

GENERAL DATA REVISION POLICY

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Contents

- INTRODUCTION..... 3
- 1. Reference framework 4
- 2. Scope of application 4
- 3. Definition and purpose of statistical data revision..... 4
- 4. Revision principles 5
- 5. Types of revisions 5
 - 5.1 Regular revisions 5
 - 5.1.1 Reasons for conducting regular revisions..... 6
 - 5.1.2 Dissemination and communication strategy for regular revisions 6
 - 5.2 Major revisions 7
 - 5.2.1 Reasons for conducting major revisions 7
 - 5.2.2 Dissemination and communication strategy for major revisions..... 7
 - 5.3 Unplanned revisions..... 8
 - 5.3.1 Reasons for conducting unplanned revisions 8
 - 5.3.2 Dissemination and communication strategy for unplanned revisions 8
- 6. Revision analysis..... 9

INTRODUCTION

In order to effectively meet user needs, official statistics must be relevant, accurate, timely, released in accordance with established dissemination timetables, accessible and clear, comparable and coherent.

User demand is particularly strong for up-to-date and current data which, in a dynamic social and economic environment, support the timely and informed decision making and the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and programmes. Official statistical authorities therefore frequently face the challenge of ensuring an appropriate balance between the timeliness of dissemination and the maintenance of the high quality of data.

The Republika Srpska Institute of Statistics (the RSIS) strives to provide users with statistical data as promptly as possible, recognising that data released at an initial stage may be provisional in nature. As statistical production progresses, such data may be replaced by revised results based on more complete information and improved methodologies, within the statistical data revision process. In addition, significant methodological changes or alignment with the legal framework and international statistical standards may require data revisions. It is important to emphasise that statistical data are revised in the interest of users and for the purpose of improving their quality.

With the aim of ensuring transparency in the process of statistical data production and revision, ensuring effective communication with users, and maintaining trust in official statistics, in this document the RSIS defines a general data revision policy.

This policy establishes general principles and rules for data revision and includes information on the defined typology of revisions and the reasons for their implementation, on methods of dissemination and informing the public, as well as on the importance of revision analysis.

1. Reference framework

The RSIS General data revision policy is based on the principles set out in the [Law on Statistics of Republika Srpska](#) (article 17), RSIS [Quality policy](#) and strategies of [dissemination](#) and [communication](#), as well as on the principles, guidelines and recommendations defined in:

- [UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics](#),
- [European Statistics Code of Practice](#), especially in:
 - o Principle 6 – Impartiality and Objectivity (indicator 6.6 – Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies),
 - o Principle 8 – Appropriate Statistical Procedures (indicator 8.5 – Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures),
 - o Principle 12 – Accuracy and Reliability (indicator 12.3 – Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve source data, statistical processes and outputs),
- [Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System \(ESS\)](#),
- [ESS guidelines on revision policy for Principal European Economic Indicators \(PEEIs\)](#).

2. Scope of application

This policy establishes the general principles of data revision applicable to all statistical data produced by the RSIS.

The principles set out in the general revision policy provide a sufficiently flexible framework to take into account the specific characteristics of statistics from different domains and fields, and the differences in the regulations and methodologies applied in their production. This ensures that domain/field specific revision policies are fully aligned with the general revision policy.

3. Definition and purpose of statistical data revision

In the broadest sense, a revision is defined as any change to the values of statistical data that have already been published.

The primary purpose of statistical data revision is to improve data quality.

Revisions are carried out in order to improve the accuracy and completeness of the data provided to users, in particular through the incorporation of new or improved information, which may result in modifications to previously published data. Revisions may also be required to ensure compliance with regulations and international standards, to reflect changes in methods, concepts, definitions and classifications, changes in data sources, or to correct subsequently identified irregularities or errors in previously delivered administrative data or submitted statistical reports.

