Joint Overview of the implementation of international statistical standards and good practices in the Republic of Uzbekistan

Final Report

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UNECE

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List of Abbreviations

BOP	Balance of Payments
BPM6	IMF's Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual
CISSTAT	Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States
COFOG	Classification of the Functions of Government
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose
CPA	Classification of Products by Activity
CPI	Consumer Price Index
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
e-GDDS	Enhanced General Data Dissemination System
EU-SILC	European Survey of Income and Living Conditions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFS	Government Finance Statistics
GLOS	Generic Law on Official Statistics
Goskomstat	State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics
GSBPM	Generic Statistical Business Process Model
HBS	Household Budget Survey
HS	Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding Systems
ICP	International Comparison Programme
IT	Information Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
NACE	The European Union's Classification of Economic Activities (Nomenclature Générale des Activités Économiques dans les Communautés Européennes)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPI	Producer Price Index
SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SNA	System of National Accounts
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
SQL	Structured Query Language
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WTO	World Trade Organization

Preface

The Joint Overview of the implementation of international statistical standards and good practices in the Republic of Uzbekistan was undertaken in partnership between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics (Goskomstat). UNECE initiated the Joint Overview following a request from the Republic of Uzbekistan to increase technical cooperation in official statistics.

The Joint Overview was conducted by Mr Steven Vale (Regional Adviser, UNECE), who was the leading expert, Mr Lars Svennebye (EFTA), Mr Steinn Steinsson (Eurostat) and Mr Marlen Jigitekov (UNECE), in cooperation with the managers and staff of Goskomstat.

The Joint Overview findings are based on an extensive review performed during the expert mission, which took place on 29 October to 2 November 2018, in Tashkent.

Prior to the first mission, Goskomstat staff completed a self-assessment questionnaire, which served as a starting point for the Joint Overview. The results of the Joint Overview are based on the analysis of documents provided by Goskomstat, documents available on their web site, and information collected and discussed during the in-country mission.

The collaboration between the international experts and the staff of Goskomstat was positive and constructive throughout all phases of the work. The international experts would like to thank the Goskomstat management and staff for this.

Executive Summary

In October / November 2018, an international team of experts representing Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Union), EFTA (the European Free Trade Association) and UNECE (the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), conducted a Joint Overview of the implementation of international statistical standards and good practices in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The overview was undertaken at the request of, and in partnership with, the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics (Goskomstat). This report contains the observations and recommendations of the international experts, and has been agreed with the management of Goskomstat.

In general terms, the international experts were impressed by level of development of the national statistical system of Uzbekistan. Considerable efforts have been made in recent years to modernise statistical production and implement international standards. There remains some work to do to ensure full compliance with the latest versions of international standards and good practices in certain areas, but in most cases, this work has started and there are clear plans in place to complete it in the near future.

The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014, provide the basic framework for official statistics worldwide, covering issues such as impartiality and professionalism. The international experts found a generally high level of compliance with the Fundamental Principles. The recommendations in Part 1 of this report mainly concern the further implementation of international best practices and improving communication and transparency with users of statistics, to better demonstrate compliance with the Fundamental Principles.

Part 2 of the report focuses on institutional issues. Here the recommendations focus on enhancing working conditions to improve staff retention, and on developing an information technology strategy to improve the efficiency of statistical work.

The third and final part of the report covers the main statistical subject-matter areas. There is good cooperation between Goskomstat, the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance in the area of economic statistics, and progress is being made to implement the latest standards. However, the greatest challenge is that there has not been a population census since 1989. This affects almost all areas of statistics, as the population is used as the denominator for many statistical indicators, e.g. gross domestic product per capita. Despite the best efforts of Goskomstat to produce accurate population estimates, the lack of baseline census data introduces a high degree of uncertainty. This also has a strong impact on the ability of Uzbekistan to produce reliable statistics to monitor progress towards the UN sustainable development goals. Therefore, the strongest recommendation coming out of this Joint Overview is that preparations for the proposed population census in 2022 should be given a high priority and full support at the highest political levels.

The international experts would like to commend the professionalism of the Goskomstat management and staff, and thank them for their full and active collaboration in the conduct of this Joint Overview.

Part 1: Compliance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Principle 1.

Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.

Overview

Goskomstat is an independent state institution, which operates in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On State Statistics" from 2002 (with later amendments). There are also several decrees and resolutions from the President and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which provide more details and clarifications on specific points.

The Law on State Statistics defines the main principles of state statistics (Article 4). These principles include objectivity, impartiality and relevance. Also, Article 4 forbids interference in the activities of state statistics bodies by state bodies and state authorities on the ground.

Taken as a whole, the legislative package is generally in line with international recommendations, including the Generic Law on Official Statistics (GLOS), developed by UNECE, in cooperation with EFTA and Eurostat. However, there could be scope to consolidate legislation into a single new statistical law, to improve transparency. This would also provide an opportunity to ensure full compliance with the GLOS, for example regarding the procedures for the appointment and tenure of the Chairman of Goskomstat.

The Chairman is a member of the Cabinet of the Ministers. This could be seen as detrimental to the perception of independence of Goskomstat. However, this risk should be weighed against the clear benefits that this situation brings, such as the high profile of official statistics within the state bodies, and the position of strength that Goskomstat has in negotiating access to data held by other ministries.

