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Improving data dissemination strategies

Supplementary report

Document submitted by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic¹

Summary

1. In 1994, the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC) acquired a higher status as a national-level organization - reflecting the fact that the authorities recognized official statistics to be an integral part of the social and economic policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. The activities of NSC are governed by the State Statistics Act which was adopted in 1995 and guarantees the independence of NSC and the confidentiality of the data submitted.
2. The purpose of the national statistical system is to provide State administrative bodies and other users with sophisticated and reliable statistical information on the state of the Republic's economy and social sector.
3. Information from ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Finance, the Customs and Tax Inspectorate, the National Bank, the Social Fund, the State Property Fund, etc. together with State statistical returns, are used to give a better picture of all aspects of the situation.

¹ Author: M.K. Isakunova

4. The information provided by NSC is used by State management bodies, the executive, ministries and departments, international and intergovernmental organizations, financial institutions, foreign firms, the media and citizens.

5. In 1997, with a view to further improving the statistical information system, NSC drew up a State programme for the reform of the Kyrgyz Republic's statistics for 1998-2000. It contains a detailed description of the current situation, shortcomings in the work of the statistical service and an indication of the measures required to correct these defects. The programme is based on a **General Data Dissemination System**, developed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide guidance in the preparation of data and the organization of statistical procedures in accordance with international standards.

6. In March 1998 NSC embarked upon its new **publications** policy, which involves the publication and dissemination of NSC's statistical information on the basis of a specific schedule. NSC issues four main types of publications, comprising analytical and statistical sections, into the standard format indicated in its statistical information dissemination policy:

Quarterly or annual thematic publications. They contain information on various topics including detailed comments on and the analysis of data constituting the most exhaustive information available on the topic in question.

Annual publications of a general nature presenting a summary of social and economic developments.

Monthly publications reflecting the current social and economic position on the basis of preliminary operational data.

Specialized publications containing thematic information obtained as a result of one-off or irregular surveys as well as detailed commentaries on the theme in question.

7. In accordance with this policy, NSC began to produce the following annual publications: "The social and economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic", "The social development of the Kyrgyz Republic", "The national accounts of the Kyrgyz Republic", "The price index of the Kyrgyz Republic" and "The foreign trade of the Kyrgyz Republic". Since 1998 it has also published a short statistical compendium entitled "The Kyrgyz Republic" in Kyrgyz, Russian and English. Each compendium contains a page of publicity material, informing users of new publications. Information on the periodicity and the dates of issues of publications is available on NSC's Internet site and in the publications themselves.

8. Its most operationally useful publications are **press releases** consisting of short articles on the most topical subjects. NSC holds press conferences, publishes articles on topical issues in various newspapers, publishes the journal "Economics and Statistics" and organizes conferences on State statistical problems which are attended by representatives of the media. Its press secretary is responsible for relations with the media.

9. Unfortunately, publicity about our statistical publications is confined to the above because of our lack of experience in conducting market surveys. Moreover, our limited financial and technical resources prevent us from presenting our publications and banner advertisements in a suitable manner.

10. As in the past, traditional publications are the ones that are the most widely disseminated, although electronic methods are also being used extensively. On 20 March 1998, NSC created its own Internet site (www.nsc.bishkek.su) which offers general information, metadata and data on the budget-tax, currency-credit, external economic and social sectors and also contains Excel files from the NSC database. It is at present being enlarged on the basis of proposals by branch divisions.

11. As a result of the introduction of this page we have begun to receive requests from various organizations - including international organizations - libraries, students and citizens. We try, to the best of our ability, to provide all the information requested and intend to conduct a survey in order to determine the needs and requirements of users.

12. The information available on our site is at present provided free of charge. In September 1999 an expert from Germany's Federal Statistical Office assisted us in looking into pricing questions and the possibility of making data available free of charge will be explored.

13. A system of statistical indicators has been developed with the help of the IMF resident adviser and was introduced as a centralized database for the preparation of publications. It contains about 300 statistical tables. We intend to expand the database to include all the NSC's processed statistical data. At present the database is updated each month by hand, but since this requires a great deal of time it has been decided to automate the process, thereby speeding up the publication of official data.

14. The user may, of course, require information not contained in the database. We have an unprocessed database but it is scattered so that we are developing a single raw database. We also intend to connect it to the NSC Internet site and to develop a special programme that can be used to compile tables at the request of users and satisfy what is a growing demand.

15. The international seminar on "Statistics for Users and Interdepartmental Cooperation", held in Bishkek on 4 and 5 October 1999, once again confirmed the need for a marketing service. Users found that the information provided by NSC was useful and reliable, but at the same time it was noted that international organizations learn of the information available by chance or through counterparts, whereas government bodies receive the programme of statistical work.

16. For this reason, further development of the marketing and publicity service was included in the Multipurpose Unified Statistical Programme for 2001-2005. Moreover, NSC will participate in the international exhibition "Expo 2000" with publications on the social and economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic.
