

Sector Review of the Implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) in Georgia

Final Report

March 2023



Introduction

There is a strong trend in official statistics to standardise processes and centralise similar statistical functions (e.g. dissemination) within national statistical offices (NSOs). This is done to realise efficiency gains, reduce risk and increase quality, especially where resources are scarce. The Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) can help organisations to think about how to achieve this through moving towards a more process-oriented organisation structure.

In February 2023, an international team of experts convened by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) conducted a Sector Review of the implementation of the GSBPM in Georgia, with the aim of producing a roadmap for organisational change. This review was undertaken at the request of, and in partnership with, Geostat, the National Statistics Office of Georgia, in the context of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Georgia¹. This report contains the observations and recommendations of the international experts and has been agreed with the management of Geostat.

The review team consisted of Mr Zoltan Vereczkei (Central Statistical Office of Hungary), Mr Carlo Vaccari (Independent consultant, Italy), Ms InKyung Choi and Mr Steven Vale (UNECE). The review was conducted in cooperation with the managers and staff of Geostat. Its findings are based on discussions and presentations during a mission of the review team to the Geostat office in Tbilisi, which took place on 20-22 February 2023.

The review team was impressed with the work done so far to implement the GSBPM in Geostat, and the willingness of staff to consider new ideas. The current strategy provides a good basis for modernisation, and this theme will be further developed in the next strategy, which will be elaborated in the coming months. The approach Geostat is taking is in line with international good practices, including those promoted by the UNECE High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics.

The review team worked with Geostat managers and staff to prepare recommendations for next steps in the implementation of the GSBPM and the move towards a more process-oriented organisation structure, as well as a draft roadmap for their implementation. The recommendations are elaborated in Chapters 1 to 3, and the roadmap is presented in Chapter 4.

The collaboration between the review team and the staff of Geostat was very positive and constructive throughout all phases of the work. The review team would like to thank the management and staff of Geostat for their full and active collaboration in the conduct of this Sector Review and would like to wish them success with their modernisation journey.

¹ <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/630/strategy-for-the-development-of-statistics>

Chapter 1: Awareness raising and communication

Modernisation, appropriate organisational structure and capability to manage change are essential for national statistical offices to meet the challenges facing official statistics. They should not be seen as one-off exercises, but rather as the development of a culture of change, a culture that helps statistical offices to become more flexible and adaptable to react to new challenges.

For modernisation to succeed, it is vital to have the support and active involvement of staff at all levels. However, the natural reaction for many people when faced with change is often suspicion and fear. This means that raising awareness and communicating the reasons and plans for change is vital.

The GSBPM and its extension, the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations (GAMSO), have been proven to support NSOs in their move towards process-oriented statistical production. They support the implementation of standard tools and methods to improve efficiency. Experience in various countries has shown that this allows resources to be freed to support new activities or to strengthen existing ones that add higher value to the outputs of the NSO. Allowing staff to focus on these activities can improve job satisfaction and staff retention.

Recommendations

1.1 ***Conduct basic training and promotion on GSBPM and its role***

- Geostat should produce promotional materials to help raise staff awareness about GSBPM.
- Geostat should conduct basic training on GSBPM, one course for the staff in general and a more extensive course for those who will be involved in the change management process as they will require more in-depth knowledge about the model to guide the changes. The training can be conducted by external experts at first, or by just asking staff to follow existing GSBPM training resources which can be found on the UNECE GSBPM wiki (e.g., YouTube video on introduction to GSBPM). However, in the long run, it is important that Geostat grows internal experts on GSBPM who can assist and guide the process for documentation (see Chapter 2) as well as centralisation (see Chapter 3). The initial focus should therefore be to “train the trainers”, to develop these internal Geostat experts.
- The training should not be done for the sake of learning about the GSBPM. It is important to provide the “big picture” and to emphasize the rationale and reasoning behind why training on GSBPM is needed, that it is a tool for the transition to a process-oriented organisation. Internal communication on the model should also highlight this point so that staff learning about GSBPM are also exposed to the broad vision where the organisation is heading toward.
- Geostat should create a centralised repository in the intranet where all resources about GSBPM, including training and awareness raising materials, can be stored. This repository should serve as the Geostat knowledge base on GSBPM.