The national statistical system in Uzbekistan is relatively centralised. The main producers of official statistics are Goskomstat, the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank. Other ministries provide data on various topics within their competence.

Statistical work is carried out in accordance with the annual Programme of State Statistical Works, which effectively defines the scope of what can be called official statistics. This programme is compiled by Goskomstat, in coordination with other relevant ministries, before being sent to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval. The approved programme is posted on the official website of Goskomstat. Whilst the programme defines what should be produced, Goskomstat is responsible for how it should be produced, and coordinates the methods, standards and questionnaires used.

Considerable efforts are being made to improve trust in official statistics, through greater transparency of methods, and increased engagement of key users, particularly journalists and academics.

Statistics are released to all users at the same time. There is no pre-release access. The annual Programme of State Statistical Works contains release dates, but there is no standard time for

statistical releases, and sometimes statistics are released before they specified date if they are ready early.

Given the volume of statistics published there are inevitably some occasional errors. This is normal and happens in all countries. When errors are discovered, they are dealt with promptly, but there is not yet a formal policy on how to deal with errors and revisions to published data.

Most statistics are published on the Goskomstat web site, however the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance also publish their own statistics. Regional offices of Goskomstat may also publish statistics on their web sites. A single web portal, or point of entry for users could help to strengthen the impression of a coherent national statistical system.

Recommendations

- Goskomstat, in consultation with the government, should consider consolidating statistical legislation into a single new statistical law, taking account of the Generic Law on Official Statistics. The new law should clarify the position of the Goskomstat within government, and the procedures for the appointment and tenure of the Chairman
- Goskomstat should continue with efforts to improve the image of, and trust in official statistics
- Goskomstat should introduce a statistical release policy in accordance with international standards, including:
  - A fixed time of day for statistical releases, which should be on the day announced in release calendar
  - The development of a formal policy on errors and revisions to published data
- Goskomstat should consider creating a single web portal or page with links to all official statistics published at the national and regional levels

Principle 2.

To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

Overview

The choice of statistical methods, standards and procedures does not require approval from the government authorities. This is confirmed in Article 5 of the Statistical Law, which says that state statistics bodies are independent in the choice of data sources, statistical methods, content, form, time and dissemination of statistical data. Article 3 of the Law states that one of the main tasks of state statistics is to provide a unified statistical methodology that meets international standards. Also, under Article 5.1, Goskomstat should develop, approve and implement a unified statistical methodology and forms (questionnaires) for state statistical observations.

Goskomstat staff follow developments in methodology on the web sites of international organisations and neighbouring countries.

When discussing methods and procedures, several minor points were identified where standardisation and clarification might help to improve transparency. These are reflected in the recommendations below.

Recommendations

- Goskomstat should consider streamlining and clarifying administrative procedures related to archiving paper questionnaires
- Goskomstat should clarify procedures for calculating response rates, and publish response rates on the web site as part of the proposed quality reports (see also Principle 3)
- Goskomstat should take expected non-response into account when designing sample sizes and avoid replacement samples particularly for non-compulsory surveys.

Principle 3.

To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

Overview

The latest methodology for calculating the main statistical indicators is published in the "e – library" section of the Goskomstat web site.

Goskomstat has been working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to implement the e-GDDS (Enhanced General Data Dissemination System) standard, which aims to "guide countries in data dissemination by supporting transparency, encouraging statistical development, and helping create strong synergies between data dissemination and surveillance"[1]. The Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank are also applying this standard. Good progress has been made, and Goskomstat is now planning to advance to the IMF's SDDS (Special Data Dissemination Standard).

Goskomstat is starting to document statistical production processes according to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), and plans to introduce standard quality reports by 2021.

Recommendations

- Goskomstat should continue working with the IMF to improve data and metadata presentation
- Goskomstat should introduce quality reports based on international best practices, e.g. Eurostat templates
- Goskomstat should document statistical production processes in line with the GSBPM, taking account of good practices, e.g. in Armenia

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[1]https://dsbb.imf.org/

Principle 4.

The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

Overview

Goskomstat has been proactive in recent years to engage with journalists and academics to improve statistical literacy and build trust. This has included working together with journalists on press articles, to ensure the statistics are correctly understood and properly presented. Some journalists now ask Goskomstat to verify articles before publication.

Recommendation

- Goskomstat should continue efforts to improve statistical literacy amongst users, and should consider engaging with teachers and the Ministry of Education to strengthen the use and understanding of official statistics in school curriculums, in-line with international best practices (for example the International Statistical Literacy Project Poster Competition[2]).

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[2]http://iase-web.org/islp/Poster_Competition_2018-2019.php

Principle 5.

Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

Overview

The Law on State Statistics and the annual Statistical Work Programmes provide the basis for data collection, and oblige ministries and other bodies to provide administrative data where needed. Formal agreements and memorandums of understanding are in place with many data suppliers. In practice, there are no real problems with getting access to administrative data, however, in a few cases those data only exist in paper format. There are plans to move all government data to electronic format, and to create a single database platform for data sharing within government.

Response burden is also managed through the annual Statistical Work Programme, which ensures there is no duplication of data collection. Goskomstat also coordinates the forms (questionnaires) used to collect official statistics. Respondents are encouraged to provide feedback on how long it takes to complete statistical forms, and suggestions on how forms can be improved. There is a process of continuous improvement to make forms clearer and easier to complete, which is recognised by the overview team as a good practice.

