

# ESS Peer Reviews Light Self-Assessment Questionnaire on the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice

## Identification

0a. Please indicate to which Institution the replies to this questionnaire belong? -open reply-(**compulsory**)

Agrostatistics Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Food

0b. Please indicate your country. -single choice reply-(**compulsory**)

Bulgaria

## Institutional Environment

### Principle 1 - Professional Independence

**Professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European Statistics.**

Indicator 1.1: The independence of the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating statistics is specified in law and assured for other statistical authorities.

Indicator 1.2: The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. They are of the highest professional caliber.

Indicator 1.3: The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have responsibility for ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner.

Indicator 1.4: The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and, where appropriate, the heads of other statistical authorities have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.

Indicator 1.5: The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.

Indicator 1.6: Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.

Indicator 1.7: The National Statistical Institute and, where appropriate, other statistical authorities, comment publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of statistics as far as considered suitable.

Indicator 1.8: The appointment of the heads of the National Statistical Institutes and, where appropriate, of other statistical authorities, is based on professional competence only. The reasons on the basis of which the incumbency can be terminated are specified in the legal framework. These cannot include reasons compromising professional or scientific independence.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- the head of the statistical department:
  - The head of the statistical entity (i.e. department, unit, structure, office,...) has the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases
  - Nomination and dismissal procedure, and duration of his/her mandate
  - Description of his/her responsibilities, indicating to which extend he/she can ensure that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner
  - Nature of reporting arrangements to, or the oversight by, the head of the NSI

- Administrative level
- the statistical releases
  - are they regularly used?
  - are they clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements?

-open reply-(compulsory)

The head of the Agrostistics department is responsible for the choice of statistical methods, standards and procedures as well for the content and timing of statistical data release. All surveys carried out by the Agrostistics department are included in the National Statistical Programme (NSP) for the current year. The head of the Agrostistics department is a civil servant appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Food in accordance with the Civil Servants Law. The head of the Agrostistics department leads a department within the Agriculture and Regional Policy Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The department is a body of statistics and part of the National Statistical System. As a body of statistics it develops, produces and publishes the results of the carried out surveys, elaborates the plans, the survey methodology and organizes the surveys in the structural units of the MAF. The head of the Agrostistics department is a member of the National Statistical Committee and the Working Group № 12 "Statistics". The statistical data for the most part results from carried out statistical surveys. All survey results are published on the MAF website. The users utilize the data on a regular basis – for evaluation of national policies in agriculture, for CAP assessment, for drafting of national, regional and municipal plans and programs for agriculture. The published statistical data does not include political comments and statements.

## Principle 2 - Mandate for Data Collection

**Statistical authorities have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.**

Indicator 2.1: The mandate of the statistical authorities to collect information for the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics is specified in law.

Indicator 2.2: The statistical authorities are allowed by law to use administrative data for statistical purposes.

Indicator 2.3: On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authorities may compel response to statistical surveys.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular:

- of the legal basis or agreement for collecting/compiling data and for producing European Statistics and
- whether it is publicly available

-open reply-(compulsory)

The mandate of the Agrostistics department as a body of statistics is to collect information on the development, production and dissemination of European and national statistics and is governed by the following normative acts, regulations and documents: • Statistics Act; • Order of the Prime Minister appointing the Agrostistics department as statistical body; • Strategy for Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria 2013-2017; • Memorandum of Understanding between the National Statistical Institute and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food; • Agreement on cooperation and strategic partnership in the exchange of information between the National Statistical Institute and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food; • Regulations of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food; • Internal rules for the organization of the activities of the Agriculture and Regional Policy Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

## Principle 3 - Adequacy of Resources

**The resources available to statistical authorities are sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.**

Indicator 3.1: Staff, financial, and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current statistical needs.

Indicator 3.2: The scope, detail and cost of statistics are commensurate with needs.

Indicator 3.3: Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new statistics against their cost.