1.2 ***Translate GSBPM into Georgian***

- Geostat should produce an agreed translation of the GSBPM into Georgian, to ensure the use of standard terminology and to better spread knowledge about the model within Geostat. Given that the transition to a process-oriented organisation concerns all parts of Geostat (statistical production and corporate support such as IT and HR), GSBPM in Georgian will help to ensure a broad and common understanding of the model across Geostat, which is a precondition for many activities that will follow.
- Geostat should store the agreed translation in the centralised repository on the intranet mentioned in the 4th bullet point of Recommendation 1.1.

1.3 ***Get to know GAMS0 and produce a Georgian translation***

- Geostat has set the goal to introduce a process-oriented organisation. In order to do this, based on the experience of countries that have already implemented similar organisational structures, GSBPM will not be enough. Therefore, Geostat should also take a look at GAMS0, produce a Georgian translation of the model, and make it available to all staff on the intranet. As demonstrated during the mission, GAMS0 can help Geostat to understand the role of corporate support areas in the statistical organisation (e.g. legal, methodology, IT, finance, HR) and what role these areas play in a future process-oriented organisation.

Chapter 2: Documentation

Many national statistical offices that have successfully used the GSBPM and GAMS0 to help them move towards a more process-oriented approach to statistical production have started by documenting existing process. Process documentation should not be seen as a goal in itself, but as a way of understanding the starting point for modernising statistical production.

Documentation should use templates that facilitate the wide re-use of text and avoid the duplication of work. In this way, documentation can be seen as an investment that will reduce efforts in the future. Managing the information in a database format can be useful as it allows different reports to be generated for different users or purposes, based on selections from standard content, e.g. quality reports for international organisations, or lists of processes that use certain software or methods.

Recommendations

2.1 **Analyse the current state of Geostat**

- Geostat should carry out an analysis, focusing on the current state in Geostat using GSBPM and GAMS0 as a reference: What processes and activities are present in the current organisation, who is responsible for what etc.

2.2 **Conduct skills mapping and develop HR strategy**

- Geostat should carry out a skills audit to prepare for a process-oriented organisation and the transition period, by identifying the skills Geostat currently has, and those it will need in the future. This will help to identify gaps between the current and the future situation. This could start in the pilot units (Recommendation 3.3), involving the internal group (Recommendation 3.1) and HR. With the transition to a process-oriented organisation, each person becomes more specialised (as opposed to an individual carrying out a little bit of every function).
- Geostat should develop a HR strategy to develop the missing skills through recruitment, re-training of existing staff, or a mixture of both.

2.3 **Develop the intranet further**

- Geostat should continue the work started to establish an intranet and make it easily available to all staff. The intranet is typically a good first access point for information internally to the NSO staff.
- As mentioned in Recommendations 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, Geostat should put all relevant documents on the intranet, including process descriptions, the Georgian translations of the GSBPM and GAMS0, any future documentation (training material, self-assessment material, future descriptions etc.) they produce, as well as materials from all international projects that Geostat is involved in.
- Geostat should consider tagging documents on the intranet according to the GSBPM to make their discovery and use easier, and to signal their importance. Tagging can also go deeper: tagged documents using the GSBPM phases or even sub-processes will enable staff to easily find and link information to the GSBPM.

2.4 ***Define IT standards***

- Geostat should define and declare what IT solutions they intend to use as IT standards for Geostat as a whole. Some examples: database structures or standard tools for Database Management System or for programming languages and for statistical packages (the “R” package is now a standard in many NSOs). These standards must be a “constraint” not only for internal developments but also for donors and international projects, preventing the IT unit from being forced to maintain and support too many software platforms. Identifying these IT standards will be important in the future to have an efficient process-oriented organisation in place and further standardise existing IT solutions and introduce new ones. Geostat should gradually abandon the use of Microsoft Office products such as Excel and Access for the production of official statistics, and introduce more professional tools.

2.5 ***Start building a metadata system based on the information collected***

- Geostat collects and stores a lot of information about processes already, and should continue and complete the intended descriptive exercise. However, it will give the organisation more value if Geostat organises this information into a very first early version of a metadata system. This is a common practice in most process-oriented organisations and will be of great help to ensure smooth operation of process flows in the new organisation.
- As a first step, Geostat should organise the information they manage into databases and not store it only in Excel sheets. This will also help Geostat to prepare to meet future needs related to metadata structures and their management, such as the introduction of the Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS), to be more in line with the requirements of the European Statistical System.