An electronic data collection tool "e-stat" has been developed in-house, and is now in its third version. It is available for download from the Goskomstat web site. Currently it works as an off-line tool, for participants to complete forms, save them, and then e-mail them to Goskomstat. There are plans to introduce a fully on-line version, but this is dependent on the implementation of a national strategy to improve Internet coverage and speed.

Annual reporting by companies is mandatory, and there are financial penalties for non-compliance. These penalties are applied to the individuals responsible for providing reports. Although many surveys are voluntary, response rates in Uzbekistan are high in comparison to other countries. This can be partly explained by the replacement of units that can not be contacted in some surveys.

Recommendations

- Goskomstat should consider ways to increase support for respondents to maintain the current high response rates and encourage timely responses
- Goskomstat should continue to take an active role in the creation of a cross-government database for information sharing, particularly regarding data on people and households

Principle 6.

Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

Overview

Confidentiality of data received from respondents is guaranteed by Article 7 of the Law on State Statistics. In addition, Article 14 of the Law states that primary statistical data from the state statistical bodies shall be used solely for statistical purposes, in the preparation of summary statistics, and published in aggregate and anonymous form.

Survey forms include a guarantee of confidentiality concerning the data provided by respondents.

Confidentiality is further guaranteed by internal rules of Goskomstat, including an Information Security Policy. Every employee, including in regional offices, is required to sign an agreement on non-disclosure and non-distribution of confidential statistical information or unpublished information. There are special clearance procedures, backed up by training, for employees working with particularly sensitive information.

The rules and procedures in place confirm that Goskomstat fully complies with this principle, therefore no recommendations are made.

Principle 7.

The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.

Overview

All relevant legislation and supporting materials are published on the Goskomstat web site in Uzbek, Russian and English.

The volume of legislation might be a challenge for some users, there are many documents, and there may be some scope for consolidating and revising legislative texts to improve transparency (see first recommendation under Principle 1).

Goskomstat seems to fully comply with this principle, therefore no recommendations are made.

Principle 8.

Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

Overview

Goskomstat has a clear coordination role in the national statistical system in Uzbekistan. This is formally set out in Article 5 of the Law on State Statistics. It is managed through the annual Programme of State Statistical Works, which is compiled in consultation with all relevant organisations. Goskomstat also has the formal responsibility for coordinating forms and methods used to produce official statistics.

This coordination seems to work well in practice. This was confirmed in the discussions with other producers of official statistics from the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance, who seemed satisfied with the coordination role played by Goskomstat.

Goskomstat and the other producers of official statistics seem to fully comply with this principle, therefore no recommendations are made.

Principle 9.

The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

Overview

There is plenty of evidence of the systematic use of international statistical standards in all areas of the work of Goskomstat and the other producers of state statistics. The use of international classifications, guidelines and methodological recommendations is widespread, throughout all areas of statistics discussed.

For example, the NACE classification of economic activity and the CPA product classification have both been adopted as the basis for national classifications, approved by the Uzstandart standards agency.

In a few cases, the version of the international standard or classification in use is not the latest one, but in all of these cases, there are clear plans to move to the latest version. One example is in the area of National Accounts, where data are currently compiled according to the 1993 version of the System of National Accounts, but steps are being taken, and plans are in place to move to the latest version.

As noted in chapters 3.6 below, there are some deviations from international recommendations and definitions in some areas of social statistics. For example, the Ministry of Labour does not fully apply International Labour Organisation (ILO) definitions in the labour force survey. In the case of the job vacancy survey, which has so far only been run as a pilot, there are plans to improve the questionnaire based on ILO definitions.

There is a national, government-wide, definition of small and other enterprises, which is widely used for statistical and regulatory purposes, however, the size-bands are different to those in the international definition. There is a clear justification for compiling data using the national definition, so that those data can be easily used for national policy purposes, however, it would help international comparability if data are also published according to the international definition.

Recommendation

- Goskomstat and the other agencies producing official statistics should continue their efforts to ensure that the latest international standards and guidelines are followed.
- Goskomstat should consider also using the international definition for small, medium and large enterprises in disseminated data.

Principle 10.

Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

Overview

In line with national policies for greater openness, Goskomstat is increasing its engagement with the international statistical community. Agreements are in place between Goskomstat and the national statistical offices of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Korea, Russia and Ukraine. These agreements often include provisions for study visits or workshops.

In addition, Goskomstat staff are attending more international workshops, seminars and training courses, up from 41 in 2014 to more than 70 in 2018. One good practice noted by the international experts is that when Goskomstat staff return from international events, they are required to give an overview for their colleagues, ensuring that information is spread throughout the organisation.

Goskomstat is also engaging with various international organisations, examples discussed included:

- The IMF concerning the implementation of the Enhanced General Data Dissemination System (e-GDDS)
- The Asian Development Bank in respect of databases, the possible introduction of special software (also on statistical capacity development programmes)
- The World Bank on household budget surveys
- UNDP on national reporting platforms for statistics on the sustainable development goals

As Goskomstat engages more with the international statistical community, it is likely that more offers of technical cooperation will be received. Other national statistical offices in the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia have noted the importance of having a strategy for capacity development, with clear priority areas, and only engaging with donors, partners and activities that support this strategy.