Indicator 3.4: Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- whether the staff, financial and computing resources are adequate in magnitude and in quality to meet the statistical needs
- whether there are procedures to follow when there are statistical activities which can be discontinued or curtailed in order to free up resources

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

In practice, the available human, financial, and IT resources are not always sufficient in quantity and quality to meet the current needs of statistical information. The available desktops were delivered within projects, in which MAF participates and receives EU grants, and are sufficient to work in the offices of MAF and the regional offices. In recent years, with the development of statistics, there is an increase of the tasks to be performed, whereas the number of experts remains steady. New surveys (e.g. agro-environmental indicators) have been introduced along with an increased commitment to publish information on the MAF website and increased requirements for quality reporting on the carried out surveys. Consistent with the MAF budget, the financial resources are not always sufficient to fulfill the surveys so they are carried out in a regime of restricted budget. Ways to optimize costs are being searched for, organizational changes were made in the of some surveys, the samples have been optimized, the introduction of information for statistical purposes from administrative registers that meet the definitions and are reliable as a source. Each survey has its own budget, developed by the Agrostistics department and included in the budgetary procedure of the ministry. The budgets are published in the National Statistical Programme (NSP) for the current year. NSP includes information about the funds received as grants from Eurostat or other donors. The development of an IT system for agricultural statistics will optimize the workflows, the data processing and the provision of the necessary information. There is continuity of staff in the Agrostistics department. The senior officials train junior experts and pass on their experience and knowledge. They guide them in the conduct of surveys.

## Principle 4 - Commitment to Quality

**Statistical authorities are committed to quality. They systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality.**

Indicator 4.1: Quality policy is defined and made available to the public. An organizational structure and tools are in place to deal with quality management.

Indicator 4.2: Procedures are in place to plan and monitor the quality of the statistical production process.

Indicator 4.3: Product quality is regularly monitored, assessed with regard to possible trade-offs, and reported according to the quality criteria for European Statistics.

Indicator 4.4: There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using also external experts where appropriate.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- your Quality Commitment
- the procedures to assure the quality of the statistical processes and outputs
- the methods of monitoring the quality with respect to the quality criteria for European Statistics

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

In order to ensure the Commitment to Quality policy documents and materials of the National Statistical System are used. Quality reports according to the requirements of European regulations have been prepared and approved by Eurostat – for the carried out surveys in crops and livestock statistics as well as the orchard survey. Controls of compliance with the planned activities and the requirement of the legislation are provided at all levels of statistical process. All new statistical questionnaires are coordinated with the NSI and approved by

an order of the NSI President. Training of MAF and RO experts, as well as of surveyors employed for the survey is regularly carried out. The data is checked at different levels, all necessary checks and follow-up controls are carried out. The results are analyzed and compared, as well as the causal relations for existing logical inconsistencies. The user needs of statistical information in the field of agriculture are taken into account in relation to the new aspects of the CAP and for national needs.

## Principle 5 - Statistical Confidentiality

**The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes are absolutely guaranteed.**

Indicator 5.1: Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.

Indicator 5.2: Staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.

Indicator 5.3: Penalties are prescribed for any willful breaches of statistical confidentiality.

Indicator 5.4: Guidelines and instructions are provided to staff on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. The confidentiality policy is made known to the public.

Indicator 5.5: Physical, technological and organisational provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases

Indicator 5.6: Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- the legal basis that requires to fully respect Statistical confidentiality
- the protocols applied
- the guidelines and instructions provided to the staff and the confidentiality commitments signed by the staff
- the physical, technological and organizational provisions to protect security and integrity of databases

-open reply-(compulsory)

