

# **TWINNING CONTRACT**

**AM/14/ENP/ST/15**

## **Strengthening of the National Statistical System of Armenia – Phase II**



### **MISSION REPORT**

**on**

#### **Statistical Information Dissemination System**

##### **Activity 1.1: Assessment of the current status**

Mission carried out by

Ms. Annegrete Wulff, Statistics Denmark  
Mr. Carsten Zangenberg, Statistics Denmark

2-6 November 2015

Version: Final



National Statistical Service  
Republic of Armenia



Expert contact information

*Annegrete Wulff  
Statistics Denmark  
Sejrøgade 11  
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø  
Denmark  
Tel: +45 3917 3155  
Email: awu@dst.dk*

*Carsten Zangenberg  
Statistics Denmark  
Sejrøgade 11  
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø  
Denmark  
Tel: +45 3917 3941  
Email: cuz@dst.dk*

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## List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
NSSRA	National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia

## 1. General comments

This mission report was prepared within the Twinning Project “Strengthening of the National Statistical System of Armenia – Phase II”. This was the first activity in component 1 and the actions planned for this activity were carried out as scheduled.

The purposes of the mission were:

- Assessment of current situation and development since the last Twinning project
- Presentation of current dissemination strategy in NSSRA
- Discussion on issues to be included in a dissemination strategy and proposal for revisions
- Input to guide on how to communicate with external stakeholders and the public e.g. errors or misuse of data on statistical publications
- Input to issues for a revision policy
- Discussion on guide on tailor-made statistics
- To involve relevant stakeholders in the discussions

The consultants would like to express their sincere thanks to all officials and individuals met for the kind support and valuable information which they received during the stay in Armenia and which highly facilitated their work. The views and observations stated in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily correspond to the views of EU, NSSRA or Statistics Denmark.

## 2. Assessment and results

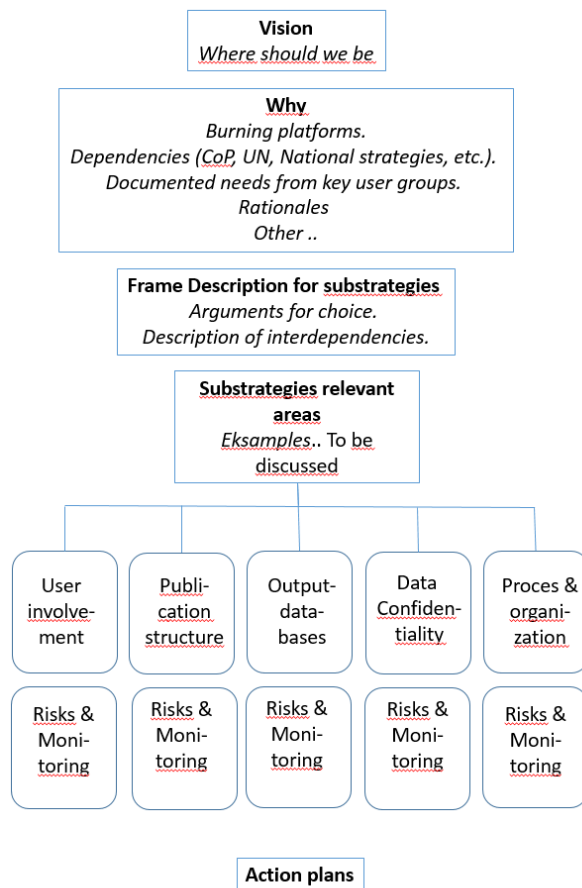
The ToR mentions the following activities:

- Current situation assessed
- Recommendation for improvement of draft dissemination strategy provided
- Recommendation for communication and revision policies
- A lining up of work programme for the next activity (1.2 is scheduled to 7-10 December 2015)

NSSRA had prepared a comprehensive material on the principles and policies regarding dissemination aspects. The Concept document states a sound ground for production and disseminating statistics, based on the international good practise: UN Fundamental Principles of Statistics for European statistics.

