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**THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT'S INFORMATION POLICY ON THE DATA
DISSEMINATION BY NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICES**

Submitted by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

Summary

Use of modern and new information technology is becoming vitally necessary for effective management and integration of the Republic into the world economy and the information environment. The Kyrgyz Republic, which has declared its policy of accessibility and transparency, is interested in promoting "electronic governance". The main objective of this policy is to establish a single information environment; to develop information resources, databases and information infrastructure that can be used both by state bodies and the wider public.

A national strategy, "Information and Communication Technologies for the Development of the Kyrgyz Republic", has been developed.

The National Statistical Office of the Kyrgyz Republic is an essential part of the information system of the Republic. Naturally, changes related to the development of the information infrastructure and introduction of modern information technologies have to a considerable extent influenced the ways in which the National Statistical Committee conducts its activities. The introduction of new and modern information technologies helped increase the effectiveness of the National Statistical Office to a considerable extent, and in strengthening the confidence of users in its work. It also gave the opportunity to compare national statistical data with international statistics.

Modern computer techniques and telecommunications allowed us to become integrated not only into the information environment of the Republic, but also into the worldwide information system and hence, to increase the number of internal and external users.

The statistical data dissemination and publication policy of the National Statistical Committee is based on principles of transparency, in accordance with the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the IMF.

Within the framework of the National Strategy: "Information and communication Technologies for development of the Kyrgyz Republic", the main purpose of technological development of the national statistical system was defined. It is to completely equip and modernize the technical basis on which the national statistical system is based, so that it can supply different groups of users with statistical information resources. It is also meant to accelerate integration into the global information space.

The Impact of Government's Information Policy on the Data Dissemination by National Statistical Offices

Today humanity is undergoing the next stage of scientific and technical revolution – the development of the information society.

Modern information and communication technologies have considerably changed people's lifestyles. It not only changes the mode of production of goods and services, but it also creates new possibilities for realization of civil rights, self-actualization of a person, for obtaining education and for spending leisure time. The information society creates unique opportunities for development of regions.

Undoubtedly, today information is the resource defining the level of development of a country. Activity of a country and a person depends to a great extent on awareness, knowledge and ability to use information effectively. Use of modern and new information technology is becoming vitally necessary for effective management and integration of the Republic into the world economy and the information environment.

In that context, Askar Akaev, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, has stated in the World Economic Forum in Davos in 1998 that: "Kyrgyzstan chooses information society".

During recent years the Kyrgyz Republic has made significant achievements in the development of an information infrastructure, developing the information technology capacity of state organizations and private companies, development of appropriate legislation. A state-run software network was created, different projects in the area of information technology are being implemented, governmental organizations and NGOs, as well as commercial organizations have created their own websites.

In addition, the Kyrgyz Republic participates in several international information technology programs, in particular, in the program of creating the automatic system of information exchange among the CIS countries (ASIE-CIS) within the framework of building the information environment of the CIS. The Kyrgyz Republic also participates in creating the network of information and marketing centers of the CIS member-states based on the Internet, based on the agreement on the Custom Union and Common Economic Environment of February 26, 1999.

A significant step in the development of information technology in the Kyrgyz Republic was the implementation of the programs within the framework of the UNDP project "Strengthening the Public Management and Reforming State Management", and Tacis projects "Strengthening Implemented Reforms of State Service in Kyrgyzstan".

Taking such measures has considerably widened possibilities of using modern information technologies in state management. Some state bodies including the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic have their own websites, which provide information on activities of state bodies. Information systems on the management of states in the region are established and it enables quick information exchange among different branches of state authorities.

The Kyrgyz Republic, which has declared its orientation to accessibility and transparency, is interested in promoting "electronic governance", which entails a system of interactive relationship between the state and the citizens, with the help of the Internet. It would also considerably reduce bureaucracy in the administration.

Within the government program of establishing an "electronic government", websites of the President and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic were created. The portal of state offices was created and a center for the development of information communication technologies is being created.

The main goal of the state policy is to establish a single information environment; to develop resources, databases and information infrastructure that can be used both by state bodies and the wider public.

The current level and problems of information and communication technologies' development in the Kyrgyz Republic provide basis for a change in policy directed at the development of selected branches within the sphere of information (communication and information technologies), towards a common strategy to enter the global information community.

National strategy "Information and Communication Technologies for the Development of the Kyrgyz Republic" has been developed to fulfill the tasks and objectives defined by the President.

Being one of the main directions for the development of the country within the framework of the National strategy; "Comprehensive Development Framework of the Kyrgyz Republic to 2010", the strategy on the development of public information defines the main priorities, objectives and tasks, main principles, provisions and directions of state policy in the field of information and communication technologies.