During the performance of their duties all experts in agrostistics strictly comply with the rules on statistical confidentiality, in accordance with the Statistics Act. The Act provides penalties for breaking the statistical confidentiality rules. All employees from the Agrostistics department and the experts on agricultural statistics from the RO annually sign an affidavit of compliance with the requirements of the laws concerning data privacy and statistical confidentiality. The same declaration is signed by the hired external experts and surveyors. The upper left corner of the title page of each questionnaire contains a note that the data is used for statistical purposes only. The heads of enterprises and farmers included in the statistical surveys receive a special letter for the purposes of the study and maintenance of statistical confidentiality. Absolutely guaranteed are the privacy of individuals and legal entities that provide data (agricultural holdings, processing enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide, and the use the information for statistical purposes only. The data of the Agrostistics Department is protected by the NTFS file system provided only for internal use by the department. The department has a Microsoft domain structure without tanks and active users who are external to the department (employees outside the department). The data integrity is provided by Microsoft SQL databases integrated into the existing domain structure, thereby providing a centralized authentication of authorized users having access to data. The data is protected by the use of back-up and archive of specialized software (Veritas) and hardware (Tape Library) in the server room with electronically and controlled access. Before publishing the results all databases are checked for the presence of confidential data.

## Principle 6 - Impartiality and Objectivity

**Statistical authorities develop, produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.**

Indicator 6.1: Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations

Indicator 6.2: Choices of sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are informed by statistical considerations.

Indicator 6.3: Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.

Indicator 6.4: Information on the methods and procedures used is publicly available.

Indicator 6.5: Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced

Indicator 6.6: Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies

Indicator 6.7: All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, monitored and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.

Indicator 6.8: Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- the equal access to all users – both within the national statistical system and externally -- to statistical releases at the same time
- pre-announced statistical releases calendars
- any privilege access to users - both within the national statistical system and externally -- and whether it is limited, controlled and publicized.
- the error treatment policy and revision strategies

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

In compiling the statistics the most appropriate techniques, definitions and methodologies are applied. All statistical data produced by the Agrostistics department shall be disseminated on the MAF website where users can use them simultaneously. The calendar is published on the MAF website. There is no privileged access for outside users - after a written request additional free of charge information could be provided under observation of the statistical confidentiality.

### Strengths and weaknesses:

Please state below the main areas of strength with regard to the **institutional environment** of your organisation. -open reply-(**compulsory**)

The legislation is regulated for the National Statistical System in Bulgaria. The functions of the Agrostistics department as a statistical body and the other structural units at MAF are clearly distinguished. The MAF is responsible for CAP and this allows the identification of the users and the information needed for the policy. There is the opportunity for consultation with experts in agriculture during the development of statistical tools such as questionnaires, instructions, methods, etc. Existence of regional MAF structures – regional office (RO), employing experts in agrostistics and responsible for these activities in particular.

Please state below the main areas of weakness with regard to the **institutional environment** of your organisation. -open reply-(**compulsory**)

Sometimes the experts in agrostistics in the RO perform tasks unusual for statistical activities. Reducing the budget for agrostistical activities can lead to survey reduction or reduction of the survey indicators. The number of permanent staff with professional statistical education is insufficient.

### Good practices

Please state below the good practices with regard to the **institutional environment** that you can enumerate within your organization.

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

The administrative data from IACS and the Ordinance № 3/1999 for the registration of farmers, supported by the structures of the MAF, are used as an additional control of the information.

### Follow up:

On the basis of the above mentioned weaknesses please list below actions you would like to take which are suited to improve the situation concerning the **institutional environment** of your organisation.

Development of short quality reports for all conducted surveys – gradually until 2016.

## Statistical Processes

### Principle 7 - Sound methodology

**Sound methodology underpins quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.**

Indicator 7.1: The overall methodological framework of the statistical authority follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices.

Indicator 7.2: Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority.

Indicator 7.3: The business register and the frame for population surveys are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to ensure high quality.

Indicator 7.4: Detailed concordance exists between national classifications systems and the corresponding European systems.

Indicator 7.5: Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited.