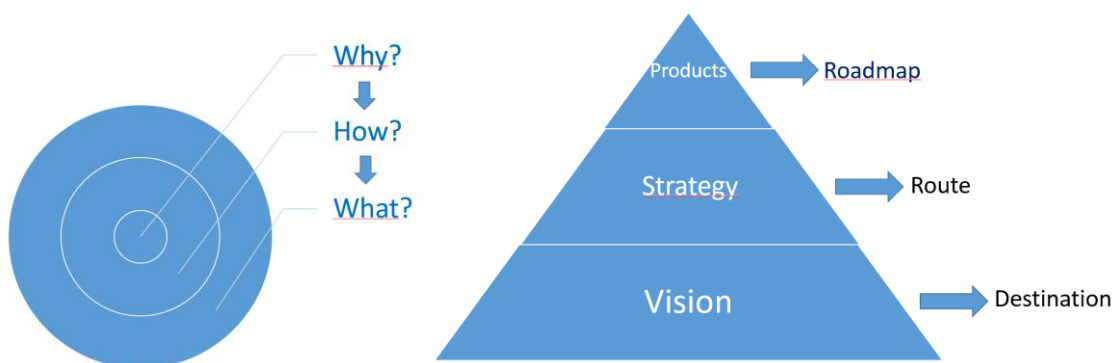
The NSSRA and the expert discussed the document and the experts recommended to focus on - and more explicitly un-fold - the principles containing elements of dissemination:

- Relevance
- Accuracy and reliability
- Timeliness and punctuality
- Coherence and comparability
- Accessibility and clarity



It was recommended to build a strategic frame on top of the concept document. The frame could include:

- which main goals the dissemination work should strive to improve („the why”)
- which means to be used in this improvement work („the how”)
- which activities and initiatives will be taken („the what”)



NSSRA has already a clear revision policy. This covers current revisions of time series and revisions are monthly, quarterly and annually. The principles for revisions should be available for external users in order to avoid criticism and misunderstanding when data are revised or changed.

Complex revisions which take place in 5-10 year intervals should be announced well in advance, and the expected consequences explained. Inviting the main users to information meetings can also be considered.

NSSRA corrects discovered errors in digital publications. In print publications corrected errors in subsequently published versions. It should be considered whether NSSRA can notify users about serious errors in a more active way - possibly on the website and through the press.

Two very successful workshops were conducted: One with staff from different divisions of NSSRA and one with external stakeholders where even the press, Armeninfo, was present in order to document the event. Meeting with 40 staff from 19 different divisions, the experts presented their experiences with strategy work and user involvement and a successful meeting with 47 representatives from stakeholders introducing the dissemination components. The Workshop with external stakeholders was also featured in the national media.

At the internal meeting NSSRA presented the coming work with a strategy and the experts presented their experiences on working with dissemination strategy and involvement with users (presentations can be found at the project website:

<http://www.dst.dk/en/consulting/projects/armenia2015/component1>).

A short user satisfaction survey was conducted among the external stakeholders. The scheme and the results of the survey is found in the annex.

### **3. Conclusions and recommendations**

NSSRA should formulate the draft strategy in a version suited for external use and available on the web site. There should be references to the concept document.

When the strategy is in place, the stakeholders should be invited once again, to be informed of expected activities and to match expectations.

The NSSRA receives a lot of more or less identical request from users and it takes many resources to answer these tailor made services. It is recommended to start register these requests systematically. Classifying them in groups as to which subject, which user group and which answer. This can be done in an application. A more low hanging fruit is to set up a frequently asked questions (FAQ) on the armstat web site. With a systematic and centralized registration, the NSSRA have the opportunity to document the extent of these activities. In addition, there may be a possible rationale in "reuse" of responses to simultaneous queries.

