

**MODERNIZATION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM
OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN - EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT
OF A STATISTICAL ORGANIZATION IN TIMES OF CHANGE**

Statistical data is the oil of the 21st century, the century of digitalization. Data is the most valuable resource in the world. It is an engine of development and transformation.

A comprehensive system for collecting, storing, processing and publishing official statistical information with the widespread use of modern information and communication technologies has been formed in the Republic of Uzbekistan as a result of the consistent implementation of measures to create the system of state statistics.

In accordance with large-scale reforms aimed at improving the management system, as well as related to the modernization of government, including state statistics bodies, based on the Action Strategy for 2017-2021 in five priority areas of country's development, some progress has been achieved, which, in turn, is positively assessed by users in the country and in international statistical community.

As a result of these reforms, the produced data are highly relevant, in-demand, more open and accessible to society, which better satisfies user requests for statistical information and increases confidence in official statistics. Over the past three years, five normative acts were adopted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as more than 30 regulatory provisions focused on their implementation were adopted by the government.

In order to meet the methodological frameworks of the country's statistical data compilation by international standards, an effective process has been established to study innovations and best practices with their subsequent implementation in practice through the participation of representatives at various international statistics events and the exchange of experience with national statistical institutions of other countries.

At the same time, it is known that Uzbekistan has made a significant breakthrough in the direction of openness and transparency to the world community, as a result of which free access to a wide range of relevant statistical information was provided, which previously had some limitations.

In May 2018, the country joined the IMF's data dissemination initiatives through the enhanced General Data Dissemination System¹. Also, the functioning of the open data portal has been improved both in terms of the quality of information and its content.

In order to fully display statistical information on the results of ongoing socio-economic reforms in the country in the databases of international organizations, a permanent information exchange has been established with such reputable international statistical organizations as the UN Statistics Department, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNECE, FAO, ESCAP, Eurostat, Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, ADB, IMF, ITU, IEA, etc.

Based on this, the data provided has gained its relevance and demand, it has become more open and accessible to society, which allows to better meet users' requests for statistical information and increases confidence in official statistics.

Regulatory infrastructure

As known, the Law "On state statistics" of 2002 (with subsequent amendments) is the legal basis for state statistics, which regulates public relations in the field of statistical activity within the framework of the National Statistical System.

The President of the country and the government have adopted a number of decrees and regulations on regulating statistical activities and providing state statistics data, if necessary.

In general, the legal framework complies with generally accepted international recommendations and standards. At the same time, the country's government clearly understands that effective legislation is crucial for the full functioning of the statistical system, and in order to fill the gaps in the current legislation, a new Law "On Official Statistics" is being created in accordance with the Model Law on Official Statistics, developed by UNECE in cooperation with EFTA and Eurostat, approved in 2016 at the 64th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians².

The necessary measures are being taken to transition to the 2008 SNA³, which will be implemented in stages on the basis of the "Multi-year statistical work programme".

The requirements of the "Guide to State Finance Statistics 2014"⁴ and the "Guide to Monetary and Financial Statistics 2016"⁵, are also being introduced, which allows improving the quality of data based on the latest international criteria for compiling statistical data.

¹ See also <https://dsbb.imf.org/e-gdds/overview>

² See also https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2016/mtg/ECE_CES_2016_8-1601555R.pdf

³ See also <https://www.lex.uz/docs/4478621>

⁴ See also <https://www.imf.org/external/Pubs/FT/GFS/Manual/2014/gfsfinal.pdf>

⁵ See also <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/mfs/manual>

Major public events

Along with the above, the government of the country is aware of the importance and significance of the databases that are being formed through large-scale public events.

Thus, the decision has been made and active work is being carried out to implement the most significant national activities in the coming years, namely:

multi-indicator cluster survey in the years 2020-2021;

population census in 2022;

agricultural census in 2023;

business census in 2024-2025.

A decision was also made on the participation of Uzbekistan in the global round 2020, the International Comparisons Programs.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 70 adopted at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015, as well as to organize systematic work on the basis of the consistent implementation of the "Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Global Agenda until 2030" (hereinafter - the SDGs), the government approved 16 National Sustainable Development Goals and 127 related tasks for the period up to 2030⁶, corresponding to the National Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021, which, in general, are considered as a unique way to achieve the SDGs in the country.

A special website has been created dedicated to the National Sustainable Development Goals, which publishes all the necessary information in this direction⁷.

ICT in the service of statistics

In the modern world, digital technologies play a decisive role in all spheres and sectors of society, including in the field of statistics. It is well known that they not only improve the quality of products and services, but also have a significant positive effect on reducing costs.

Thus, the introduction of advanced ICTs in the field of statistics allows us to optimize the processes of statistical work, significantly reduce the reporting burden on respondents, effectively establish communication with users through the dissemination of statistical information in electronic form, etc.

⁶ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 841 dated 10.20.2018 "On measures to implement the National goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development for the period until 2030" // www.lex.uz

⁷ See also <http://nsdg.stat.uz/>

However, it is more important that the successful implementation of advanced ICTs helps to minimize the human factor in the overall processes of statistical work, which, in general, helps to increase the trust, transparency and reliability of statistical data.