Indicator 7.6: Statistical authorities implement a policy of continuous vocational training for their staff

Indicator 7.7: Co-operation with the scientific community is organized to improve methodology, the effectiveness of the methods implemented and to promote better tools, when feasible.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- the application of standard concepts, definitions and classifications and whether they are in concordance with the corresponding European standards (also related to principle 14)the cooperation with the scientific community
- the recruitment policy in order to guarantee that experts of relevant academic disciplines are hired

-open reply-(compulsory)

Definitions, classifications and requirements of the European legislation on agricultural statistics are used while developing the survey methodology and the statistical tools. If necessary, additional indicators for national purposes are observed. The cooperation with the scientific community is available, but insufficient. There were brief staff trainings in statistical topics. It is necessary to strengthen the interaction and participation of the scientific community in the process of developing a methodology and survey planning, for the data validation and data analysis. The recruitment of experts is according to the provision of the national law – the experts get recruited after a competition under announcing the requirements for the relevant academic disciplines.

### Principle 8 - Appropriate statistical procedures

**Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, must underpin quality statistics.**

Indicator 8.1: When European Statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for the administrative purpose are a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes.

Indicator 8.2: In case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection.

Indicator 8.3: Survey designs, sample selections, and estimation methods are well based and regularly reviewed and revised as required.

Indicator 8.4: Data collection, data entry, and coding are routinely monitored and revised as required

Indicator 8.5: Appropriate editing and imputation methods are used and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required.

Indicator 8.6: Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures

Indicator 8.7: Statistical authorities are involved in the design of administrative data in order to make administrative data more suitable for statistical purposes.



Indicator 8.8: Agreements are made with owners of administrative data which set out their shared commitment to the use of these data for statistical purposes.

Indicator 8.9: Statistical authorities co-operate with owners of administrative data in assuring data quality.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

In case of statistics based on **survey data**:

- what methods are used for the following issues, if applicable, and how they are revised and updated
  - Data collection
    - Survey design
    - Samples selection
    - Secondary data use
    - Data entry
    - Data coding
    - Questionnaire testing
  - Data processing
    - Editing
    - Imputation
    - Estimation

In case of statistics based on **administrative data**:

- the involvement of the statistical department in the design of administrative data in order to make administrative data more suitable for statistical purposes; to which extent the definitions and concepts used for administrative purposes are a good approximation of those required for statistical purposes and how this is shared/organised with the NSI

-open reply- (compulsory)

The statistical data result from the conducted statistical surveys. The design of each survey includes development of a methodology for survey conduct, time schedule of activities for the organization of the data collection, validation, data entry and data processing and the preparation and publication of results. Data control includes developing of logical checks and controls of totals. A sample (list) of agricultural holdings is drawn up for each sample survey by means of the SPSS software. The random stratified sampling is the most commonly used. Exhaustively observed are units forming the gross of the values of the surveyed parameters. The accuracy required in the European legislation is aimed to be complied with. Sample designs are periodically renewed. While conducting exhaustive surveys - censuses the data get collected from all holdings, meeting certain criteria (the complete population). The agricultural holdings get visited on site by surveyors specially recruited and trained in RO, by experts of MAF or experts in agrostistics from RO. They conduct an interview with the owner or manager of the agricultural holding and fill in a statistical questionnaire with the obtained data. All survey questionnaires before launching for the first time are tested compulsory on the field for their applicability. After the tests the questionnaires are analyzed, corrected if necessary and approved with an order of the President of NSI. The information collected is entered by the regional experts in agrostistics in specially prepared in MAF computer modules. During data entry the individual data are controlled by computer embedded control modules and compared with data from previous surveys. The data get controlled by the experts in agrostistics in RO and the MAF. Modules get tested for their applicability in advance. The data get edited by comparing key indicators with results from previous surveys on regional and national level. In MAF the information get controlled again, validated, analyzed, summarized and the results get published. All data must be evaluated and compared with other sources. Parts of the population, not included in the scope of the survey, get assessed. At this stage the administrative data from IACS are used indicatively for comparison and control. The data from administrative registers still can not be used directly for statistical purposes because they do not meet the requirements for coverage of the population and completeness of the set of indicators, uniformity of the definitions and timeliness of data.