## 4. Road map and time plan

Actions needed for moving forward as well as for preparing future missions and study visit:

- Mission 1.2 (December 2015):
  - Develop draft concept paper for user groups and user needs
  - Specify concept for systematic registration of user requests (telephone, e-mail, mail)
- Study visit to Statistics Denmark (June 2016):
  - Midway status on dissemination strategy development
  - Discuss sub-strategies within the dissemination strategy
  - Discuss synergies between general NSI strategy and strategy for dissemination
  - Working with recommendations from EU peer review
- Mission 1.5 (September 2016):
  - Follow up mission on the dissemination strategy
  - Review of final draft dissemination strategy and action plans
- July 2017:
  - Final dissemination strategy approved by State Council of Statistics

## Annex 1: Terms of Reference

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Terms of Reference</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>EU Twinning Project AM/14/ENP/ST/15</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2-6 November 2015</b></p>
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### Component 1: Statistical Information Dissemination System

#### Activity 1.1: Assessment of the current status. Initial discussion on the dissemination strategy

#### 0. Mandatory results and benchmarks for the component

Mandatory results:

- Statistical Information Dissemination System improved (July 2017)

Benchmarks:

- Statistical Information Dissemination System in place (July 2017)
- Statistical Information Dissemination System Strategy paper developed and adopted by the State Council on Statistics (July 2017)
- User satisfaction survey questionnaire updated, tested and published at the NSSRA website (July 2017)
- Staff of NSSRA trained on issues related to the Statistical Information Dissemination (July 2017)

#### 1. Purpose of the activity

- Assessment of current situation and development since the last Twinning project
- Presentation of current dissemination strategy in NSSRA
- Discussion on issues to be included in a dissemination strategy and proposal for revisions
- Input to guide on how to communicate with external stakeholders and the public e.g. errors or misuse of data on statistical publications
- Input to issues for a revision policy
- Discussion on guide on tailor-made statistics
- To involve relevant stakeholders in the discussions

#### 2. Expected output of the activity

- Current situation assessed
- Recommendation for improvement of draft dissemination strategy provided
- Recommendation for communication and revision policies
- A lining up of work programme for the next activity (1.2 is scheduled to 7-10 December 2015)

#### 3. Participants

**NSSRA**



**Component leaders**

- Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan
- Ms. Anahit Safyan
- Ms. Narine Musheghyan

**Other staff**

- Ms. Silva Ulubabyan
- Ms. Nelly Margaryan
- Ms. Gohar Nshanyan
- Ms. Alina Hunanyan
- Mrs. Amine Martikyan
- Mrs. Lilit Karapetyan

**MS experts**

Ms. Annegrete Wulff, Expert, Statistics Denmark

Mr. Carsten Zangenberg, Expert, Statistics Denmark

**Other stakeholders taking part in the activity**

Representatives also to be invited:

- Representative of Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations
- Representative of Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- Representative of Ministry of Healthcare
- Representative of Ministry of Justice
- Representative of Ministry of Nature Protection
- Representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Representative of Ministry of Agriculture
- Representative of Ministry of Economy
- Representative of Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
- Representative of Ministry of Education and Science
- Representative of Ministry of Culture
- Representative of Ministry of Defense
- Representative of Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs
- Representative of Ministry of Transport and Communication
- Representative of Ministry of Urban Development
- Representative of Ministry of Finance
- Representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Representative of Central Bank of Armenia
- Representative of Representation of The International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Representative of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Representative of United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- Representative of United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO)
- Representative of UNICEF
- Representation of The European Bank For Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Representative of Office of The World Bank (WB)
- Representative of Delegation of the European Union
- Representative of Office of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Representative of “Arka” news agency
- Representative of “Armenpress” news agency
- Representative of “Arminfo” news agency
- Representative of “Mediamax” news agency
- Representative of Public radio of Armenia
- Representative of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia
- Representative of Armenian State University of Economics
- Representative of Public Administration Academy of the RA