It should be emphasised that corrections of already published data and information resulting from unintentional errors in the statistical production process – such as linguistic errors, processing, calculation or compilation errors, technical or other similar errors, are not considered revisions in the sense of this policy. The procedure for correcting and communicating these errors and their typology are given in the [RSIS Manual for the correction of errors in published editions](#).

4. Revision principles

General principles of revision are:

- Statistical data are revised in the interest of users and solely with the purpose of improving their quality.
- The data revision policy is public and accessible to all users through the RSIS official website.
- The general principles of revision apply to all statistics produced by the RSIS.
- Individual statistical domains or fields may define their own specific revision policies, in accordance with the regulations, methodologies, and practices applied in statistical production. Such policies shall be fully aligned with the principles of the general revision policy.
- In order to maintain users' trust in the data revision process, the RSIS aims to ensure stability of revision policies over time.
- Users are provided, in a timely and transparent manner, with all necessary information regarding upcoming revisions and their dissemination schedule.
- Users are provided access to previously published (original) data.
- The impact of revisions on data quality is regularly monitored, analysed, and reported.

5. Types of revisions

The RSIS general data revision policy distinguishes the following types of revisions:

- regular revisions,
- major revisions,
- unplanned revisions.

5.1 Regular revisions

Regular revisions are planned, current revisions of already published data. They are carried out to incorporate new or more complete information. Regular revisions are part of a standard practice in statistical data production.

In order to produce the required statistical data for various statistical domains as soon as possible, most often for short-term statistics, provisional data, such as preliminary or estimated data, are calculated and disseminated. Such data may be incomplete to some extent, as they rely on records or databases that are not yet fully finalised. As input data are completed over time, preliminary or estimated results are revised and replaced with higher-quality results based on more recent information or more complete data sources.

Regular revisions are typically carried out on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. Statistical data subject to regular revisions are preliminary and estimated data. Final data are not subject to regular revisions.

5.1.1 Reasons for conducting regular revisions

Reasons for conducting regular revisions may be:

- availability of new, more complete or more accurate information collected from reporting units or obtained from administrative sources;
- availability of source data that better correspond to the concept under statistical observation, which is often the case for statistics compiled from multiple sources (e.g. national accounts);
- reconciliation of data at higher levels of aggregation with more detailed calculations at lower levels of aggregation;
- reconciliation of data of higher-frequency of collection and dissemination (e.g. monthly, quarterly) with those of lower-frequency (e.g. annual) based on more detailed and reliable information;
- incorporation of revised or newly added original (unadjusted) data in the calculation of seasonally and calendar adjusted time series.

5.1.2 Dissemination and communication strategy for regular revisions

Regular revisions of statistical data are planned and announced in advance on the RSIS website. They are released according to a pre-established schedule defined in the annual Publication plan.

At the beginning of each year, users have access on the RSIS website to the annual [Release calendar](#), which includes the schedule for the publication of regular revisions.

The Release calendar contains the titles of all statistical releases, publications and other data releases. Titles clearly indicate when data are preliminary or estimated. Data or statistical outputs that are not labelled in this way are considered final.

In tables, charts, methodological explanations, and accompanying interpretations that are contained in the RSIS dissemination products, users are provided with information on the nature of the data presented (estimated, preliminary or revised) through notes or additional textual explanations.

It is necessary to ensure that revised data, whenever possible, are disseminated at the same level of detail as the previously published (original) data.

5.2 Major revisions

Major revisions are well in advance planned and often substantial changes to already published statistical data, aimed at ensuring their quality, relevance, and comparability. They occur less frequently than regular revisions, typically every five to ten years. Major revisions are also considered methodological revisions as they are often carried out due to changes in statistical methods, concepts or classifications.

These revisions often have impact on a large part of time series, and in some cases, on entire time series. To avoid breaks in the series and to maintain comparability of data across different time periods, recalculations (back-cast) of previously published statistical data are performed, incorporating new or more accurate information.

