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# **Data dissemination strategy of the Statistical Agency**

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**1. Data Dissemination Strategy of the Statistical Agency**

Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (hereinafter referred to as Agency) is a public authority in the field of statistical accounting and its activity is subject to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Agency is guided by the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, Laws of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Civil Service" and "On State Statistics", regulations of the Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan, decrees and orders of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, decrees and orders of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Regulation on the Agency, as well as international legal acts recognized by Tajikistan.

The aim of "Law on State Statistics" is to create a legal framework and regulatory mechanisms for the implementation of the unified state policy in the field of official statistics and national statistics dissemination to satisfy the state and society needs with full, reliable, scientifically based and timely statistical information on social, economic, demographic, environmental and other social processes in Tajikistan.

The Agency within the frames of its activities collects and disseminates statistical information guided by the principles of relevance, objectivity, timeliness, reliability, impartiality, statistical confidentiality, transparency, openness, accessibility, coherence and a comprehensive reflection of the socio-economic processes taking place in the republic.

The methodology for calculating statistical indicators in accordance with the international standards, forms, methods for collecting and processing statistical data established by the Agency are the official statistical standards of the Republic of Tajikistan.

One of the Agency's responsibilities is the effective and timely preparation and dissemination of high-quality statistical indicators, which influence economic and social phenomena and processes, and which provide for their users reliable sources for decision making and shaping their attitudes according to the given facts.

Current and future users are the reason and the purpose for the existence and development of the statistical system, since the user needs take the highest priority in the system development. The

activities must be aimed at satisfying those needs, which are realised through the mutual agreement between the users and the producer of the official statistics.

The Tajik statistical system should be publicly acknowledged, user-oriented and recognized as a source of reliable and timely statistical indicators. System efficiency of the official statistics is manifested in the professionally performed data and information dissemination, because the statistical system will reaffirm its purpose as long as its indicators are being requested.

Users of official statistical data may be found in all the spheres of economic and social life, ranging from individuals, business entities, bodies of legislative, executive, and judicial power, state administration and local self-government bodies, science and research institutions, and NGOs to other international institutions.

Dissemination stands for the efficiency of provision of services to natural and legal persons according to their needs. It refers to all activities of official statistics, which include the presentation of results of official statistics, and the means and methods of ensuring access to results and methodological basis. The task of the state statistical agencies is to provide all users with equal access to public statistical information.

The dissemination depends on the official strategy, qualified specialist, and current technical support.

The Agency MCC founded the unit to familiarize users with official statistics. The main idea was to forward all user requests to this unit in order to gather the most important information on the number and types of users and requests.

The Agency disseminates statistical data in the following manner:

- statistical publications (in printed format or on electronic media)
- statistical databases
- website
- information provided by specialists of particular statistical fields
- providing information/data via telephone or e-mail.

The Agency provides users with the following services:

- data/publications/databases on the website
- fast replies to requests in written form (for data already released)
- data requests on demand prepared by department specialist (customized processing)
- sales of publications
- subscription to publications

It is planned to implement:

- using publications in the library
- photocopying publications
- accessing data via the library computers

The official statistics is the common good of a society and therefore should be available to everyone. Statistical data must be presented in such a manner that the main results are understandable even without the expert knowledge of statistics, that is, in a form that ensures correct interpretation and meaningful comparisons.

The main channel for dissemination of statistical data and analysis is the Agency's website. In regards to altered market conditions and greater user demand for publications in electronic format, the Agency will in the shortest time possible start publishing all of its publications in electronic format on its website. Apart from the website, the Agency uses other channels for dissemination of statistical data and analysis, printed publications and electronic media being among them. Currently, all publications of the Agency are released in printed format, but the long-term goal is to decrease gradually the edition and to switch to electronic dissemination.

All available publications, data and databases are free of charge. When using or copying released on the website or published in printed publications, the Agency must be quoted as the source. Printed publications and user requests/queries, which require special processing, that is, which are prepared on user demand, are regulated in the Price list of publications and services disclosed in The Publishing programme, available on the website, as well as in printed form, free of charge).

All publications are announced in advance. A review of scheduled editions with a precise release date is available in the Calendar of Statistical Data Issues for a specific year (herein after: Calendar),

which is available on the website, as well as in printed format for internal use and dissemination among users. All publications must be released in accordance with the plan announced in the Calendar, and be available on the website (applying to the ones currently being released on the Agency's website) on the set date. Every departure from the plan disclosed in the Calendar shall be previously announced, an explanation shall be given, and a new release date shall be set.

In order to satisfy user needs, all regular issues of publications are released on the Agency's website, and are available in Tajik, Russian and English languages. The Agency holds the right to publish special editions of publications in Tajik and Russian only.