## Annex 2: Programme for the mission

Time	Place	Event	Purpose / detail
Monday, noon	Hotel / NSSRA	Meeting with RTA	To discuss the programme of the week
Monday, afternoon	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Assessment of current situation and development since the last Twinning project
	<i>In meeting room</i>		Presentation of current dissemination strategy in NSSRA
			Presentations by experts on Dissemination strategy and User involvement
Tuesday, morning	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Discussion on issues to be included in a dissemination strategy and proposal for revisions
Tuesday, afternoon	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Input to guide on how to communicate with external stakeholders and the public e.g. errors or misuse of data on statistical publications
Wednesday, morning	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Input to issues for a revision policy
Wednesday, afternoon 15:00	NSSRA <i>In meeting room</i>	Meeting with stakeholders	Meeting with stakeholders
Thursday, morning	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Discussion on guide on tailor-made statistics
Thursday, afternoon	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader and BC Experts	Summarize and prepare for mission report
Friday, morning	NSSRA	Meeting with BC Component Leader	Presentation of MS Experts' findings and agreement on the reached conclusions
Friday, morning	NSSRA	Ad-hoc meetings	Final clarifications with BC Experts, prepara- tion of report and presentation for BC Project Leader
Friday, afternoon	NSSRA	Debriefing with BC Project Lead- er	Conclusions and recommendations for the next activity and the implied work programme for BC Experts

## Annex 3: Persons met

### NSSRA:

Stepan Mnatsakanyan, President of the NSSRA  
 Anahit Safyan, Member of the State Council on Statistics of RA  
 Narine Musheghyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division  
 Nelli Margaryan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division  
 Armine Martikyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division  
 Alina Hunanyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division  
 Gohar Nshanyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division  
 Silva Ulababyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division  
 Lilit Karapetyan, Statistical Information Dissemination and Public Relations Division  
 Laura Grigoryan, Agriculture Statistics Division  
 Ruzanna Vardanyan, Agriculture Statistics Division  
 Lusine Kalantaryan, Labour Statistics Division  
 Susan Hunanyan, Labour Statistics Division  
 Siranush Zeynalyan, Labour Statistics Division  
 Marina Petrosyan, Construction Statistics Division  
 Anahit Nazaryan, Construction Statistics Division  
 Aida Martirosyan, Information Resources Management and Technologies Department  
 Sona Shahgeldyan, Information Resources Management and Technologies Department  
 Gayane Nersisyan, Data Base Development and Programming Division  
 Arsen Ohanjanov, Finance Statistics Division  
 Liana Shahbazyan, Finance Statistics Division  
 Haykush Titizyan, Finance Statistics Division  
 Asya Podpomogova, Social Sphere and Nature Protection Division  
 Anahit Nazaryan, Social Sphere and Nature Protection Division  
 Hasmik Hovhannisyan, Industry Statistics Division  
 Liana Aleksanyan, Industry Statistics Division  
 Armine Stepanyan, Transport and Communication Statistics Division  
 Diana Ananyan, Transport and Communication Statistics Division  
 Anahit Avetisyan, Food Security Statistics Division  
 Manushak Khachatryan, Food Security Statistics Division  
 Gohar Harutyunyan, Food Security Statistics Division  
 Gurgen Martirosyan, Price Statistics and International Comparisons Division  
 Hasmik Karapetyan, Price Statistics and International Comparisons Division  
 Aida Badalyan, Household Surveys Division  
 Lusine Markosyan, Household Survey Division  
 Anahit Harutyunyan, Trade and Other Services Statistics Division  
 Anna Antonyan, Trade and Other Services Statistics Division  
 Ruzanna Baghdasaryan, Trade and Other Services Statistics Division  
 Anna Grigoryan, Population Census and Demography Division  
 Varsik Senekerimyan, International Statistical Co-operation Division  
 Hasmik Soghomonyan, International Statistical Co-operation Division  
 Ruzanna Shaboyan, International Statistical Co-operation Division  
 Hasmik Yeghiazaryan, International Statistical Co-operation Division  
 Lusya Markosyan, Macroeconomic Indicators and National Accounts Division  
 Nadezhda Astvatsaturova, Macroeconomic Indicators and National Accounts Division  
 Karine Aramyan, Business-register Division  
 Laura Sargsyan, Business-register Division  
 Astghik Safyan, Balance of Payments and Foreign Trade Statistics Division