## Principle 9 - Non excessive burden on respondents

**The reporting burden is proportionate to the needs of the users and is not excessive for respondents. The statistical authorities monitor the response burden and sets targets for its reduction over time.**

Indicator 9.1: The range and detail of European Statistics demands is limited to what is absolutely necessary

Indicator 9.2: The reporting burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations.

Indicator 9.3: The information sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used where possible to facilitate its return.

Indicator 9.4: Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information.

Indicator 9.5: Data sharing within statistical authorities is generalised in order to avoid multiplication of surveys.

Indicator 9.6: Statistical authorities promote measures that enable the linking of data sources in order to reduce reporting burden.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities, methods and tools put in place to comply with this principle.

In particular if you depend from outside respondents for providing you with raw data elaborate on:

- the use of data already available from other sources to avoid duplicating request for information
- (when information is sought from business) whether the information is readily available from their accounts and whether electronics means are used
- the data sharing with other authorities to avoid multiplication of surveys

-open reply-(compulsory)

The usage of data from the IACS register at this stage is mainly for comparison and control of area under crops. Information from the SFA- Paying Agency about subsidies paid and other farmers' aid, benefiting the FADN data collection, is received on a regular basis. Data on the area and the production of wine grapes and wine for industrial processing is provided by the Executive Agency on Vine and Wine (EAVW). The data from enterprises get collected by a questionnaire. At this stage electronic means are used only limited and are not included in the accounts. The data received from registers is insufficient because it contains only part of the necessary information.

## **Principle 10 - Cost Effectiveness**

**Resources are used effectively.**

Indicator 10.1: Internal and independent external measures monitor the statistical authority's use of resources.

Indicator 10.2: The productivity potential of information and communications technology is being optimised for data collection, processing and dissemination.

Indicator 10.3: Proactive efforts are being made to improve the statistical potential of administrative data and to limit recourse to direct surveys

Indicator 10.4: Statistical authorities promote and implement standardized solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- the use of information and communications technologies
- the use of data already available to limit the recourse to direct surveys
- the monitoring and reporting of resources used for statistical operations

-open reply-(compulsory)

The information system ASNS is used currently for data input and processing of data collected, part of which is the most used module DECIDE. This module is used primarily for data entry and data control and processing. The executive Agency on Vine and Wine (EAVW) provides data on area and production of wine grapes and wine for industrial processing, which allows avoiding the double collection. The MAF monitors the spending of resources administratively. This is included in the commitments of the National FADN Committee. The



NSP envisages budget for each survey. The internal budget control is performed by the financial department of the MAF. Despite budgetary restrictions there are currently no cancelled surveys.

### Strengths and weaknesses:

Please state below the main areas of strength with regard to the **statistical processes** of your organisation.

-open reply-(compulsory)

Availability of good administrative capacity - part of the experts have long professional experience in agricultural statistics and have undergone series of training by experts from the EU. There are specialists with appropriate professional background in the field of agriculture and the economy. Applying a methodology that allows the production of comparable statistics. The developed Agricultural Statistics corresponds to the standards and requirements of EU legislation.

Please state below the main areas of weakness with regard to the **statistical processes** of your organisation.

-open reply-(compulsory)

The lack of a state-of-the-art web-based IT system leads to the need to hire surveyors and operators, making the process of compilation of statistics expensive and is a prerequisite for admission to various errors. It extends and raises the costs for the process of data entry, data control, processing and analysis of data. This leads to delay in publication of the results. There is a lack of reliable administrative sources due to the incompleteness of the registered indicators, incomplete coverage of the population, outdated definitions. There are many administrative data sources in agriculture available. They are not synchronized among each other. Most often these are databases in spreadsheet format. There is a variety as between entities obliged to supply information and between the definitions of characteristics in different registers. This greatly hampers their use for statistical purposes. The participation of experts in agricultural statistics in the design of the administrative records related to the data collection for the compilation of agricultural statistics is not enough. An example of incomplete administrative records is the data collection on area in IACS, but not data for the crop production. There is data available on the livestock number in the identification system of livestock, but there is no data on the production of milk, meat, etc.