The main directions are as follows:

- establishment of conditions for effective information provision in solving social and economic tasks of economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic, meeting demands on information needs of state and local authorities, publicity, commercial structures and individuals;
- support the development of national information infrastructure by creating and improving software and networks in order to implement a common scientific and technical policy, as well as developing international information networks and systems in the Republic;
- adopt progressive systems of unification, classification and standardization of information that promote the creation of a single information environment of the CIS countries, and integration with international information networks and systems;
- improve central administration and local governance with information and communication technologies;
- create, develop, provide security, accessibility and effective use of national information resources;
- create conditions for the market of information products, resources, technologies, as well as services for information systems, networks;
- ensure citizens' rights and the right of organizations to access information resources;
- strengthen and develop organizational and normative-legal background of the development of information environment;
- support educational system, staff training and scientific research in the field of information technology, etc.

It is obvious that the availability of an effective and transparent information system in society is one of the most important features of democracy.

Today, no one has doubts that modern statistics play an important role in state information system because its task is to provide all users with information on both the level and possibilities of social and economic development, as well as information about the country, and its administrative and territorial units.

Naturally, changes related to the development of information infrastructure and introduction of modern information technologies have to a considerable extent influenced the activity of the National Statistical Service of Kyrgyzstan.

Today, the computer network connecting the government information system and the statistical office is one of the largest and most developed in the Republic. The number of officials equipped with personal computers is higher (3,6 persons versus 9,6) than in any other public institutions.

Information technologies are the key tool for statistical production. Introduction of new and modern information technologies to the information processes has to a considerable extent increased the effectiveness of the national statistical office, and strengthened the confidence of its users. It has also enabled comparison with international statistics.

One of the main priorities of the National Statistical Committee is to effectively disseminate the results of the statistical work.

Modern computer techniques and telecommunications allowed us to become integrated not only into the information environment of the Republic, but also into the worldwide information system.

A unique opportunity to increase the number of internal and external users of statistical products has evolved in the process of the development of information technologies and systems. In this context, a website of the National Statistical Committee has been created on the Internet in two languages, which is a great success, in particular, with regards to external users.

The website of the National Statistical Committee contains:

- General information about the National Statistical Committee: its legal basis, current activities, and main trends in the improvement of its activities.
- Information on the current economic situation, including monthly/quarterly summary indicators, integrated statistical basis, and annual summary indicators characterizing all economic sectors.
- Information on statistical indicators including methodology and quality of their preparation (metadata)

Publications schedule is disseminated via the website of the National Statistical Committee, and users have the opportunity to know the deadline of information submission as well as the system of statistical indicators available for sale.

Information on the website is updated monthly, directly from databases of the NSC.

Equal access to the statistical information is a fundamental principle of Kyrgyz National Statistical Committee activity.

Therefore, statistical data dissemination and publication policy of the National Statistical Committee is based on principles of transparency, in accordance with the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the IMF.

The Kyrgyz Republic has been affiliated with the General Data Dissemination System since February 2001, which ensures timely collection and dissemination of reliable economic, financial, social and demographic data.

Official statistical information is disseminated in the form of annual, quarterly, monthly, and special publications. Implementation of the TACIS project aims to increase the volume of statistical information in electronic version.

Usage of a more varied sets of hardware components: electronic components - floppy-discs, CD-ROMs; communication components - web-site and e-mail, is a result of modern technological development. In addition, the National Statistical Committee publishes monthly on the website, a short summary of its activities and information on main indicators of social and economic development of the country. For receiving more detailed information, users can contact the website of the NSC on Internet.

With the purpose of increasing effectiveness of information dissemination, a unified information and statistics database has been created. This database contributes to supplementary services on information dissemination:

- access of particular parts of statistical data by subscription, for example by e-mail;
- direct access to all statistical data on the databases through the Internet;

Development of information services is impossible without the development of information systems and information sources.

The main objective behind the technical development of the national statistical system is to completely equip and modernize it, so that it can supply different groups of users with statistical information resources. It is also meant to accelerate integration into the global information space.

In order to reach the above-mentioned objectives, the following needs to be done:

- establishment of statistical funds in line with unified modern technology, which is used worldwide; creation of distributed statistical databases;
- improvement in the field of telecommunication to enable the statistical system to enter into the information space of the republic;
- improvement in the collection, processing and publication of statistical information; maintenance of efficiency and high quality through introduction of modern technologies.
- support efficient cooperation with regard to information, between structural divisions of the National Statistical Committee.
- interaction with other state and departmental automated systems.
- guarantee compatibility and interaction of information systems on the basis of modern technologies, international standards, classifications, and registers;
- ensuring availability of relevant statistical materials for external users;
- guarantee comprehensive protection of information resources against forbidden access;
- increasing computer-based and information literacy level;
- creation of system of information storage, including electronic publications;
- dissemination and publication of statistical materials;
- introduction of international experiences in the field of informational technologies;
- archiving, creation of reserve copies and protection of computer system.

It is necessary to create new system of information dissemination based on statistical databases, which will provide different groups of users with inexpensive, accommodative and flexible accesses to official statistical data and metadata, including processing of these data in their own computer environment.

We hope for future cooperation with international organizations and national statistical offices of the CIS countries.