**External stakeholders:**

Alessandro Zanutta, EU Delegation to Armenia  
Mariam Hovhannisyan, Armenpress  
Alaina Hovhannisyan, Arminfo  
Gohar Harutyunyan, RA Ministry of Agriculture  
Armenak Aghajanyan, RA Ministry of Agriculture  
Artur Petrosyan, RA Ministry of Agriculture  
Anahit Barseghyan, RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations  
Hasmik Isakhanyan, RA Ministry of Transport and Communication  
Gohar Grigoryan, RA Ministry of Economy  
Lyudmila Soghomonyan, RA Ministry of Economy  
Lusine Avetisyan, RA Ministry of Nature Protection  
Julietta Ghlijyan, RA Ministry of Nature Protection  
Suren Vardanyants, RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Gayane Avetisyan, RA Ministry of Finance  
Ruzanna Ghlechyian, RA Ministry of Culture  
Davit Yepiskoposyan, RA Ministry of Urban Development  
Alik Grigoryan, RA Ministry of Defense  
Vahram Janvelyan, IMF resident representative office in Armenia  
Karen Hakobyan, State Economic University of Armenia, Chair of Statistics  
Avetis Gevorgyan, RA Public Administration Academy  
Diana Afyan, RA Central Bank

**RTA Team:**

Mr. Peter Bohnstedt Anan Hansen, Resident Twinning Adviser  
Ms. Margarit Bejanyan, RTA Assistant  
Ms. Anush Poghosyan, RTA Language Assistant

## Annex 4: Short User Survey



### SHORT USER SURVEY

- 1) Are you aware of the release calendar for official statistics? Yes ☐ No ☐
- 2) Do you use the methodology/documentation linked to the statistics? Yes ☐ No ☐
- 3) Which sources do you use?
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>amstat.am (armstat.info)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Press releases</i>               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>armstatbank.am</i>           | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Publications</i>                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>ArmeniaInfo</i>              | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other (please specify):.....</i> |
- 4) In case of errors in published statistics, do you feel informed about the error? Yes ☐ No ☐
- 5) Where should Armstat improve to fulfill your needs?
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Quality</i>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Comprehensiveness</i>            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Timeliness</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other (please specify):.....</i> |
- 6) NSS use different sources for producing statistics (census, administrative registers and sample surveys).

Please mark below how you trust each of these 3 data sources?

	High trust	Medium trust	Low trust
Census			
Administrative registers			
Sample surveys			

Who do you represent:

☐ Ministry
 ☐ International organization
 ☐ Media
 ☐ Other



This project is funded  
by the European Union

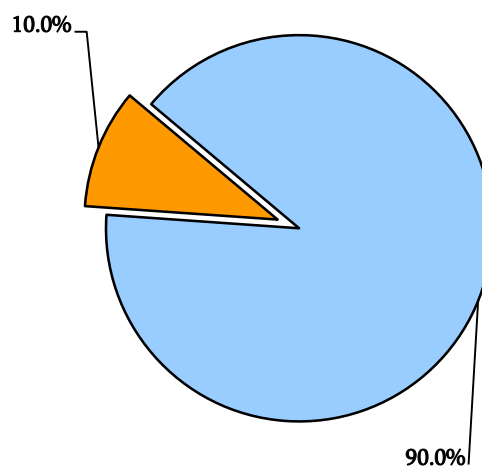
*Thank you very much for your co-operation ☺*

### SHORT USER SURVEY Summary

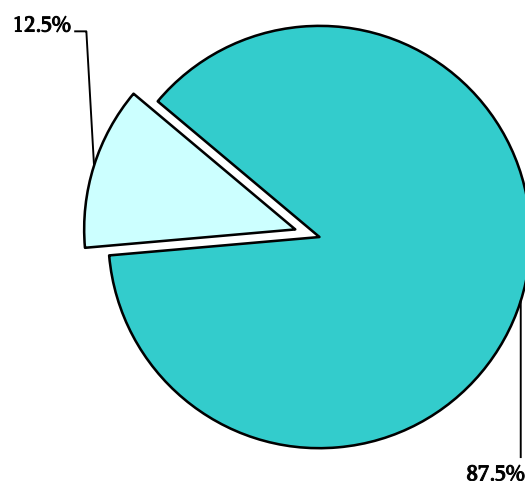
The total number of participants in the meeting organized on 4 November 2015 in the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia within the Twinning project was 47, of which 40 or 85.1 % answered the Short User Survey questionnaire.