Recommendations

- Goskomstat should consider how to better coordinate international cooperation, including with donors, so that this cooperation is more systematically aligned with strategic priorities
- Goskomstat should encourage staff at all levels to develop and enhance bilateral contacts with colleagues in other national statistical offices
- Goskomstat should provide more training for staff in English, to facilitate international cooperation

Part 2: Institutional Issues

2.1   Organisational issues, human and financial resources

Overview

Goskomstat is headed by the Chairman, with four deputies: First Deputy Chairman, Deputy Chairman for Economic Statistics, Deputy Chairman for Social Statistics, and Deputy Chairman for Information and Communication Technology and Information Security.

The central office, in Tashkent, has 263 staff. There are a further 1891 staff at 14 regional offices (including the city of Tashkent and the Republic of Karakalpakstan), as well as around 200 district and city offices throughout Uzbekistan. There is also a Centre for Retraining and Statistical Studies, in Tashkent, with 42 staff.

In general, data are collected and partly processed in the district and regional offices, and then sent to the central office for final processing, analysis and publication. Regional offices can also produce specific regional statistical outputs.

In general, Goskomstat staff felt that the current level of human and financial resources was sufficient. In terms of staff quality, most staff have a first-level university degree, and there is regular training to enhance and update skills. However, more workshops in Uzbekistan by international experts, on the latest developments in official statistics, would be very welcome.

Staff turnover was found to be generally acceptable, but due to the low level of wages, statistics staff go to other agencies with higher salaries. There is some staff mobility between the central and regional offices, as well as with the other national producers of official statistics.

Wages for most staff are considered to be a little less than the average for other ministries.

Recommendations

- Goskomstat should explore how wages can be increased to bring them more in line with other ministries
- Goskomstat should consider introducing non-monetary incentives to improve staff retention, for example, the use of flexible working hours, and improving the working environment (building, equipment and furniture)
- Goskomstat should work with international and bilateral partners to increase the possibilities for holding training workshops in Uzbekistan

2.2   Technological resources

Overview

The biggest challenge in terms of technology in Goskomstat is the high turnover of IT staff, with relatively few staff having more than three years of experience. This makes knowledge transfer very important, and underlines the need for a clear information technology strategy.

Computing hardware was considered to be largely sufficient, with around 25%-30% of computers less than three years old. Most statistical processing is done using Microsoft Access and Excel, though some database systems use Microsoft SQL. In some cases there have been difficulties due to different software versions being used in the central and regional offices. Currently, the use of open-source software is limited to the web servers only. No free or open-source software is used for statistical data processing and dissemination. Most IT development is done in-house, though occasionally, for major projects, external contractors are used.

Data management and security practices seemed to be sufficient, with regular data back-ups to computers in other locations.

Internet content management is currently centralised, with a small team responsible for implementing all updates to the Goskomstat web site.

IT staff do not seem to have any contacts with colleagues in other countries. The development of professional networks through such contacts could help to identify new ideas and good practices more rapidly (see also Fundamental Principle 10).

Recommendations

- Goskomstat should consider developing a multi-year information technology strategy including the following points:
    - A policy on hardware upgrading
    - A policy on increasing electronic data collection, including via tablets and the Internet
    - Standardising versions of software with territorial bodies
    - The selection and use of internal communication tools – e-mail and intranet, wiki, etc.
- Goskomstat should consider staff training needs and the acquisition of suitable software for questionnaire programming, in relation to the proposed introduction of electronic data collection
- Goskomstat should consider training statisticians to be able to use statistical software independently, including simple programming tasks
- Goskomstat should move away from Microsoft Office software to Microsoft SQL Server / Oracle and other data management systems for statistical processing (for example in National Accounts)
- Goskomstat should investigate the potential of free and open source statistical software tools, including R and/or Python, taking account of the experiences of other national statistical offices

- Goskomstat should continue with plans to switch to modern systems for the dissemination of statistical data using special software.

- Goskomstat should introduce more distributed web content management processes (each division should be able to publish their information)

- Goskomstat should encourage IT staff to develop bilateral contacts with colleagues in other national statistical offices

Part 3: Main Statistical Subject-matter Areas

3.1   National Accounts

Overview

The National Accounts practices of Goskomstat generally appear to be in line with the recommendations of System of National Accounts (SNA) 1993. Since 2013, considerable efforts have been taken in order to implement SNA 2008, in cooperation with international organisations. The National Accounts department shows a clear understanding of the remaining issues and has specific plans on how to meet these and other challenges. In the field of methodological development, priority should be given to those areas that affect the size, structure and dynamics of GDP.

On the IT side, the existing hardware is regarded as satisfactory but there is a need to explore possibilities to replace or complement the current reliance on commercial software – which may be less than optimally suitable for the task – with free software developed specifically for National Accounts purposes.

High turnover of staff is clearly a challenge in the National Accounts department. At the moment, 5 out of 19 staff have less than one year's experience. Measures to develop skills and to promote an attractive working environment should be considered in order to encourage staff to remain.

Organisation and international cooperation

The National Accounts are compiled by Goskomstat. Balance of Payments Statistics and Monetary and Financial Statistics are compiled by the Central Bank, whereas the Ministry of Finance is responsible for Government Finance Statistics. Goskomstat cooperates closely with the two other institutions.