5.2.1 Reasons for conducting major revisions

Major revisions are most often conducted for one or more of the following reasons:

- change of the base year for index series;
- updating of the weighting system;
- changes in concepts, definitions, or classifications (e.g. to align with new international standards or due to the adoption of a new classification);
- availability of new data collected over longer periods of time (e.g. data from censuses or surveys conducted at multi-year intervals);
- availability of new data sources (introduction of a new statistical survey or use of a new or improved administrative data source or register);
- changes in methods of data collection, processing, or statistical analysis;
- alignment with new or amended legal regulations that directly or indirectly affect the statistical production process.

5.2.2 Dissemination and communication strategy for major revisions

Major revisions are announced in advance through information on the RSIS website and the Release calendar, at least one month prior to the scheduled date of publication of the revised data.

Users are provided in advance with information on the reasons for the revision, the length and type of the revised time series, and the expected publication date.

Typically, for the publication of these revisions, dedicated statistical releases or publications are prepared, in which the entire time series of revised data is presented. The titles or headers of these publications clearly indicate that the data are revised, including the information on a reference period.

The publication of major revisions is accompanied by appropriate explanations that allow users to understand and evaluate the revised results. These explanations include information on the reasons for the revision, its impact on results, and any potential breaks in the time series.

When revised data are published as part of a time series that has not been fully revised, users are provided with information on the nature of the data (revised) and additional explanations in the form of notes related to the table title, column, or row in which the revised data are presented.

5.3 Unplanned revisions

Unplanned revisions are extraordinary revisions of published statistical data and are not part of the regular statistical business process. They are carried out exclusively as a result of unforeseen events, or circumstances that could not be influenced in advance.

Frequent unplanned revisions are avoided to the greatest extent possible, as they affect the reliability of statistics and may undermine users' confidence in the quality of statistical data. Therefore, prior to their implementation it is essential to analyse the scope and impact of changes on the quality, correct use and interpretation of previously published data.

5.3.1 Reasons for conducting unplanned revisions

Unplanned revisions are carried out rarely and only when substantial shortcomings are identified after the publication of statistical data and indicators. These may be caused by:

- unforeseen changes or subsequently identified irregularities or errors in previously submitted statistical reports (e.g. by major reporting units), in administrative source data, or in data obtained from other authorised producers of statistics used for the compilation of official statistics;
- unexpected emergence of new data or data of significantly higher quality;
- unforeseen changes in methodology (the subsequent availability of new, significantly improved methods or procedures for compiling results);
- other unforeseen circumstances (technical failures, natural disasters, public health threats, etc.).

5.3.2 Dissemination and communication strategy for unplanned revisions

Unplanned data revisions are published as soon as possible on the RSIS website. Whenever feasible, users are notified in advance of the need to conduct a revision.

Revised data are accompanied by appropriate explanations of the reasons for conducting the unplanned revision. The header of a statistical release or other dissemination product clearly indicates that the data are revised, including the time period to which the data refer and the edition version.

In exceptional cases, after it is confirmed by the analysis that the changes in the data are not of a major scale and cannot significantly affect the quality, correct use or interpretation of previously published data, the revised data may be published as part of the next regular revision or other release of similar data, with a note indicating that the data are revised.

6. Revision analysis

Revision analysis is an activity carried out by producers of official statistics to assess data quality and to verify the consistent application of established revision procedures.

The analysis examines the impact of revisions on results by comparing preliminary or estimated data with final data or subsequent estimates. Observed differences provide information on the magnitude and direction of revisions, the reliability of original statistical data, and may indicate potential systematic deficiencies or weaknesses in the statistical production or estimation process.

Data revisions are analysed regularly, following each data release, and at least once a year.

The results of revision analyses are publicly available to users. They are published in methodological documents and explanations accompanying revised data, particularly in the case of major revisions. The main instrument for the regular monitoring and reporting on revision analysis results is the standardised quality report, that includes both qualitative and quantitative assessments of the conducted revisions. Quality reports should include a description of the revision policy, procedures, and practices, as well as indicators of the magnitude of revisions carried out on the results of the statistical processes being reported.