The summary results of the survey show that 18 of them or 45.0 % were representatives of ministries, 2 or 5.0 % - representatives of other organizations. The findings of detailed review of each question are the following:

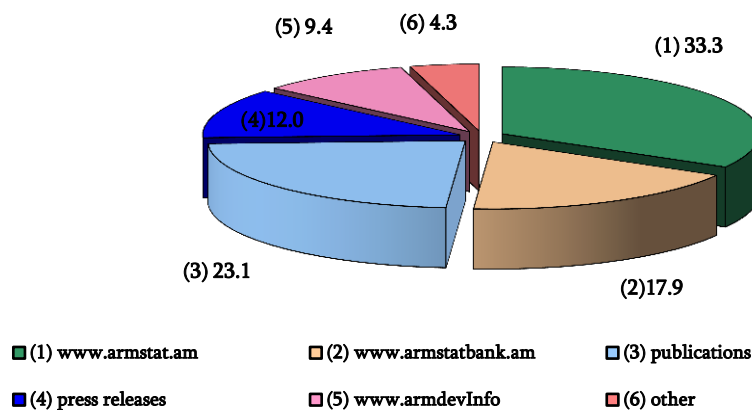
1. To the question **“Are you aware of the release calendar for official statistics?”** 36 of the respondents or 90.0% answered “yes”.



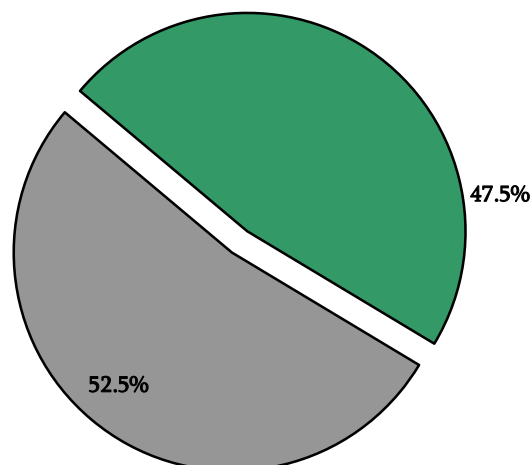
2. To the question **“Do you use the methodology/documentation linked to the statistics”** 35 or 87.5% answered positively.



3. To the question **“Which sources do you use?”** 40 respondents gave 117 indications in total, of which 39 or 33.3% specified that they used [www.armstat.am](http://www.armstat.am) (mirror web-page: [www.armstat.info](http://www.armstat.info)), 21 or 17.9 % - [www.ArmStatBank.am](http://www.ArmStatBank.am), 27 or 23.1% - publications, 14 or 12.0 % - press releases, 11 or 9.4 % - [www.ArmDevInfo.am](http://www.ArmDevInfo.am) and only 5 of them or 4.3% noted that they used other sources.