The Macroeconomic Indicators and National Accounts Department in Goskomstat consists of 19 staff and is organised in four subdivisions: Division of Formation and Analysis of Macroeconomic Indicators, Division of Current Accounts, Division of Capital and Satellite Accounts and Division of Input-Output Statistics. The academic background of the staff is mainly in economics. Many new recruits already have experience in working with statistical data, for instance in the regional statistical offices or in other sectors of the economy, like banks. While the number of staff is seen as sufficient, turnover is quite high and many are relatively new in their job. Hence, there is a constant need for training and improvement of skills. Similar concerns regarding the development of staff potential were raised by Goskomstat, by the Central Bank and by the Ministry of Finance.

The first steps towards the implementation of international standards were undertaken in 1994. At present, National Accounts are based on SNA 1993, but efforts to implement SNA 2008 have been going on since 2013 and remain a high priority. Employees have been taking part in several workshops under the multi-annual UNECE-Eurostat-EFTA programme on the implementation of SNA 2008, with links to Balance of Payments (BOP) and Government Finance Statistics (GFS). More recently, a four-year plan has been agreed with the IMF in order to prioritise works in specific areas. There is also cooperation with CISSTAT and with the Asian Development Bank. Goskomstat is preparing to re-join the International Comparison Programme (ICP) in 2020.

Current practices

On an annual basis, all current accounts of the system (production account, generation of income account, primary distribution of income account, secondary distribution of income account, use of disposable income account) and the capital account are compiled. In addition to the five domestic institutional sectors of the economy, transactions between residents and non-residents are reflected in the "rest of the world" sector. Sector accounts are compiled on the basis of CISSTAT recommendations.

National Accounts are compiled primarily from the production side, but also from the expenditure side, on both an annual and quarterly basis. The main international classifications applied are:

- the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE) Rev. 2
- the Classification of Products by Activity (CPA) 2008
- the Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP)
- the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG)
- the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding Systems (HS)

Input data for the compilation of National Accounts from the production side are taken mainly from

- the annual census of all commercial enterprises, state and non-state non-profit organisations, financial enterprises, farms
- a monthly survey of large commercial enterprises
- quarterly sample surveys of small businesses and micro firms
- sample surveys of the individuals engaged in agricultural, industrial, transport, trading and construction activities, as well as other services (informal sector)
- administrative sources from the Ministry of Finance, the Tax and Customs Authority, the Central Bank and various State agencies

For the calculation of GDP from the expenditure side, the following data sources are used:

- the Household Budget Survey
- data on retail turnover
- agricultural data
- data from the State budget
- investment data from enterprises
- reported data from non-profit organisations
- Balance of Payments data

Any discrepancy at the level of GDP between the production approach and the expenditure approach is carefully analysed. Calculations are undertaken in accordance with publicly accessible methodological documentation. Consistency and completeness are checked using supply-use tables and by comparing data from different sources and over time.

Annual and quarterly accounts are prepared in current and constant prices. The constant time series is calculated based on the output deflator index. However, there are plans to introduce a double deflation approach in order to achieve a more reliable estimate of real value added.

The time series of annual GDP goes back to 1991, while quarterly estimates have been produced since 2000. In addition to GDP, Gross Regional Product is compiled for the country's 14 territorial administrative units.

Databases are maintained in Microsoft Access and calculations carried out in Microsoft Excel, but there is an interest in looking into alternatives, in particular free software developed specifically for National Accounts purposes.

Work plan and dissemination

The deadlines for the compilation and dissemination of annual and quarterly National Accounts are laid down in the Annual Program of Statistical Works. Preliminary annual estimates of GDP at current prices are released in January of the following year (t+1) and finalised in November. The preliminary quarterly GDP estimate is published on the14[th] day after the end of the reporting quarter (to be changed to the 21st day according to the Program of State Statistical Works for 2019), and the final assessment after 3 months. Alignment between annual and quarterly accounts is carried out in February the following year (t+1).

The release calendar on the website of Goskomstat indicates the date of each release, but not any specific time. It also states that changes to the date of release may be made.

Challenges and future plans

In relation to the SNA 2008 implementation, priority will be given to those areas that affect the size, structure and dynamics of GDP. Goskomstat identifies financial accounts, the changes in assets and liabilities account, the revaluation account and the balance of assets and liabilities as the main challenges. Efforts to improve the consistency between National Accounts, Balance of Payments statistics and Government Finance Statistics will continue, as will the implementation of the classifications in SNA 2008.

Further issues to be developed include estimates of the non-observed economy, housing services and the consumption of fixed capital. Improving the quality of quarterly accounts by introducing seasonal adjustment, and of GDP in constant prices by moving to calculations based on annual average prices of the base year and introducing a double deflation approach, are other priority areas.

Recommendations

Goskomstat is encouraged to:

- Continue work on the implementation of the classifications and recommendations in SNA 2008 in line with internal priorities and recommendations from international organisations
- Continue the process, in cooperation with international organisations, on achieving consistency between National Accounts and the Balance of Payments
- Introduce a double-deflation approach in the compilation of constant price series
- Improve the methodology for the non-observed economy in line with international best practices
- Further develop the skills and potential of the staff, and consider non-monetary motivational measures in order to reduce turnover

3.2   Price statistics

Overview

The review focused on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Producer Price Index (PPI). These statistics are compiled broadly in line with standards laid out in manuals published by the major international organisations. The CPI and the Household Budget Survey (HBS), which provides the weights for the CPI, are both compiled according to COICOP 1999. Only monetary transactions are recorded in the CPI.