### Good Practices

Please state below the good practices with regard to the **statistical processes** that you can enumerate within your organization. -open reply-(compulsory)

Limited use of administrative sources in order to omit statistical surveys.

### Follow up:

On the basis of the above mentioned weaknesses please list below actions you would like to take which are suited to improve the situation concerning the **statistical processes** of your organisation.

Actions and time frame -open reply-(compulsory)

A public procurement procedure for the development of web based IT system for agricultural statistics is due to get under way. It will allow the on-line data collection. The system implementation will automate and streamline the process of data collection, data processing, data control, data validation and data analysis. The development of the statistical farm register is also included in the system. The linkage with other administrative registers in order to reduce response burden is expected to be fulfilled - the end of 2015. Development of national legislation necessary to make the active administrative sources (registers) suitable for use for statistical purposes by the end of 2015. Expanding the share of the used information from administrative sources for statistical purposes - the end of 2016.

## Statistical Output

### Principle 11 - Relevance

**European Statistics meet the needs of users.**

Indicator 11.1: Processes are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and consider their emerging needs and priorities.

Indicator 11.2: Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme.

Indicator 11.3: User satisfaction is monitored on a regular basis and is systematically followed up.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- how users are consulted and their degree of satisfaction is monitored
- how priorities and emerging needs are set

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

A specialized survey on user satisfaction has not yet been conducted at this stage. Upon request, by letter, by phone, by email, by direct contact the users of statistical information consult on matters of their interest. Some of the indicators are difficult to understand and require more detailed explanation. While developing the questionnaires for conduct of new surveys, the latter shall be agreed upon by the key users, which produce proposals for the inclusion of additional indicators or other details. Priorities are determined in accordance with the set tasks and targets of European and National statistical system. The requirements included in European legislation are fulfilled.

## Principle 12 - Accuracy and Reliability

**European Statistics accurately and reliably portray reality.**

Indicator 12.1: Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are assessed and validated

Indicator 12.2: Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented according to the European standards.

Indicator 12.3: Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve statistical processes.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- how source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are validated
- (if applicable) the calculation of sampling and non-sampling errors
- (if applicable) the provision of quantitative information about the accuracy of estimates compiled from administrative sources
- (if applicable) information about the completeness of administrative registers, and any duplication
- the revision policy and its procedures

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

Sampling and non-sampling errors get calculated during the conduct of the relevant surveys. The data get validated in strict compliance with the relevant requirements of Eurostat. So far revisions have not been performed since it was not necessary. Changes of the methodologies leading to distortions in the time series have not been made.

## Principle 13 - Timeliness and Punctuality

**European Statistics are released in a timely and punctual manner.**

Indicator 13.1: Timeliness meets European and other international release standards.

Indicator 13.2: A standard daily time for the release of European Statistics is made public.

Indicator 13.3: The periodicity of statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible.

Indicator 13.4: Divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicized in advance, explained and a new release date set.

Indicator 13.5: Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate accuracy can be released when considered useful.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to

comply with this principle. In particular of:

- The dissemination policy addressing the following issuesInteraction with users on statistical products and its frequency
  - Release dates (pre-announced calendar, deviations and justifications)
  - Revision policy
  - Dissemination of preliminary results

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

The time calendar for the dissemination of statistical surveys results is published on the MAF website. So far no revisions have been performed, because the methodologies or other circumstances that would require data revision have not been changed. For certain surveys preliminary data are disseminated within the time calendar. There are no regularly scheduled meetings with data users, but everyone gets free additional information upon request.

## Principle 14 - Coherence and Comparability

**European Statistics are consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it is possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.**

Indicator 14.1: Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (i.e. arithmetic and accounting identities observed).

Indicator 14.2: Statistics are comparable over a reasonable period of time.

Indicator 14.3: Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources.

Indicator 14.4: Statistics from different sources and of different periodicity are compared and reconciled.