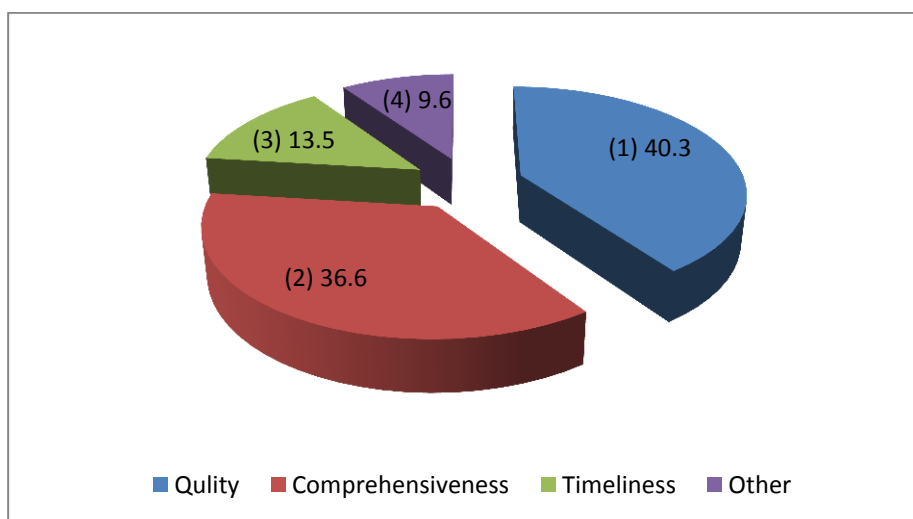


4. **“In case of errors in published statistics, do you feel informed about the errors?”** Only 19 or 47.5% of respondents noted that they were informed.



5. To “**Where should Armstat improve to fulfill your needs?**” 40 respondents had 52 indications in total. 21 of them or 40.3 % noted the quality, 19 or 36.6 % - comprehensiveness, 7 or 13.5 % - timeliness, 5 or 9.6 % - “other”.

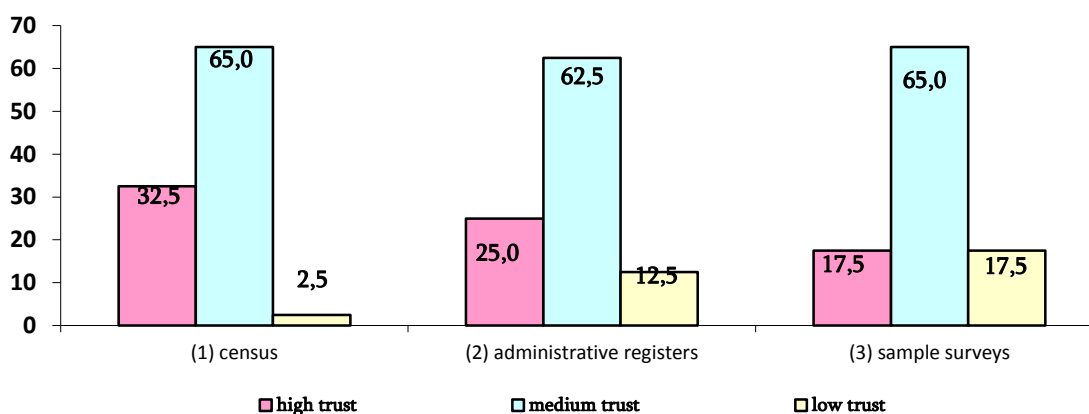
(%)



6. To the question “**NSS use different sources for producing statistics (census, administrative registers and sample surveys). Please mark below how you trust each of these 3 data sources.**” there were 120 indications in total, of which 30 or 25.0% chose “high trust”, 77 or 64.2% - “medium trust”, 13 or 10.8 % - “low trust”.

It is worth mentioning that 13 or 32.5% noted “High trust” for the census, 26 or 65.0 % - “medium trust” and 1 or 2.5% - “low trust”. For administrative registers 10 or 25.0% had “high trust”, 25 or 62.5 % - “medium trust”, and 5 or 12.5 % - “low trust”. For sample surveys 7 or 17.5 % noted “high trust”, 26 or 65.0% - “medium trust”, and 7 or 17.5 % - “low trust”.

(%)





## Annex 5: Minutes from workshop with stakeholders

### *Question 1:*

**Ms. Gohar Harutyunyan**, *RA Ministry of Nature Protection*

- We collect from companies information about the dumping wastes. Is there any experience related to ecological wastes? Regarding information about the financial standing of individual companies, it is normal that this information should be confidential. But what about the information on wastes? How can companies be encouraged to reveal this information?

### **Answers:**

**Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan**, *NSSRA President*, mentioned that here we should remember Principle 6 of UN fundamental principles of official statistics which ensures confidentiality of data collected. He also added that most of the information about nature protection related issues are dealt with not as much by statistical services as by administrative information authorities.

