

**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS**

**ECE Work Session on Statistical Output  
for Dissemination to Information Media  
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Topic (b): Methods of statistical dissemination,  
policies and techniques

**DISSEMINATION POLICIES IN THE STATE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE OF  
AZERBAIJAN**

Submitted by the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan<sup>1</sup>

Democratisation and development into a market economy calls for official statistical systems to adapt to new conditions and demands. Therefore, democratisation and changes towards a market economy in Azerbaijan inevitably entailed the reorganisation of the production of official statistics in accordance with international standards. Not only were the structure and the principal activities of statistical bodies reformed, but also the policy, strategic preparation and the distribution of ecological and other statistical information was reconsidered to provide basis for forming public opinion. A wide circle of users, including mass media, was given access to aggregated statistical data, with necessary explanations about the methodology behind the production of statistics.

The official information provider of the republic is the State Statistical Committee, which closely adheres to a policy that is aimed at meeting the interests of users, providing statistics in a timely and flexible manner, according to demand.

The level of public confidence in official statistics depends on following the fundamental principles that underlie the production of official statistics.

The basic principles, which are followed by state statistical bodies in preparation and distribution of statistics, can be characterized as follows:

- Guarantee of confidentiality of data received from respondents;
- Study of customer demand and provision of statistics responding to this demand;
- Preparation of high-quality information, meeting international requirements;
- Ensuring scientific and impartial approach in the preparation of information;
- Fully meeting the requirements/interests of users with regards to volume and character of the information provided;
- Providing users with access to sources of information;
- Ensuring timeliness and accuracy in provision of information to customers.

Following the above-mentioned principles on preparation and distribution of data, Goskomstat strictly adheres to the requirements of ensuring reliability, actuality, objectivity and democracy.

Let us consider these concepts more in detail.

**Reliability**

- Correctness of received information.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Meri Gardashkhanova, Head of Statistical Information Department

- Accuracy of sources.

### **Actuality**

- Timeliness and efficiency in preparation of statistical data.
- Description of the most actual problems in society.

### **Objectivity**

- Preparation of independent, unbiased data not pursuing anyone's specific interests.

### **Democracy**

- Preparation of statistical information in a more accessible form, not requiring specialized knowledge in order to understand them.
- Present data in a way that enables each citizen to know more about statistical data, describing the socio-economic situation of the country.

The dissemination of statistical information is carried out in accordance with recommendations from the IMF on 'General standards of statistical data dissemination', 'Statistical Law' of Azerbaijan Republic, and the documents of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Coordination Group on the programme of cooperation of EC with the New States, and Monopoly in the field of statistics; "Distribution policy of information and recommendation" (Document SG/2000/13 Kiev, 18-22 September 2000).

The statistical information in Azerbaijan is presented to governmental bodies of the country, ministries and departments of the republic and other potential users, including private persons, which have the opportunity to get access on a contractual or commercial basis.

At present, the prevailing way of distributing the information in Azerbaijan is through printed publications. One of the most widespread publications is the statistical yearbook, which gives readers the opportunity to observe the radical changes of socio-economic transformation in the country and the region, during a rather remarkable period of time.

Recently the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan issued: Brief statistical yearbook "Azerbaijan in figures 2002", "Statistical indicators of Azerbaijan 2002", "Independent Azerbaijan", "Azerbaijan in XX century, two-volume edition", "Regions of Azerbaijan", "Catalogue of publications", and in the framework of TACIS programme, the yearbook on "South Caucasus countries 2002" in both Russian and English languages. All of these publications were issued with a CD-ROM. Since 1996, the statistical yearbook has been sub-divided into specific fields. In that context, special issues have been successfully published, such as economic reports and statistical bulletins on the main fields of the economy. It is necessary to note that along with tables and diagrams, the economic report supplies analytical information, which allows the users to get to know the current situation in the republic better, and in more detail. Moreover, Goskomstat prepares analytical reports, which include concrete indicators on different parts of the economy.

One of the main on-line information issued by Goskomstat is express-information, which is prepared and published immediately upon finalization of data processing, and customers receive these data very quickly.

All issues are prepared in Azerbaijan and English languages.

The mass media is one of the important channels to disseminate statistical information. Without the mass media it would be impossible to draw the general public's attention to the results of the statistical work. The independence and objectivity of the statistical data is highly appreciated by the mass media. Annually, the mass media organizes a press conference for journalists. Frequently, they do not interpret the statistical material correctly. This holds true particularly for indicators such as Gross Domestic Product, price index, inflation, unemployment, population income per capita, etc. In such cases, specialists from Goskomstat give corrections and explanations on how indicators are calculated. The specialists from Goskomstat make a special effort to cooperate with, and they support good relationship with the mass

media, which opens access to statistical information for the wider public. The representatives of the central mass media are private guests of the statistical office. They make use of maximum access to the information that interests them. Thus, the press publishes monthly a brief economic review about the socio-economic situation of the country. In addition, the heads of statistical bodies are often interviewed on the most urgent problems of the country's economy, which is covered in the print media (newspapers and magazines), and also in the Azerbaijan's state TV and private channels. Goskomstat also issues press releases and other information of special interest to users.

It is important that customers can access the available statistics in a simple way. Towards this end, one of the priorities has been to establish a statistical library. In 2002, a statistical library was established in the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan Republic, with the assistance of UNPF and in accordance with international standards. The library contains thematic books on countries and international organizations. There are two PCs with connection to the Internet, a copying machine, a printer, a TV and a projector. The user can take the statistical materials from the reading hall to his/her home or work.

The progress in information technology promotes distribution of statistical material through electronic communication. The electronic communication facilities are either a floppy disk or remote access to information. But the advantage of the Internet is obvious, as it allows instant access to information. A global network through the Internet enables worldwide distribution of the information, open to potential users. However, at present we do not have such an opportunity due to the following two reasons: firstly, because of hardware limitations at Goskomstat, and secondly, because of lack of corresponding electronic technology among potential users.

But future access to Internet gives the opportunity for constant and reliable connection with the clients and will help in carrying out the policy of disseminating statistical data in a more efficient way. Currently, we have a server and a web site and we communicate through the Internet with the State Committee of the CIS to transfer information on the situation of different sectors within the economy and macroeconomic indicators. Moreover, we also have connection via e-mail with international organizations such as the UN, Eurostat, EC, ILO, IMF, WB, UNICEF, UNESCO and others. At their request, Goskomstat periodically fills in questionnaires providing indicators of social statistics, demography, labour statistics, price statistics, national accounts, etc.

Goskomstat serves a broad group of users, which can be divided into constant, temporary and random users, and represent all sectors of society. With the aim to meet the demands of users, Goskomstat is developing a statistical database on the Internet, containing monthly, quarterly and annual data on the relevant sectors. An electronic database has important advantages over traditional methods of disseminating statistical data, as it facilitates an open, effective and less expensive access to the information.

Due to the rapid advancement in information technology, it now offers new opportunities in the field of storage, processing and distribution of information. Therefore, Goskomstat will be studying the newest means of distribution of information and search for ways to ensure optimal use.