Statistical sources like the HBS (for CPI) and business statistics (for PPI) are used for the sampling of items, whereas the sampling of outlets in the CPI seems to be based primarily on the judgement of price collectors. Given the dynamic economic development in Uzbekistan and the existence of a comprehensive register of enterprises, it could be considered whether this judgemental sampling of outlets is still suitable.

Organisation and international cooperation

The CPI and the PPI are produced by separate units within the Department of Price Statistics. In addition to the two main outputs, the Department of Price Statistics produces an input index of materials purchased by industrial enterprises, price indices for transportation and communication, price indices for investment in fixed assets and construction, and price indices for exports and imports. The Department of Price Statistics is also actively involved in methodological development. The staff situation is seen as satisfactory.

The CPI was introduced in Uzbekistan in 1994 with support from the IMF. The PPI time series is available back to 1991 and the price index for material resources acquired by industrial enterprises back to 1997. The most important manuals are "Guide to the Consumer Price Index: Theory and Practice" and "The Producer Price Index: Theory and Practice" by IMF, OECD, Eurostat, UNECE, World Bank and ILO.

Current practices

The CPI is compiled monthly on the basis of more than 10.000 price quotations for 386 items, of which 112 are food items, 206 non-food items, and 68 services. The items are selected based on what households report in the HBS. Any item with more than one percent of total household consumption reported will be included in the sample. Starting from 2018, 120 regions covering approximately 73 percent of the entire population and 83 percent of national turnover in trade are selected for surveying.

The price collection is carried out by employees of the regional offices of Goskomstat between the 10th and 20th of every month. There is no register-based sampling of outlets. Instead, employees select outlets based on their knowledge of the local market (judgemental sampling). Prices are collected on paper, but the data are later entered into Microsoft Access. Uzbekistan has a State monopoly for public utilities like gas, electricity and water. Electricity and gas tariffs for households are the same throughout the country. Water, heating and sewerage tariffs for each region are determined by local authorities. Second-hand goods, like used cars, and goods produced for own consumption, are not included in the CPI.

Seasonality for fruit and vegetables is dealt with by imputing the prices for apples and onions as reference prices. These products are available throughout the year.

The CPI records only monetary transactions. Hence, no attempt is made to estimate prices for dwelling services of owner-occupiers. These comprise approximately 95 percent of the housing market.

CPI weights are based mostly on the HBS, and revised once a year. Notable exceptions are cars and alcoholic beverages, for which expert estimates are used.

In the PPI, a national version of NACE Rev.2 has been used since 2016. In the price index for material resources acquired by industrial enterprises, the same classification was introduced in 2018. The PPI covers the NACE sections B "Mining and quarrying", C "Manufacturing", D "Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning" and E "Water supply, sewerage, waste collection and disposal".

The PPI is calculated on the basis of data on 379 types of products from 522 respondents, of which 177 are small enterprises. The product sample is based on the most popular products, as indicated in the industry statistics. Data on prices and weights are provided by the enterprises as part of a standard reporting routine. The weights are revised once a year.

Work plan and dissemination

The CPI and PPI are published monthly, in accordance with the Program of State Statistical Works. The day of publication is pre-announced in the publication calendar on the website and results are published on the website, in the form of press releases and – for the CPI – in e-GDDS. Users can subscribe to information in the form of statistical bulletins.

Challenges and future plans

Goskomstat mentions specifically the following plans for future development:

- Further implementation of international standards in the calculation of the CPI
- Improve the methodology for calculating price indices for exports and imports
- Develop a methodology for the production of price indices for agriculture
- Develop a methodology for the production of price indices for housing
- Update the methodology for the calculation of price indices for the purchase of materials by industrial enterprises
- Expand the sample of enterprises and products in the PPI

Furthermore, a number of challenges have been identified, notably the following:

- Quality aspects and new products
- Seasonal aspects and temporarily missing items
- Prices for industrial goods and services with a long production cycle, and for individual orders
- The coverage of small businesses that are not obliged to report monthly data

Recommendations

Goskomstat is encouraged to;

- Consider whether a register-based sampling of outlets would be preferable to the current judgemental sampling approach in the CPI
- Consider the various approaches to owner-occupied housing in the CPI, based on international best practices

- Start preparations for the implementation of COICOP 2018, in cooperation with National Accounts

3.3 Other macroeconomic statistics

Overview

Balance of Payments and Government Finance Statistics are compiled by other state bodies. Goskomstat cooperates closely with both the State Customs Committee, the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance.

External Trade Statistics

External Trade Statistics are compiled by the Department of Statistics on Foreign Economic Activity and Trade within Goskomstat. The main sources of methodological guidance are the IMF's Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (BPM6) and the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010 by the UN, IMF, WTO, Eurostat and others.

The collection and processing of statistical data on foreign trade in goods and the maintenance of the database is carried out by the State Customs Committee on the basis of data from customs declarations. Goskomstat receives only those data required for the statistical production process. A new commodity nomenclature based on the Harmonised System (HS) with certain national adaptations, notably in the pharmaceutical sector, was introduced in 2018.