Upon a written request, the producers of the official statistics may disseminate individual statistical data which activities deal with performing the scientific research. Such data may be provided to scientific organizations, to scientists registered at the central body of the state administration responsible for the field of science, and to other subjects of scientific activities. A written request must state the purpose of the use of the statistical data.

A special contract shall be concluded on the use of the statistical data according to which the user shall be held financially and criminally responsible to use statistical data only for the purpose stated in the request, and shall not provide these data for inspection or use to unauthorised persons, and shall destroy such data after use.

Each authorised department of the Agency must, within the framework of its activities, set rules and principles regarding individual data, more specifically, which data must not be grouped together, in order to avoid recognition of the reporting unit to which the data refer to, and which aggregated data might expose individual data.

It is planned to conduct Open Days as a possibility to convey knowledge on statistics to target groups and the general public. Themes of the Open days are related to areas which are insufficiently familiar to target groups or general public, or in case that it's assumed that the knowledge of the Agency specialists of the particular area might be of great help to users. The scope and

statistical areas that Open Days might cover depend on the amount of current interest in statistical data, and on current needs for understanding official statistics.

Special target groups for whom the Open days are intended are journalists/media. The Agency intended to provide journalists with necessary methodological explanations easily understandable (methodology explained in plain language, not scientific) by organizing Open days, in order for them to be able to comment and interpret statistical data in a correct and quality manner.

One of the aims of the Agency is to create a uniform visual identity. All the Agency employees must act in accordance with the rules in reference to the usage of the available templates. All guidelines and templates shall be set and created by the Unit for data dissemination and communication.

Unit for data dissemination and communication is in charge of the implementation of marketing activities including feedback questionnaires. The employees of the unit are in charge of implementing research – covering current and potential users, defining the aim of research: problems and goals, determining sources of research, types, and methods of research, research sample selection, and means of interpreting and presenting the results.

The goals of user satisfaction research are various:

- learning the statistical data needs of users
- examining user preferences for creation of different publications and services
- acquiring feedback on publications and services of the Agency
- acquiring most needed information important for further development of products and services.

The agency guarantees the reporting units and confidentiality and protection of the provided statistical information, compliance with state and commercial secrets, protection of the legitimate interests of legal entities and natural persons.

The statistical data collected from the reporting units are released without the identifiers that directly or indirectly may be related to the natural or legal person representing the Agency's reporting unit. All the data the Agency releases and the data produced upon user's demand are expressed in aggregated form, unless otherwise agreed

with the reporting. In line with the Law statistical data may be disseminated individually in exceptional cases as follows:

- if the reporting unit agrees in writing to this form of dissemination of data
- if the data have been collected from public (universally available) compilations of data
- if they are disseminated in a form and in a way, which does not allow for the identification of the reporting unit to which the data refer.

## **2. Releasing official statistics**

The Agency is solely responsible for all decisions in deciding what, when and how statistics shall be released.

No one has access to the statistics before they are officially released. This is one of the most important principles of Dissemination Strategy of Statistical Data of the Agency, and is designed to ensure equally enabled access to statistical data to all users – no privileged users.

The Agency employees involved in approving and preparing statistical data for release and the Director can have access to the statistics prior to release. Other employees may be given such access for purposes of their work, for calculation of statistical data (indicators) related to some other data. However, official statistics must not be made public, either directly or indirectly, before they are released by the Agency.

The Calendar of Statistical Data Issues is a publication that provides a precise overview of the publications due to be released by the Agency for the entire statistical year, one year in advance.

It is planned to prepare an internal calendar of publications, which will contain the date and day, month and week, and the year of the release of the publication. Furthermore, it contains title and the number of the publication, reference period, level and the language of the issue. The dynamics of issuing the First Release is monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and annually.

Delays and changes in the release date of the publications must be announced in advance. The Agency obliges to announce any delay or change in the release date of the publications and give notice no less than three working days prior to the original release date in the Calendar, on the Agency's website.

Publishing Programme (hereinafter referred to as the Programme) is the Agency's publication catalogue. It is published annually, by the end of the year for the following statistical year. This publication is released both on the Agency's website as well as in printed format free of charge.

The first part contains images of publications issued by the Agency, and general information on types of publications. A detailed review of issues planned for the entire year ahead follows. Publications are grouped by statistical areas. Next to the number and title of a publication, most of the publications have a short description, release date, dynamics of the publishing, data level, language, format, and the media on which the publications are published.

At the end of the Programme, users can find detailed information on how to acquire statistical data and publications, telephone numbers and addresses for information, order options, complaints, payments and delivery. The Programme also contains the Price list of publications and services of the Agency.

The Agency releases preliminary and final data retrospectively in many statistical areas. Preliminary data shall only be used where this is crucial in relation to timeliness.

Publishing preliminary data shall always be followed up with the final figures. Provisional data are released on the Agency's website or in printed format, and they must be, whenever it is possible, followed by an announcement of the release date of the final data.