With a deep understanding of this, necessary measures are being taken to effectively introduce the capabilities of advanced ICTs in the National Statistical System of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In particular, an electronic system for receiving statistical reports using the e-Stat3.0 software product via the Internet has already been activated. This software product is constantly being improved and modernized, and today its more advanced version of e-Stat4.0 is being developed, which allows working online, as well as on various platforms, including mobile operating systems.

Price surveys in the consumer sector of the economy are now fully carried out using special electronic devices (tablets). With the support of the World Bank, household survey questionnaires, which are also conducted using tablets, have been improved. In the following years, this practice will be implemented in all types of statistical surveys.

Along with data sets in the form of certain tables, the practice of disseminating analytical and statistical information in the form of press releases using infographics and charts has been established.

In order to create favorable conditions and meet user demand, statistical information is published in the seven most popular formats (word, excel, pdf, xlsx, csv, json and xml).

The open data portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan allows providing users with necessary and relevant statistical information, which contains about 7.7 thousand data sets, more than a hundred ministries and departments of the republic in a single information resource.

Active work is underway to introduce modern methods of data visualization, integration of statistical and geospatial information. International recommendations and best practices of other countries in these areas are being studied for their implementation in the near future into practice in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

With the support of the Asian Development Bank, a modern and modernized interface of the official website of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on statistics is being developed today, and the Open Data Portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan is with the help of the World Bank.

At the same time, there is a deeper awareness of the economic and social value of data in the socio-economic decision-makings of the country and the need for continuous improvement. Given this, a common vision has been developed for the development of national statistical system with the support of the World Bank.

The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics of the Republic of Uzbekistan is the key to the full integration of the national statistical system into the international statistical community

The National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) is the initiative of the State Statistics Committee, with the support of the World Bank, and is designed to contribute to improved relevance of statistics that meet the user's need, improvement of the management and coordination of statistical systems and ensuring that the development of statistics in the country is sustainable.

According to the Strategy, a strengthened National Statistical System shall comprehensively include all bodies of state that are producing official statistics, harmonize the production and dissemination of statistics, promote the use of official statistics in policy development, policy monitoring and evaluation as well as decision-making efforts, advocate and raise statistical awareness of general public, provide framework for the development of the statistical system.

On the basis of the NSDS, every effort is made to promote and increase statistical public awareness more widely and to further develop the country's statistical system based on generally established international requirements and standards.

The NSDS has two main objectives. Firstly, it is an assessment of the current state of the statistical system in Uzbekistan; secondly, based on the action plan and budget, it determines the priority areas for the development of the National Statistical System of the country for the next five years.

The process of assessing and preparing the NSDS was carried out in accordance with the best practices and guidelines of the NSDS developed by PARIS21⁸, as well as taking into account the Standard Model of Work of Statistical Organizations⁹ and the Standard Model of Statistical Workflow¹⁰, based on which the following aspects of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Uzbekistan are considered:

- organizational and legal infrastructure;
- statistics infrastructure;
- relationships between users and providers;
- information processing infrastructure;
- individual thematic programs or statistical indicators.

⁸ See also <https://paris21.org/national-strategy-development-statistics-nsds>

⁹ See also <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/50th-session/documents/BG-Item3b-FPOS-Implementation-guidelines-E.pdf>.

¹⁰ See also ECE/CES/2017/11, <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/GAMSO/GAMSO+v1.1.2> and <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/GSBPM/GSBPM+v5.0>

The core of the strategy is formed by the following strategic objectives:

- Key national indicators that are relevant for policy and decision-making are properly covered.
- A strong quality management, monitoring, and evaluation framework.
- The national statistical system will have a clear data dissemination policy and practice.
- A sturdy, comprehensive, and coherent legal framework and coordination mechanism for statistics are in place to maintain integrity and independence
- The national statistics producers will continue satisfying demand for official statistical information and will maintain required capacity, contribute to an informed society through official statistical advocacy and creating the necessary conditions for statistical awareness of users.

The following strategic goals are bases of the developed NSDC:

- key national policy and decision-making indicators;
- strong quality management, monitoring and evaluation system;
- a National statistical system with clear data dissemination policies and practices;
- the creation of a strong, comprehensive and harmonized legal framework, as well as an appropriate coordination mechanism to maintain the integrity and independence of the country's statistical system;
- national producers of statistics will continue to meet the demand for official statistical information, maintain the necessary capacity at the appropriate level, make a feasible contribution to society by promoting official statistics and creating the necessary conditions for statistical awareness of users.

The implementation of the NSDS in the period 2020-2025 will allow to achieve the following broad measurable strategic outcomes:

- high user satisfaction in statistical information;
- qualitative motivation of suppliers of statistical data;
- comprehensive support of the government and partners in the development of national statistics;
- motivation and high qualification of staff;
- effective coordination of the entire national statistical system of the country.

The value system of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and other institutions producing data is primarily based on professionalism, integrity, quality thinking, reliability, openness, interaction and cooperation with all interested partners. As a result of the implementation of the NSDS, this value system will be implemented and institutionalized in accordance with the fundamental principles of official statistics¹¹.

Of course, the implementation of the above measures will create a solid foundation for the modernization and improvement of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Uzbekistan in accordance with generally accepted standards and its full integration into the international statistical community.



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¹¹ See also <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/FP-New-E.pdf>