The main data sources for statistics on trade in services are data from administrative sources, statistical surveys and quantitative assessment methods. The larger enterprises report data on a monthly basis, while expert estimates are used for smaller enterprises and micro firms. For tourism services, a sample survey on inbound and outbound tourism is carried out. A satellite account on tourism has been developed based on recommendations from the World Tourism Organisation.

Statistics on external trade are published on the Goskomstat website, in news releases and other statistical publications. Users can subscribe to data in electronic form. Non-published data can be accessed by users upon application unless classified as sensitive.

Cooperation has been established with a number of key trading partners (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia) with a view to undertaking mirroring exercises and improving the coherence of external trade statistics.

Goskomstat has identified the following priority areas for future development work:

- Improve the quality of the existing reporting forms
- Achieve comprehensive coverage
- Improve practices and timeliness at the data processing and analysing stage
- Ensure a single repository of statistical information and data integrity
- Increase efforts to provide advanced training to all staff

Balance of Payments Statistics

Balance of Payments (BOP) Statistics are compiled by the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, starting in 2018.

The IMF's Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (BPM6) constitutes the basis for the production of BOP Statistics. Training sessions have been carried

out, but due to the insufficient number of experienced staff, efforts are required in order to further develop skills and capabilities.

In the production of BOP Statistics, the Central Bank relies on Microsoft Excel, which is also used to exchange data with Goskomstat. The Central Bank is cooperating with Goskomstat and the IMF on the implementation of e-GDDS.

Statistics on the Balance of Payments, International investment position and external debt are published each quarter in Uzbek, Russian and English.

Government Finance Statistics

Government Finance Statistics (GFS) are compiled by the Ministry of Finance. Since the Financial Statistics Department is new, there is a need to recruit and train staff.

The Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014, published by the IMF, is the main international standard adhered to. The IMF has been supportive in providing training for new staff at the Ministry of Finance.

The IMF data dissemination standard "enhanced GDDS" (e-GDDS) is currently used. There are plans to change to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) in the near future.

Recommendations

The State bodies in charge are recommended to:

- Carry out mirroring exercises in external trade statistics with key trading partners with a view to improving statistical coherence across countries
- Further develop the skills and potential of the staff producing official statistics in Goskomstat, the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance

3.4 Population register

Overview

Goskomstat has a strong mandate for data collection (Chapter 2) and in many ways a strong register system. Registration of acts of civil status (birth, death, marriage, divorce) is carried out by the registry office at the Agency of public services of the Ministry of justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Goskomstat has full access to the acts of civil status. In the near future, the main task is the integration of electronic systems of registry offices and state statistics for the rapid exchange of data on births, deaths, marriages, divorces.

The process of documenting child births is well established, resulting in the birth certificate of the child which is an important document and necessary for reception of health and education services for the child. Documentation of deaths, marriages and divorces is also in good order.

Registration of migration data is limited. The exercise of social rights is not linked to the region of registration and there is therefore no incentive to report a change of address within the country. Statistical bodies keep records of the population only for persons who have changed their permanent place of residence, according to the information of the internal affairs bodies on registration and discharge.

In the near future, the main task is the integration of electronic systems of internal affairs bodies and state statistics bodies for the rapid exchange of data on arrivals and departures.

There is insufficient information on short-term migration flows both within and outside the country, which makes it difficult to record migration processes.

The strong system of registers and access to data provides opportunities for development in various statistical domains. One possibility would be to establish a real estate register which could be used for household sampling and estimation of the population size if combined with information from household surveys.

Recommendations

- Follow plans to establish a statistical population register.
- Consider ways to gather more comprehensive information on internal and external migration.
- Continue the movement from paper to electronic databases in the different administrative sources
- Look into ways to further develop registers for statistical purposes, including the establishment of a real estate register

3.5　Demographic statistics and population census

Overview

The most recent census was conducted in 1989. This is the base of demographic statistics in Uzbekistan. On the basis of the latest census, current population records are maintained using data on births, deaths and migration. Information on births and deaths seem to be reliable, but there is no systematic record of migration either within the country or between Uzbekistan and other countries. Given how much time has passed since the last census, there is reason to be cautious about the demographic indicators of the country.

The preparatory work for the next census is part of the national strategy for action for 2017-2021. The census concept has been developed and submitted for consideration by the Government.

Recommendations
- As a high priority, continue planning and developing a costed strategy for the next population census in cooperation with international partners and experts
- Review the reliability of demographic statistics in light of the recommendations on census and population registers

3.6 Labour market statistics

Overview

Goskomstat follows ILO standards and classifications in labour market statistics with some notable exceptions. There are plans to move into electronic data collection in the labour force survey, which is currently conducted through face-to-face interviews using paper and pencil. There is lack of clarity and documentation of response rates in the survey. Statistics on job vacancies, labour cost and earnings are available in Uzbekistan in some degree but improvements are needed to be in line with international standards.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS): The labour force survey is conducted and managed by the Ministry of Labour. The ministry handles all stages of the survey including training of interviewers, sampling and collection of data, questionnaire design and data analysis.

The ministry partly follows ILO standards but there are notable exceptions as in the definition of unemployment and information on number of hours worked is not collected. The latest versions of ISCO (2008) and ISCED (2011) are not applied.

