

Concept of the State Statistical Committee on work with users

Main purpose of the SSC's activity as the main producer of official statistical information characterizing economic and social life of the country is to provide users with official data and regularly satisfy their needs. Since statistics covers different domains and statistical data users represent various strata of society they have different range of interests, views and purposes. And that is reflected by distinction in their statistical data needs both in the context of area and time and coverage. Scope of statistical data users is large. It includes state administrative bodies, profit and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, scientific organizations, mass media, international organizations, natural persons. Therefore, main duty of statistical bodies is to provide all user categories with equal access to statistical data.

Realization of this duty entails implementation of user-related policy and practices. In this regard the Committee implements the following activities:

- provision of access to official statistical information for all users;
- increasing of statistical data users' awareness and statistical literacy;
- formation of positive opinion on activity of statistical body and rising of awareness of society;
- increasing of effectiveness of work with users, meeting their needs more operatively by application of modern information and communication technologies.

One of the main purposes of the realized actions and official documents adopted during last years in the State Statistical Committee is the improvement of works with users, reduction of their data obtaining burden. On organization of activity related with users the State Statistical Committee follows a lot of laws and normative legal acts. It includes laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On official statistics", "On Obtaining of information", "On procedures for review of citizen appeals", "Policy on dissemination of official statistics" of the Committee, "Rules regulating the actions of the Committee in a case of misinterpretation of statistical information by users" and etc.

The most important duty of statistical bodies is to provide satisfaction of users' needs with high quality data.

Thus, in accordance with article 2 of the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On official statistics" the main purpose of official statistics is to provide confidentiality of primary data in the country and satisfy needs of administrative bodies, economic subjects, academic researchers in statistical information

characterizing social-economic situation, scientific and technical development, mutual economic relations at country, regional and field level, structural changes and production effectiveness.

Realization of this purpose requires adequate organization of user-related works and provision of free access to official statistical information. For this purpose the SSC of Azerbaijan practically implements the followings:

- publication of catalogue of releases to be issued during a year and familiarization of publicity in a paper format and posting it on the Internet;
- familiarization of the state administrative bodies, scientific research institutes and higher schools, international organizations, several state and private institutions with statistical publications;
- posting of statistical information (yearbooks, bulletins, express data, press-releases and etc.) on the web-page of the SSC;
- receiving of users requests regarding to this or another statistical information and preparation of replies to them;
- posting of databases on the Internet covering long-term period by corresponding fields;
- conduction of country scale surveys in order to study data users opinion, to estimate level of their trust in official statistics, to define future needs.

Despite the main duty of statistical bodies is to provide publicity with essential social, economic statistical information, the world practice shows that this activity could not be implemented one-sidedly for a long time. Demands and expectations of the publicity could differ from the results of statistical bodies. In this view, in order to satisfy statistical data users' needs, increase satisfaction with activity of statistical bodies it is primarily necessary to make a feedback with users for studying their demands and to improve appropriate activity, and all of that is provided by conduction of surveys among users.

Full and promptly response to inquiries of statistical data users made essential improving the activity within the Committee and mechanism of responding to inquiries. E-document circulation on the system of the State Statistical Committee had been submitted into use for the purpose to provide timely and fully responding to inquiries of statistical data users. And that increased work effectiveness, provided the unity of mechanism of data submission and its central control.

One of the main structural parts of the work with statistical data users is the increasing of literacy. It is clear that not many groups of users have complete knowledge and understanding about statistical activity. In particular, one of the main factors stipulating the increasing of users trust is the provision of essential knowledge on statistics, acknowledgement with statistical activity characteristics, and access to statistical methodology. For this purpose the Committee implements the following activities:

- conduction of press conferences regarding to social-economic development of the country, censuses and other activities;
- organization and conduction of seminars on several domains of statistics for development of knowledge of statistical data users, statisticians and students willing to be a specialist in this area in future;
- posting on the web-page of the Committee the explanations of statistical indicators and information about processing methodology developed by the SSC and regularly required by the society and facilitation access to them.

One of the main factors entailing the increasing of literacy of users in the field of statistics is minimization of the cases of misinterpretation, corruption of statistical data. In such cases, steps to be taken by the Committee are reflected in the “Rules regulating the actions of the Committee in the case of misinterpretation of statistical information by users”.