Although the agency's employees make maximum efforts to reduce errors prior to the data release, some might occur occasionally. It is important to preserve the confidence in the official statistics, as well as in the Agency as the institution whose highest goal is dissemination of official statistics. For that reason, it is crucial that the Agency acknowledges and documents the errors, and that a candid and professional explanation is given.

Given that there is a high risk of users retrieving and using the data

before errors have been detected and corrected, the errors must be published in the shortest period possible, and users must be enabled to see clearly what has been corrected.

In the case of a serious error that requires a period longer than one working day to correct, the incorrect data/publication shall be removed from the Agency's website, and a message stating when the corrected version or corrigenda will be posted on the homepage. With the release of the amended version of the data/publication or corrigenda, the first released version is released simultaneously, in which the amendment is displayed clearly. In other words, released data containing an error shall never be replaced by the correct version, without being clearly displayed (footnote reference to the correction required)..

If an error is detected and corrected on the day of the release, the correction notice must state precise release time of the correction. Corrections of proofing/printing errors shall be made without issuing a correction notice.

### **3. Agency's Publications**

The Agency's publications are available to the users in printed and/or in electronic format (e-mail/electronic media and internet). Majority of statistical survey results are issued in a standard way – in the form of printed publications – while also available on demand in electronic format (e-mail/electronic media). If the results of statistical surveys are not issued in the form of printed publications, they are available in the form of databases on the Agency's website or on an electronic medium. Regardless of the format they are issued in (printed or electronic) the following rule applies to all publications – they are announced in advance and the precise day or month of the release is set. All publications are available to all users simultaneously, meaning that no one has access to publications before release (see chapter Access to official statistics before release)

The Agency issues several types of publications: the social and economic status, Statistical Yearbook, the regions of Tajikistan, Tajikistan in figures, Tajikistan and CIS countries, finance, main indicators of national accounts, industry of Tajikistan, construction, agriculture, cotton growing, newsletters on food security and poverty, environmental protection, main trade indicators, logistics,

prices in the Republic of Tajikistan, foreign economic activity, population, education, Demographic Yearbook, labor market, main indicators of household budgets surveys, and others.

All the users, with the exception of those with the free-of-charge status shall pay for the Agency's publications according to the Price List of Publications and Services published on the website.

#### **4. Data processing**

The conducted statistical surveys and the collected and processed data are intended for the users. The role of the users is becoming more important and is growing side-by-side with the awareness, the level of knowledge, and the increasing quality of statistical data and services. The National statistics, which is independent and user-oriented, is a symbol of a democratic and developed society. However, the users often do not find the data of their interest included in the data that are officially released, which naturally, does not mean that the requested data are not available to users. Such data are processed on the user demand and are charged depending on the complexity of the request and the time necessary for the specialist to prepare.

Although predicting future user needs is an important part of the Dissemination Strategy of Statistical Data of the Agency, the Agency does not have the capacity to release all data that users are requesting. For that reason, certain statistical data is exclusively available on user demand.

Information/data request implies request for information on the Agency and its activities, and for released data referring to the Republic of Tajikistan. Responses to information/data requests are submitted in Tajik or Russian language.

Information/data request shall be answered either by telephone, e-mail, and fax or by mail (letter).

By calling telephone numbers of the Dissemination Unit the users will get all the information on where to locate the requested data or instructions on how to submit a publication purchase request, or customized processing request, and all information regarding the Agency and its activities.

If a more time-consuming question is involved, Dissemination unit

employees will ask the user to leave a contact number to call back after consulting an specialist department, give a contact number of a person from a department whose area of expertise corresponds to the user's question, or they will ask the user to submit the request by e-mail, fax or by mail.

A request for customized processing implies a request for more detailed information/data from the ones available in the released data, that is, from the ones available in the publications, databases or on the Agency's website. Resolving such requests requires additional processing or data analysis, which is conducted by specialist departments with assistance of Information Technology. Customized processing is available in all statistical areas, and may be a subject of request for customized processing which is answered to in Tajik and in Russian.

Standardised request for customized processing implies requests for foreign trade data, industrial production, for delivery of price indices and earnings indices, and they are charged not by the hour of work of the specialist department, and costs of the Information Technology, but by the amount of data.

## **5. The Agency's internal dissemination**

The main channel for the dissemination of the information and data inside the Agency is the Intranet. Its main task is to help the Agency's employees explore the information, acquire knowledge and to use it afterwards. Apart from that, the purpose of the Intranet is to promote the interaction and to create the identity by providing the information on the institution, its tasks and employees.

The Intranet is a helpful working tool, which promotes skills, knowledge, openness and sharing information within the Agency. It is helpful to employees because they are aware that it is always a source of fresh information regarding the Agency, which they need for decision-making, writing reports and general awareness.