The sampling rate is 0.3% of households in Uzbekistan. The design is a two-stage systematic, stratified cluster sample using regions within the country as stratum and mahallas (villages / neighbourhoods) as clusters. In total 600 mahallas were selected for the survey and all households within the selected mahallas were listed. A systematic sample of ten households plus five reserve households was selected from each of the 600 mahallas, using a fixed interval from the listed households. The five reserve households where used in order to replace non-responding households. The response rate from the survey is not published. Analysis is done using the SPSS software.

All interviewers who work with the LFS receive training and detailed instructions, designed for the survey. They are monitored by supervisors during fieldwork. The ministry plans to move into electronic data collection through tables next year (2019)

Survey of Job Vacancies: The Ministry of Labour has conducted one round of the job vacancy survey among enterprises in both the private and the public sector. Questions on work conditions and safety at work are included in the survey. The ministry noted that the first round of the survey deviates considerably from international standards but they aim to make improvements before the next round. Data on the worked time and vacancies are formed on the basis of the state statistical reporting on work according to the annually approved Program of State Statistical Works.

Statistics of Labour Cost: Goskomstat collected data on the cost of labour for large enterprises (not small business) until 2013.

Statistics on Earnings: Goskomstat receives data on earnings from the business register. The business register covers all enterprises in Uzbekistan, including the smallest, so a sample is not required. The data are analysed at the NACE 2-digit level. Goskomstat has information to calculate the gender pay gap and plans to make improvements to be able to publish this indicator.

Recommendations

- Follow more closely the exact definitions on unemployment and other key labour market indicators according to the standards of the International Labour Organisation
- Move towards the latest versions of ISCO (2008) and ISCED (2011)
- Collect and publish data on hours worked in the labour force survey
- Complete the implementation of the job vacancy survey in line with international standards
- Reintroduce the labour cost survey, in accordance with international standards
- Produce gender-pay-gap data from earnings statistics, in accordance with international standards

3.7   Living conditions statistics

Overview

The strong mandate for data collection and availability of data allows Goskomstat to collect detailed household income data from administrative sources. The household sample survey includes every member, including children, from the selected households and therefore provides a strong base for the calculation of various standard of living indicators. It also includes detailed information on consumption and information on material properties.

Living conditions statistics in Uzbekistan are based on international standards from the World Bank and the United Nations. The sample design is two-stage, first 208 mahallas (small local areas) are selected randomly and all households within them are listed. Mahallas are stratified by regions of the country. The listed households are sampled systematically (with equal interval). A reserve sample is kept in case of refusals or non-contact. This is the same practice as in the labour force survey, with lack of documentation and clarity of response rates and other data collection indicators. This process is repeated every 6 months. Data are collected from 10,000 households per year which is 0.2% of the households in Uzbekistan.

The survey is split into three sections: a diary of daily expenses, which is kept for 14 days, a household survey questionnaire and a survey of domestic tourism and physical activity. The household questionnaire includes questions on material items and use of technology.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. Interviewers visit each household up to three times in order to increase likelihood of participation. If the third visit does not produce a response the household is substituted for a household from the reserve list. In 2017, 10% of the selected sample refused to participate.

Several indicators are calculated from the survey such as monetary household income, consumer expenditures, income deciles and quantiles, Gini index, differentiation of the population by the main source of income, household types and material items. Poverty rates are not calculated from the survey. Income can be split into wages, income from entrepreneurial activities, income from sale of agricultural products, social benefits, interest dividends and other income from property and other monetary receipts. Information on income in-kind is collected from food and non-food products. Indicators from the survey are calculated on quarterly basis for the whole country and on a yearly basis for regions.

Future plans include revision of the sampling methodology and transition to electronic data collection mode.

Recommendations
- Calculate and publish indicators on monetary poverty in line with international standards
- Consider collecting more data on material deprivation in line with international standards (e.g. EU-SILC)

3.8 Statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals

Overview

In October 2018, shortly before the expert mission, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a Resolution on the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Uzbekistan. This Resolution approved the national road map and established a coordination committee and six expert groups on specific topics. Goskomstat will participate in these where appropriate. A preliminary list of national SDG indicators (196 indicators) was developed.

Goskomstat plans to publish statistics on the SDGs (national indicators) in Uzbek, Russian and English. The first version of the web portal on national indicators is expected around the 1st quarter of 2019. This will be followed by discussions with ministries and other government bodies to identify relevant data and develop methodologies to address any gaps. The national platform for reporting on global indicators is being prepared with the support of UNDP.

Regarding the global indicators, there are still many data gaps, though this situation is quite comparable to other countries. Goskomstat is working with various international organisations to identify ways to fill these gaps, including with UNICEF on a proposed Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

A new organisational unit of three people has recently been created within Goskomstat to take forward the work on SDG statistics. It was noted that they will have a lot of work.

Recommendations

- Goskomstat should consider preparing a baseline report on the availability of data, to raise funds and identify priorities for international technical cooperation.
- Goskomstat should implement plans to conduct a multi-indicator cluster survey (MICS) as a way to fill some data gaps
- Goskomstat should continue with plans to implement national reporting platforms for national and global SDG indicators
- Goskomstat should consider how to strengthen the resources available for the unit dealing with SDG statistics