Armenian statistics to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources?

**64.** What actions would like to take to improve the adequacy of NSS resources?

**65.** Do you have an internal team or process responsible for monitoring the way you allocate human and financial resources?

**66.** Do you have an external body responsible for monitoring or assessing the way you allocate human and financial resources?

**67.** To what extent do you use automated data capture/coding/validation techniques?

**68.** Does the NSS review the use of technology across the statistical value chain (collection, processing, analysis, dissemination)?

**69.** In your view, what are the obstacles for the NSS that prevent greater use of technology to improve statistical processing?

**70.** Are you able to influence the statistical potential of administrative data (i.e. the form or content of the data collected for administrative purposes, or the classifications used)?

**71.** What actions would you like to take to improve the NSS cost-effectiveness?

72. Do you have free access to the labour market to recruit graduates from specific academic disciplines as needed? If no, please explain.

73. Do you have a training programme to improve the expertise of the staff? If yes, please explain.

### **3.4. Internal and external monitoring of quality and performance**

74. Does your organisation conduct periodic reviews of individual staff performance? If yes, please elaborate.

75. Approximately for what share of your surveys are field operations, data entry, and coding routinely supervised and revised when required?

76. For what percentage of your statistical outputs do you regularly monitor quality? Where do you disseminate the results of this monitoring? Are the results made available to top management for action?

77. What are the procedures or methods to monitor the quality of the stages in the statistical production process (survey planning, survey design, data collection, data capture and processing, data analysis and dissemination)?

78. Do you have formal processes in place to deal with quality considerations, including tradeoffs within quality (for example between timeliness and accuracy)?

79. For what share of your statistics do you systematically collect information on punctuality? On timeliness?

80. Do you have a formal policy in place to guide the planning of the new surveys?

81. Do you have internal handbooks / guidelines / recommendations for the statistical production process? If yes, are they available as well to external users?

82. Do you have specific training to address quality issues at the NSS?

### **3.5. Dissemination policy of the NSS**

83. Do you charge for providing your data?

84. Do you publish in advance a release calendar comprising your main statistical outputs? If yes, is there a procedure in place on how to revise this release calendar?

85. Do you have a daily time for the release of official statistics?

86. Do you publish in advance divergences from the pre-announced release calendar? If yes, do you include an explanation and publicly announce a new release time?

87. Do you disseminate preliminary results of acceptable aggregate quality when they are considered useful? If yes, do you mark them as such?

88. Do you actively provide statistical releases to all sectors of media and any media, requesting it?

89. Are statistical tables usually accompanied by an explanation (explanation on how the statistics should be used, pointers to related statistical information, etc.)?

90. To what extent do you publish on your website information on the methods and procedures used?

91. To what extent is information on methods and procedures regularly updated?

92. Do you invite user comments on the content and presentation of your statistical outputs? If yes, do you have active procedures in place to follow-up these user comments?

93. Do you offer training for your staff in writing press releases? Dealing with the media?

94. Approximately what percentage of your statistical outputs is available via the internet?

95. Do you provide adapted, custom-designed analyses of your statistical output upon request? If yes, do the results of the analysis become generally available?

96. Do you have a standard metadata format for your statistical output? If yes, do you follow an international metadata standard? Which one?

97. Do you apply measures to improve metadata quality?

### **3.6. Relations with main stakeholders**

98. Do you have procedures in place to identify and profile your users across domains?

99. Do you have formal procedures to consult users about their statistical needs?

100. Do you have procedures in place to prioritise between different users' needs in your work programme?

101. Do you have official/unofficial agreements with your key users?

102. Do you carry out customer/user satisfaction surveys or studies with an office-wide scope on a regular basis? If yes, please state frequency.

103. Do you hold meetings with the scientific community?

104. Do you work with the scientific community to improve methodology? If yes, please provide a few examples.

### **3.7. International cooperation**

105. Do you actively encourage your staff to participate in international conferences, seminars, workshops? How is this participation financed?

106. Currently, do you benefit from international support? If yes, please specify donors, project titles, goals, and financing amounts.

## **4. STATISTICAL DOMAINS**

The main purpose of assessing the statistical domains is to evaluate the level of conformity with the European and international standards and requirements.

### **General question for statistical domains**

107. To what extent are European and international standards and requirements reflected in your work in various statistical domains?

## **Registers**

- 108.** Do you have a farm register, a business register or an address register at your disposal?
- 109.** What is the registration procedure for these registers? What is the responsible registration authority?
- 110.** How does the NSS get the information about registration?
- 111.** What is the register updating procedure?
- 112.** What kind of units (legal, physical, local, local kind-of-activity) are included in the business register? How many units are there?
- 113.** Is there a unique identification number used for all institutions in the business register? If yes, who gives the identification number to the unit?
- 114.** What NSS divisions use the business register?
- 115.** Is the business register cross-checked with other registers?
- 116.** What is the coverage of the business register, especially for the small and medium enterprises?
- 117.** Approximately how many sleeping units are in the business register?
- 118.** What could be done to improve the quality of the business register?

## **Household/business surveys**

- 119.** What type of sampling frames are used for household surveys and how often are they updated?
- 120.** Do you have procedures in place to evaluate the quality of the sampling frame used for household surveys?
- 121.** What type of sampling frames are used for business surveys and how often are they updated?
- 122.** Does your organisation have a definition of response burden for individual respondents, for institutional respondents (e.g. enterprises)?
- 123.** Is your organisation required (by legislation or internal targets) to measure, reduce, and/or set targets for the response burden on enterprises?
- 124.** For the enterprise surveys, do you try to adapt the questionnaire design to the accounting system of the relevant enterprises?
- 125.** To what extent has the NSS assessed if administrative sources can be used for the production of statistics?

## **Business statistics**

- 126.** How often are the enterprises surveyed? What kinds of indicators are asked about?
- 127.** Do you use integrated questionnaire for all sectors or are there differences? Please explain.



**128.** What classifications are used in the surveys? Are the classifications also used by other Ministries?

**129.** To what extent are sampling surveys used? What surveys are still the exhaustive ones? What is the response rate in the surveys?

**130.** How are the national accounts needs reflected when drafting the questionnaires?