Actions implemented with regard to timely responding to inquiries of statistical data users, provision of their satisfaction, increasing their literacy on statistics create favourable conditions for increasing of users’ trust in the Committee, in its activity. Main way stipulating the increasing of users’ trust in activity of statistical bodies is the description of social-economic processes taken place in the country more clearly and precisely in the context of quantity and the provision of its accordance with reality. And that in its term is provided with improvement of statistical data processes, more detailed coverage of statistical units during the surveys. As a whole, the following actions are taken for increasing of trust in the Committee and statistical information:

- submission of information on actions implemented by the Committee and actual problems with regard to activity of the SSC in mass media and posting of this information on the Internet;
- holding of “Open days” by the State Statistical Committee;

- establishing of corresponding councils and collaboration network in order to improve cooperation with civil society, provision of participation of the public in the process of public importance decision-making, and for this purpose using of web-page;
- organization of propaganda activities, conduction of surveys for the purpose to increase public confidence in the system of the State Statistical Committee.

For this purpose, in the framework of execution of the “State Program on improvement of official statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan during 2008-2012” there had been initially started conduction of surveys since 2009 for assessment of the level of trust of users in official statistics. Aim of these surveys was to create feedback with users and define their needs and thus improve dissemination of statistical information and increase the level of trust in statistical body. Statistical data users’ needs and satisfaction indices had been calculated based on the conducted surveys. As continue of these surveys in the framework of execution of the “State Program on improvement of official statistics in the Republic of Azerbaijan during 2008-2012” in 2013 online survey was initially conducted among users.

The final and most important part of activity related with statistical data users is the establishment of communication with them. Statistical data are presented to users by the following ways of dissemination:

- submission of press releases in mass media;
- posting of information on official web-page of the Committee;
- dissemination of statistical information in form of express data, bulletins and statistical yearbooks;
- submission of data by posts and e-mails;
- submission of data based on agreed data exchange between parties;
- submission of data based on individual inquiries received from legal and natural entities;
- organization of press conferences for mass media and interested parties by the SSC about social-economic development of the country at least once a year.

Obtaining of statistical information by general public is provided due to all above mentioned.

During last years the acceleration of development of information and communication technologies, the achievements in this area are reflected in activity

of public authorities. It is specifically shown by increasing of service quality for the country citizens, provision of transparency. As an example launch of “E-government” portal could be shown. “E-government” enables public organizations applying modern information technologies to provide information and e-services for all citizens residing in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, legal and natural entities, foreign citizens and persons having no citizenship. Like other public authorities the State Statistical Committee has also joined to this system and provides the following five services by e-government portal:

- submission of official statistical reports;
- update of statistical data (indicators);
- submission of statistical release calendar and press data dissemination calendar;
- online payment of administrative penalties for violation of rules on submission of statistical information;
- online selling of statistical publications.

One of the main means of practical application of achievements of the sector of information and communication technologies is the improvement of official web-page of the SSC. Due to improvements during last years the styling design of the web-page has been enhanced, user-friendly operation mode has been provided; more statistical information characterizing the country economy has been posted. Specifically, e-versions of publications have been posted on the web-page in order to provide users with easy and free access to the yearbooks released by the SSC; equal possibilities have been provided for all user categories.

Targets

Along with actions taken during last years regarding to statistical data users and gaining of positive results on user-friendly access to data the SSC has new targets arising from requirements of the recent period.

Main strategic purpose of the Development Concept “Azerbaijan 2020: The vision of the future” confirmed by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 29 December 2012, № 800 was to gain the stage of development stipulated by sustainable economic growth and social welfare, effective public administration and supremacy of the law, provision of rights and freedom of people and active status of civil society in the country public life during the period up to the year 2020. Within implementation of the concept an effective and timely bringing achievements to the notice of general public makes necessary for the SSC to improve its activity with regard to statistical data users.

Taking into account above-noted, in order to improve work with statistical data users, enhance statistical data supply applying modern information technologies and user-friendly dissemination of statistical information the SSC has foreseen implementation of the following actions during the next period:

- more extension of relations with mass media;
- expansion of choices of services offered in “e-government” portal;
- improvement of surveys conducted in order to study statistical data users’ satisfaction level, create feedback to define their needs;
- participation in several exhibitions and events to highlight the SSC’s activity;
- application of the method of individual approach to separate users groups and involvement of new users;
- application of new dissemination formats, creation of possibilities for users to prepare interactive multidimensional tables on all indicators of database posted on the web-page of the Committee;
- giving instructions for statistical data users applying information and communication technologies;
- more improvement of application of geographic information system in the field of statistics;
- by means of thematic maps to provide visualization of statistical data selected by users from official web-page of the SSC.