Chapter 3 – Organisation

Moving to a process-oriented organisation has been shown in various countries to improve the efficiency of the NSO. Geostat has already started along this path by centralising dissemination and communication activities in the Department of International and Public Relations some years ago.

A major staffing challenge in the coming years will be how to redeploy the large number of posts that are currently dedicated to data collection activities in the regional offices of Geostat. This is a natural consequence of the move from collecting data on paper by interviewers, towards more electronic data collection (including by Internet) and the greater use of administrative and other non-statistical data sources. Logically, the posts that are no longer needed for data collection could be re-used to help to improve quality, produce new outputs, or any other activities that add value to Geostat's work. It is important to note that any organisation structure needs to evolve over time to meet new user needs and take advantage of new opportunities.

The current lack of space in the Geostat headquarters building in Tbilisi can be seen as a constraint on redeploying posts to support activities that currently only take place in that building. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the possibilities of remote working, and it may be possible for some staff to work on new tasks whilst still being physically based in regional offices.

The sector review team and Geostat staff discussed the most likely next steps and identified possibilities to improve efficiency by consolidating data collection, as well as a further consolidation of methodological support activities.

There are several points to take into account when considering whether to consolidate an activity that is currently spread amongst several different organisational units. These can include:

- Evaluating changes in the external environment (e.g. new technologies, new administrative or other data sources)
- Assessing risks and making plans for managing them
- Identifying the different capabilities needed, not just the staff and their skills, but all the other institutional capabilities that should be combined to ensure a successful transition. The diagram below showing the seven dimensions of statistical capabilities is taken from the UNECE Statistical Capacity Development Strategy², and may help with this
- Identifying the steps needed for capability improvement
- Setting quality guidelines and criteria. The GSBPM quality indicators³ may help with this
- Implementing and monitoring the results.

² <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Statistical%20capacity%20development%20strategy%20final.pdf>

³ <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/GSBPM/Quality+Indicators>

The seven dimensions of statistical capabilities



In an organisation based on statistical subject-matter domains, most production activities for one domain are carried out within one organisational unit. On the contrary, in a process-oriented organisation with centralised functions, production should be carried out in collaboration and coordination between multiple units (e.g. subject-domain, data collection unit, IT unit). This requires the establishment of formal agreements (sometimes referred to as service-level agreements or SLAs) to define who is responsible for what and to ensure the smooth flows of data and services between units, at the right time, with an agreed level of quality.

Recommendations

3.1 *Establish change champion(s) and a small internal group*

- Geostat should identify one or more change champions amongst mid and senior managers. They should be mandated by the Executive Director to lead the change process across Geostat.
- Geostat should create a small internal group of people who are open to change from different parts of the organisation. They should be people who understand what the process-oriented organisation means. They should drive the discussions about change, bringing in all necessary skills and competencies from across the organisation, and keep the change process going in the right direction.

3.2 *Change manager to be mandated*

- Geostat should find and mandate an independent change manager to help the top management in the whole transition process of changing the organisation. This change manager should have good knowledge of the Georgian public administration system and Geostat, as well as being an excellent change manager. Ideally, an external change manager can bring in new skills and knowledge on how to manage change that can be as crucial for a successful transition as good knowledge of Geostat.

3.3 ***Consolidate data collection – step by step***

- Geostat should centralise the data collection functions across the organisation. Even in the era of electronic data collection, there is a strong potential in centralising services such as data collection. This will open up new modernisation directions that will result in further efficiency gains and higher quality, such as using multimode design, using more administrative data and other data sources, introduction of new methods in cooperation with the methodology team (such as sampling or survey-methodology), upskilling field interviewers, etc.
- In consolidating data collection, Geostat should consider a step-by-step approach, perhaps starting with a small sub-set of subject-matter domains (for example, agriculture, business, social). This should be seen as a pilot to test the approach and understand the benefits before it is extended to the whole organisation.

3.4 ***Consider consolidating methodology***

- Geostat should consider greater consolidation of methodology functions. This can improve efficiency and value added. There is a clear trend towards centralised methodology support in most NSOs having process-oriented organisations.
- As a first step Geostat could try a pilot focusing on data collection-related methodologies, such as sampling or survey-methodology, to see the benefits.