**Mr. Carsten Zangenberg**, *STE from Statistics Denmark*, answered the same question saying that such information can hardly be disclosed, because it will eventually result in loss of trust among the users.

### *Question 2:*

**Mr. Karen Hakobyan**, *State Economic University of Armenia, Chair of Statistics*

- In his presentation Mr. Zangenberg highlighted comparability of statistical data over time. In the case of Armenia especially the comparability over time is of great importance. For example, if we take indicators of national accounts, due to the changes in classification and methodology, the retrospective comparability over time becomes complicated and even impossible. What could be recommended in this regard?

### **Answers:**

**Mr. Carsten Zangenberg** answered that though this is a huge task the statistical service is the best to solve this problem which exists not only in Armenia, but also in the whole world.

**Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan** mentioned that the fact of Armenia's being a post-Soviet country makes the situation more complicated due to some changes in the society. Apart from that another problem is the shortage of resources, though the NSSRA will make an attempt to make a retrospective calculation and cover the post-Soviet years.

**Question 3.****Mr. Alessandro Zanotta, EU Delegation to Armenia**

- Have you ever carried out a survey on the efficiency of the use of statistics to find out which areas need improvement? Are there any qualitative data on the satisfaction of users?

**Answers:**

**Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan** answered that it is really very important to involve more users in the dissemination being aware of who the NSSRA is aiming at. It is as well important to extend the frame of users, to prioritize them, to take into account their opinion and to follow the development of users.

**Mr. Carsten Zangenberg** also mentioned that this is one of the priorities of the strategy and it is necessary to frame the strategy and its principles so as to provide openness, among other things.

**Question 4.****Mr. Alessandro Zanotta, EU Delegation to Armenia**

- Are there any awareness raising programs related to dissemination of statistics in schools or other educational institutions?

**Answers:**

**Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan** mentioned that the NSSRA has the experience of disseminating statistics via educational institutions. Within the framework of the first Twinning project special leaflets and booklets were produced to raise awareness through visits to schools.

**Question 5.****Mr. Alessandro Zanotta, EU Delegation to Armenia**

- How can the NSSRA official web page be improved so as to target and help users navigate to needed data more easily?

**Answers:**

**Mr. Stepan Mnatsakanyan** answered that one of the objectives of the ongoing Twinning project is to improve the use of statistical information, and hopefully by the end of the project the NSSRA will have relevant recommendations on how to improve statistical dissemination system. He stressed that the users should not be blamed, because the NSSRA official webpage is only 16 years old and they are well aware that a lot of work has still to be done.

**Ms Annegrete Wulff** answered the same question highlighting the structure of the web page and use of search possibilities. She mentioned that no matter how good the web page is, people always find it difficult to find things easily. So, the statistical service has to find the link between the words used and statistical terminology.

## **Annex 6: Media coverage from workshop with stakeholders**

<http://armenpress.am/arm/news/824570/daniaci-pordzagety-bardzr-e-gnahatum-hh-avts-i-ashkhatanqy.html>

Text translated to English:

### **The Danish experts highly value the work of the NSSRA**

“The second Twinning has been launched to strengthen the works of the NSSRA.” As ARMENPRESS reports, the president of the NSSRA Stepan Mnatsakanyan said this at the meeting on November 4 aimed at discussing dissemination of statistical information.

“The two year Twinning project, like the first Twinning project implemented in 2011-2013, will also be implemented by Statistics Denmark. The first Twinning project was quite material and the results – impressive” added Mr Mnatsakanyan.

The expert of Statistics Denmark Ms Annegrete Wulff pointed out that last year a number of ambitious goals were set, one of them was creating digital data through Armstatbank, but the most important thing is that through this it’s possible to get all needed data.

“As users of statistical data we should understand how to obtain this data. These were improvements that might seem to be impossible to reach within a short time. And I am sure due to your serious efforts all your strategic goals will be achieved” the expert added.

*Twining is an EU cooperation tool between a public institution in a beneficiary country and equivalent institutions in EU Member States. In August 2015 the 2 year Twinning project on statistics commenced between the beneficiary institution, the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia and the implementing partner Statistics Denmark.*