Indicator 14.5: Cross-national comparability of the data is ensured within the European Statistical System through periodical exchanges between the European Statistical System and other statistical systems. Methodological studies are carried out in close co-operation between the Member States and Eurostat.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular:

- dissemination of comparable series over a reasonable period of time
- (if applicable) on whether statistics from different sources and of different periodicity are compared and reconciled

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

Time series on basic statistical indicators are published on the MAF website. The Agrostatistical handbook 2000 - 2011 was released in 2013. Its second edition with data from 2000 to 2012 will be released in the coming months. The publication recollects data on area, production and yields of major crops, vegetables, vineyards, orchards, and on the number of livestock and animal products for the period from 2000 to 2012. The standard results for natural indicators and farm incomes, collected by the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) in Bulgaria in recent years, are also included. The data are compared with other sources, and the differences are explained.

## Principle 15 - Accessibility and Clarity

**European Statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.**

Indicator 15.1: Statistics and the corresponding metadata are presented, and archived, in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.

Indicator 15.2: Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy.

Indicator 15.3: Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and the public is informed.

Indicator 15.4: Access to microdata is allowed for research purposes and is subject to specific rules or protocols.

Indicator 15.5: Metadata are documented according to standardized metadata systems.

Indicator 15.6: Users are kept informed about the methodology of statistical processes including the use of administrative data.

Indicator 15.7: Users are kept informed about the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the quality criteria for European Statistics.

Taking into account the Indicators of this Principle, please give details of the activities and procedures put in place to comply with this principle. In particular of:

- how data and metadata are disseminated
- how users are kept informed about the methodology of the statistical processes and the quality of their outputs
- the type of dissemination service available to users
- custom designed analysis and products for satisfying user request
- accessibility of micro data

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

The publications presented on the site of MAF contain data from the conducted surveys. The methodology and the metadata are published on the following link: Bulgarian - <http://www.mzh.government.bg/MZH/bg/ShortLinks/SelskaPolitika/Agrostatistics.aspx> English - <http://www.mzh.government.bg/MZH/en/ShortLinks/SelskaPolitika/Agrostatistics.aspx> A limited part of the publications are printed on paper. Quality reports are in preparation. The quality reports required by the EU regulations are drawn up and adopted by Eurostat. They are prepare for publication on the website of MAF in Bulgarian and English. Upon written request, additional data not subject to statistical confidentiality, could be delivered free of charge. The publications published on the MAF site contain results and analyses of the data. Microdata for scientific purposes are available upon request and under observation of the requirements of the Statistics Act on the basis of an individual agreement with the scientific institution, an acceptance certificate for the provision of data and affidavits of the persons who use the data.

### Strengths and weaknesses:

Please state below the main areas of strength with regard to the **statistical output** of your organisation.

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

The statistical data largely satisfy the needs of users from state and municipal institutions, associations and professional organizations, research institutes, farmers and citizens. The publications with statistical data from 2001 are available on the website of the MAF.

Please state below the main areas of weakness with regard to the **statistical output** of your organisation.

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

In very rare cases due to financial constraints not all the indicators needed for national purposes have been observed. There is lack of developed policy for data revisions if necessary. The annual surveys are conducted at the level of statistical regions (NUTS 2) due to financial constraints. Statistical data at lower geographical levels (NUTS 3, etc.) are published only after the conduct of censuses.

### Good Practices

Please state below the good practices with regard to the **statistical output** that you can enumerate within your organization.

-open reply-(**compulsory**)

Publications are prepared with results and analyses of data obtained from statistical surveys. The e-mail address for questions from users is: [agrostat@mzh.government.bg](mailto:agrostat@mzh.government.bg)

### Follow up:

On the basis of the above mentioned weaknesses please list below actions you would like to take which are suited to improve the situation concerning the **statistical output** of your organisation.

Actions and time frame -open reply-(**compulsory**)

Conduct of a customer satisfaction survey, for which a questionnaire is under preparation - conduct by the end of 2014. Preparation and print of the revised edition of the Agrostatistical Handbook 2000-2012 – until June 2014. Introduction of statistical methods to obtain data on lower geographical levels for use by the scientific community - until the end of 2015.