

DELIBERATION NO 22 OF THE CONSELHO SUPERIOR DE ESTATÍSTICA (STATISTICAL COUNCIL)

2008-2011 NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM SITUATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Law governing the National Statistical System (NSS) sets forth that before the end of each term of office the *Conselho Superior de Estatística* (Statistical Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council) shall prepare a situation assessment report for the National Statistical System (NSS) (Article 15 (4) of Law No 22/2008 of 13 May). It is now time to fulfil this obligation, as the three-year mandate of the current Council members is nearing the end (cf. Decision No 22343/2008 of 25 August).

In terms of the methodology approved in due course by the Standing Section of Statistical Coordination (*Secção Permanente de Coordenação Estatística* in Portuguese), the elaboration of this Report resulted from in-depth work to analyse the results achieved over the past three years and identify future challenges posed to the NSS. This involved the Council Secretariat, statistical authorities, members of the above Standing Section, the chairpersons of Council sections, and the Vice-Chairperson.

Pursuant to Article 15 (4) of Law No 22/2008 of 13 May, after a favourable opinion of the Standing Section of Statistical Coordination, **the Statistical Council, at the plenary meeting on 21 September 2011, decided to approve the 2008-2011 National Statistical System Situation Assessment Report, and identified, as an annex to this deliberation, the priority actions to be developed and monitored within the National Statistical System.**

The Council considers that it should emphasise the most relevant achievements reached between 2008 and 2011 at the level of the National Statistical System:

- Reinforced coordination of the System;
- Widened statistical production in particularly relevant areas, increased supply of statistical information and greater accessibility thereof;
- Higher quality of official statistics, most notably with regard to compliance with a release calendar and to the credibility of general government statistics;
- Considerable modernisation of the statistical production process in general, and in particular as regards the collection stage, and reduction of the burden on respondents, particularly enterprises, through wider use of administrative data for statistical purposes;
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness in the use of human and financial resources available for the production of official statistics.

This matter shall be covered by a press release and widely disseminated throughout society.

Lisbon, 21st September 2011

The Chairman of the Statistical Council, *Miguel Relvas*

The Executive Secretary of the Statistical Council, *Maria da Graça Fernandes Caeiro Bento*

**PRIORITY ACTIONS TO BE DEVELOPED AND MONITORED IN THE NEAR FUTURE WITHIN THE
NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

With regard to the activity of the Council:

1. To present a project to revise the legal framework governing the NSS, that envisages, inter alia, (i) a new chairmanship model for the Council and (ii) reinforced independence and autonomy as regards the management of Statistics Portugal (in addition to the technical independence already enshrined), and the corresponding "accountability", rendering these structures increasingly capable of exercising their powers and observing the principles enshrined in the EC Regulation on European Statistics, the Law governing the National Statistical System and the European Statistics Code of Practice.
2. To design and implement mechanisms that, in accordance with its powers, make it possible to ensure observance of the principles envisaged in the NSS Law and their monitoring at the level of statistical authorities.
3. To clarify a regulatory framework suitable for strict compliance with the provisions of the NSS Law regarding the principle of statistical confidentiality, in particular through (i) the assessment of regulations on statistical confidentiality to be adopted by all statistical authorities and (ii) the creation of surveillance and other mechanisms making it possible to ensure compliance with rules on confidentiality by entities to which information subject to statistical confidentiality is provided.
4. To foster and coordinate statistical dissemination actions conducive to promoting statistical literacy, notably in school population and society at large.
5. To pursue the monitoring and development of the actions referred to in the "Action Plan for compliance with deadlines for availability of Portuguese statistics" with the purpose of (i) complying with deadlines for availability of Portuguese statistics and inventorying administrative sources and (ii) gradually extending the assessment of official statistics to all other dimensions of statistical quality.¹
6. To promote initiatives suitable to the reinforcement of institutional cooperation mechanisms within the NSS, namely to (i) build and update a single statistical units file to be shared by statistical authorities; (ii) optimise the NSS human resources requalification process, so that it may efficiently and effectively meet the demands of new challenges; and (iii) implement the European Statistics Code of Practice.
7. To reinforce the use of administrative sources for statistical purposes, namely through intervention of statistical authorities as from an early stage of their design, update or modernisation, in order to ensure an adequate balance between the objective of cutting costs associated with agents' reporting and the need to produce quality official statistics.

¹ Dimensions of statistical quality (incorporated in the European Statistics Code of Practice): relevance, accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, coherence and comparability.

8. To urgently identify and invigorate the analysis and monitoring of relevant statistical areas for decision-making, particularly those where some weaknesses prevail in the production of statistical data, taking as reference the objectives set out in the General Guidelines of National Statistical Activity for 2008-2012.
9. To implement the NSS Law provision setting forth mandatory prior consultation of the Council with regard to draft decree-laws setting up statistical services or containing rules on statistical activity.

With regard to the activity of statistical authorities:

1. To reinforce and consolidate the autonomy of statistical authorities, including entities with delegated powers, so as to strictly and independently ensure the exercise of their powers and observance of the principles enshrined in the NSS Law and the European Statistics Code of Practice.
2. To monitor the commitments assumed in protocols for the delegation of powers by Statistics Portugal, namely through statistical audits.
3. To improve statistical communication and dissemination channels, thereby contributing to promoting statistical literacy.
4. To reinforce NSS institutional cooperation mechanisms, thereby contributing to improve the quality of Portuguese statistics and minimise the operating costs of statistical production systems, such as the single statistical units file to be shared by statistical authorities.
5. To analyse the statistical implications and prepare the national statistical system to respond to the implementation of:
 - (i) new legislative arrangements aimed at reinforcing the legal framework of the Economic and Monetary Union, so as to make it possible to safeguard against and correct macroeconomic imbalances, and ensure public finance sustainability;
 - (ii) new Community requirements, in particular the availability of timely statistics on new areas for monitoring the 2020 European strategy;
 - (iii) international handbooks, notably the new 2010 System of National Accounts and its implementation in the European Union (ESA); and
 - (iv) the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report, which reinforces interaction across the economic, social and environmental spheres, among others.
6. To reconcile the production of statistics in new domains and with greater detail, particularly those on relevant areas for decision-making and others where weaknesses prevail (e.g. due to the scarceness of available resources or the burden on respondents). This is done namely through the adoption of new statistical production and dissemination models, use of administrative data, and sharing of technological and operational infrastructures, under review at European level.
7. To intensify the appropriation of quality administrative data for the production of official statistics.
8. To increase the information made available, notably long series.

9. To enhance the information made available, notably as regards revisions, discontinued variables, accessibility, transparency and timeliness.
10. To bring the legislation of the Regional Directorate of Statistics of Madeira more into keeping with the new legal framework governing the NSS, along the same lines as was carried out by the Regional Statistical Office of the Azores.