3.5 ***Introduce and use SLAs***

- Geostat should consider introducing SLAs (or similar agreements), to help to clearly define the borders between units working on different processes (for example between data collection and subject-matter domains). SLAs can be used to define quality criteria (including when the output of one team is accepted by the next) and clarify responsibilities.
- SLAs should be supported by a software tool to manage the service request and provision, keeping track of different requests and replies, allowing an analysis of efficiency and bottlenecks.

3.6 ***Set up an international advisory support group***

- Geostat should consider setting up an international group of experts to provide advice and support during the transition period. This group could review the progress periodically and advise on next steps or how to solve any issues encountered, based on their experiences.

Chapter 4: Moving forwards – A roadmap

The review team identified a series of actions, some of which are inter-dependent. Based on experiences in other NSOs, these actions could take 3-4 years to complete. They can be grouped as follows:

First 12-18 Months - Foundations

- Training on GSBPM / GAMS0 / process-based organisation (Recommendation 1.1)
- Agreed translations of GSBPM and GAMS0 (Recommendations 1.2 and 1.3)
- Analysis of the current state of Geostat (Recommendation 2.1)
- Skills mapping and HR strategy (Recommendation 2.2)
- Define IT standards (Recommendation 2.4)
- Initial design for intranet and metadata system (first parts of Recommendations 2.3 and 2.5)
- Set up and train group of change champions (Recommendation 3.1)
- Appoint change manager (Recommendation 3.2)
- Set up international advisory support group (Recommendation 3.6)

Next 24-30 Months - Implementation

- Implement intranet and metadata system (second parts of Recommendations 2.3 and 2.5)
- Consolidate data collection – step by step (Recommendation 3.3)
- Consolidate methodology (Recommendation 3.4)
- Set up service level agreements (or similar) (Recommendation 3.5)

The review team notes that Geostat is applying for a “twinning” project with a European Union country. Such projects can be very useful, and, in this case, it will be important to include support for at least some of the above steps in that project, so that Geostat can benefit from the experience of the partner NSO. There are likely to also be other opportunities (like IPA projects) for international support in the context of Georgia’s European Union accession process.

The review team wishes Geostat success in implementing the above roadmap and in their further steps to modernise official statistics in Georgia. The Georgian experiences will definitely be of interest to other countries that are at a similar point, or further behind on the modernisation journey. UNECE intends to bring together representatives of Geostat and the NSOs of Armenia and Moldova (possibly others) later in 2023, to share ideas and experiences. The review team would also encourage Geostat to present progress and experiences at relevant international events, including the UNECE ModernStats World Workshops.

The members of the review team also remain available for follow-up discussions by e-mail and on-line meetings, and are willing to provide further advice and support with the implementation of the recommendations and roadmap.

Annex: Resources

- [GSBPM documentation and supporting materials](#)
 - [Maturity Model](#)
 - [Implementation check list](#)
- [GAMSO documentation and supporting materials](#)
- [Sector Review of GAMSO Implementation in Armenia](#)
- Mapping of Armstat activities to GAMSO (Note: This is not a public document, but has been shared with Geostat with the permission of Armstat)
- Information flow within GSBPM using GSIM: [diagram](#) and [full report](#)
- [Documentation using GSBPM \(Excel template\)](#)
- [GSBPM “tasks” \(activities at more detailed level than sub-process\) that could be useful for documentation](#)
- Quality indicators through GSBPM: [in GSBPM clickable \(at the bottom of middle box\)](#), [full report](#)
- [Geoinformation in GSBPM](#)
- [Awesome official statistics software list \(github repository for R packages for official statistics\)](#)

GSBPM Experiences from other organisations (from [GSBPM Resource Repository](#))

- Slovenia (2022): [GSBPM as a Backbone of the Internal Documentation System](#)
- Portugal (2019): [Describing the Statistical Business Process using the GSBPM as a reference](#) (for Internal planning and management IT system)
- New Zealand (2018): [GSBPM: 12+ years of implementation!](#)
- IMF (2022): [GSBPM Implementation: Experience from the IMF](#) (also see: 2019: [IMF and the GSBPM: Progress So far](#))
- Croatia (2022): [Instructions on Quality according to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model \(GSBPM\)](#)