## **6. Public Relations**

The Agency exists for the users, and to establish an effective communication (directly or indirectly aimed at achieving goals of the Dissemination strategy of statistical data of the Agency). A quality

strategy for promotional activities based on informing and reminding is much needed.

The goal of public relations is that the Agency staff and external target groups should be aware of the Agency's goals and objectives, that they should support the achievement of goals via communication. The development of the society has resulted in a situation in which the Agency as a service provider does not take the centre stage, but instead it adapts to the users with which the Agency is working now. Because of that, the Agency needs to have an open mind to their needs and desires, and to disseminate the data it releases accordingly.

To the Agency, the communication with the media is crucial, because the media is one of the key users of the official statistics and an important link between the producers of the statistical data and general public. Media are, in fact, the main channel transferring official statistics to the general public, and due to that very fact, maintaining good relations with the journalists is very important to the Agency. Tajik media rarely quote institutions as often as they quote the Agency.

Although the media is a separate target group of the Agency's users, it is essential not to forget that the same rules apply to them as to everybody else. In other words, details must never be revealed prior to the official release of statistical data, not even information on whether the data is going to contrast or coincide to the already released data. The Agency does not deliver data to the media prior to their release, which means that they will have access to them simultaneously as the rest of the users. Furthermore, the Agency does not take political stands, because its role is of a professional and independent institution.

All information/data that the Agency prepares at journalists'/media request is free of charge.

Given that the Agency does not employ a Public Relations spokesperson, Dissemination unit in cooperation with the specialist departments prepares the replies/data to journalist requests. In case they demand a statement, it shall be given by the Director of the Agency, or by a person authorized by the Director. In general, journalist requests are in most cases related to the interpretation of statistical data, analysis of statistical data or surveys.

In preparation of the data, and interpretation and analysis of the data, it is necessary to explain the matter of things argumentatively and concisely. The most important elements need to be emphasized, while making sure that the data and their interpretation or analysis is put within the requested context. The vocabulary that is used for the commentary needs to be understandable to all, and not only to the statisticians.

We must be aware of the fact that the journalists often do not convey all parts of the commentary that is prepared for them, but more often they choose elements that they find interesting to the readers. For that reason, it is crucially important to get to the point of the aim of journalist's request and to condense, at target and argumentatively, to avoid misinterpretations. Journalists must always be reminded to quote the Agency as the source.

If any Agency employee notices or is notified by a user that the Agency's data is incorrectly presented, or misinterpreted in the media, employees of the Dissemination Unit shall get in touch with the journalist that published the article, in shortest time possible, and kindly ask them to correct the incorrectly stated information/data.

The Dissemination Unit is in charge of the implementation of marketing activities, including public survey and polls. The Unit employees are also in charge of the implementation of research – covering present and potential users, defining the aim of research: problems and goals, determining sources of research, type and method of research, research sample selection and means of interpreting and presenting the results.

The reputation researches are conducted to find out about an increase or a decrease trend of the Agency's reputation among current and potential users. Such researches turn out to be very helpful after taking specific measures that we find useful for improvement of the Agency's performance. In addition, they are important for retrieving feedback on factors influencing reputation, so that we could have a greater influence on them in the future.

## **7. Pricing policy**

It is important to note, that the Agency's activities are funded from

the state budget, and that the Agency does not have a status of a profit organization. These facts define the basic means of cooperation with customers/users of official statistics to a great extent. Therefore, a share of publications and data is available free of charge, and the prices of printed publications and other services solely depend on the material costs.

The Agency developed four models for charging official statistics:

1. The information/data requests imply requests for the information on the Agency and its activities and published data relating to the Republic of Tajikistan. Having in mind that the responses to such requests are the basic information/data, they are free of charge, except in cases when the users demand the information/data to be delivered in a written form on a memo with a stamp and signature of a person responsible. In that case, the service will be charged according to the Price list of publications and services issued in the Programme (available in printed format, and on the Agency website free of charge).
2. Standardized requests for the customized processing and the requests for customized processing which can be solved within the specialist department, and without the assistance of the Information Technology Directorate are charged not by the hour of work of the specialist department, and costs of the Information Technology Directorate, but by the amount of data. The Price list of publications and services is issued in the Programme (available in printed format, and on the Agency website free of charge).
3. Specific Requests for Customized Processing imply narrowly specified user requests and are charged according to the hours of work of the specialist department required, the price of assistance of the Information Technology Directorate. The price of such service is impossible to predict or plan ahead.
4. Databases imply databases of foreign trade statistics; the register of business entities, the Household Budget Survey Database, the Labour Force Survey Database (only aggregated data, rather than individual). Their price is defined in the Price list of publications and services issued in the Programme (available in printed format, and on the Agency website free of charge).

All general information, i.e. statistical data for the general public is

available for free at the library and on the Agency website.

