



DISSEMINATION POLICY

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1. Introduction

Official statistics is an indispensable element of the information system of any demographic society.

Statistical data make fundamental grounds for decision-making processes, for designing analyses and implementation of various surveys. Statistics are of utmost importance and interest for decision-makers, policymakers, economic experts and researchers; therefore they directly upgrade public awareness of the significance of official statistics.

Data dissemination, as the final stage of any statistical activity, represents an instrument contributing to the respect and importance of official statistics.

The dissemination policy of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: SORS) lays down the basic principles of dissemination of statistical data and information.

2. Strategic goals

The production of high quality data, their presentations and strengthened cooperation with users ensure the implementation of major objectives, namely, recognition, professional independence and international comparability of official statistics.

By implementing the respective dissemination policy, SORS ensures data and information dissemination by using modern technological tools and formats that are adjusted to the needs of users.

Official statistics is publicly available to all and on impartial basis.

The policy of dissemination is harmonized with the [Official Statistics Law](#), [Quality policy](#) and [European Statistics Code of Practice](#).

3. Main principles and guidelines of dissemination policy

- *Professional independence.* The decisions concerning the definitions, methods of data collection, processing and dissemination of official statistics is exclusively in charge of the authorized producers of official statistics, and the absence of political or any other external influence shall be guaranteed.
- *Impartiality and objectivity.* Official statistics is disseminated on impartial basis while respecting the principle of objectivity and ensuring equal treatment for all users. The credibility of official statistics shall be protected against unprofessional influence of any kind.
- *Accessibility and clarity.* The modern adequate and available technology is used to provide efficient access to statistics, while disseminated data are presented in a clear and understandable form.

- *Confidentiality.* The results of statistical surveys are disseminated in compliance with the provisions of confidentiality, as stipulated in the Official Statistics Law. Therefore, in order to protect the rights of data providers all data shall be anonymized before dissemination. All tables, reports, statistical releases and other publications shall be prepared in a way that will ensure that the confidentiality right of any data provider is not jeopardized.
- *User-oriented approach.* Statistics dissemination is oriented towards the needs of users. Meeting the needs of users shall be regarded as the the key issue of dissemination policy.
- *Accuracy and transparency.* Users are timely advised on applied methodologies and ways of processing statistical products, as well as on all releases in accordance with the previously announced Calendar of releases. Calendar of releases is updated during a year, since the precise dates cannot be always strictly defined in advance. Any divergence from the anticipated time schedule is publicized in advance, explained and the new release date is set. Thereby any influence to professional independence is avoided.
- *Free access to data.* The results of statistical surveys envisaged by the Plan and Program of official statistics are available to users free of charge.
- *Repeated use of statistics.* Repeated use of statistics and the corresponding metadata is ensured so that any person is free to use and repeatedly release statistics subject to quoting the source (SORS). In cases of misuse and wrong interpretation of official statistics, SORS keeps the right to act publicly.

4. Publication of statistical results

In compliance with the [Policy of releases](#), the statistical data and information that SORS makes public in releases, publications and in the dissemination database are available free of charge at the SORS site (www.stat.gov.rs) to all users at the same time and on impartial basis.

The data at the SORS site are available in compliance with in advance published Calendar of releases, which is put at the site before the beginning of a calendar year for the forthcoming year. Calendar of releases is envisaged to offer a review of all statistical releases and publications, with precisely defined title, period of reference, date and time of release.

Divergence from the time schedule determined in the Calendar of releases is publicized and explained. In cases when due to unpredictable circumstances it is necessary to postpone the release of data, a new release date, together with the reasons for delay, shall be set and announced in Calendar of releases.

In order to ensure consistency and impartiality in releasing statistical data, SORS observes the time schedule defined in the Calendar.

The results of statistical surveys are also at disposal in the dissemination base, whereby the users are enabled to search the available data from various statistical domains. The users may select various formats to download the data.

Apart from the page in Serbian, the SORS website also offers English version page.

5. Metadata

In order to ensure that statistics are not only easy to access, but also provided in an understandable form so that their wrong interpretation can be avoided, the users need to be properly informed about the definitions, classifications, methodologies, legal acts and standard codes that are used in the process of statistical production.

All official statistics shall be accompanied with adequate methodological documents (metadata) and explanations, so that users should properly understand statistical results. Statistical metadata serve to describe, i.e. they document statistical data. Metadata make an indispensable element of any statistical production process.

6. Correction of errors

Finding out errors, their prompt correction and the respective notification on the error occurred represent a practice that ensures the quality of the published data and information, as well as the quality of the services that SORS renders to its users.

The errors occurring in statistical releases and publications fall within two categories:

- Light error – an error that does not change essentially the published data and information, such as is grammatical error, textual or graph error.
- Hard error – an error in tables, text or graphs, which is of major importance and need to be considered since it changes essentially the information contents; it is an error that can be seen to break the provisions of the *SORS Rules on statistical data protection*.

Correction of errors:

- When a light error is discovered, it shall be corrected immediately. Since an error of this type cannot affect the meaning of data, the notification on the correction is not required.
- When correcting a hard error, which affects the interpretation of data, applicable is the prescribed *Procedure on correction of errors in published data and information*.

7. Revision

The revision of statistical data shall be implemented in compliance with the [General policy of revision](#) that stipulates the general rules for the revision of published statistics and the manner of informing users, the types of revisions and accompanying documents covering all aspects of revisions.

8. User support

In order to ensure a facilitated approach to the products and services offered by SORS, through various canals and service tools the users are enabled to access the required data, place a request, demand offered services and get informed in due time.

The main objective of statistical dissemination is to meet the needs of users.

Communication channel for users:

- Website together with dissemination base presents the main canal of statistical dissemination.
- Through the web service [Ask us](#) and email address stat@stat.gov.rs users may ask questions, place requests and offer suggestions. In accordance with *the Rules on the method of using and disseminating data produced by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia*, the deadline for reply to request varies from five to 15 days, depending on the nature of request.
- By applying to the [Mailing list](#) service, users are enabled to get informed on published releases from a selected statistical area.
- By the way of [RSS](#) service, ensured is automatic overloading of statistical releases and publications from the SORS internet presentation.
- Statistical publications are at disposal to users and may be used at the SORS Library rooms.

9. Dissemination through social networks

The services of communication networks ([Twitter](#), [YouTube](#)) are rendered by specialized staff, with the aim to guarantee the quality of offered information.

On its Twitter account ([@StatistikaSrb](#)) SORS releases, in Serbian and in English, the latest news on results of statistical surveys and actual information.

The SORS YouTube canal offers the opportunity to review and share various video contents.

Educative video contents are regarded as a suitable media to find a way for statistical products and methods to potential users, especially to high school/secondary school and university students.

10. Microdata

This policy is aimed at meeting the needs of the scientific community and providing anonymized microdata to be used for scientific research purposes. The availability of these data for scientific research purposes considerably upgrades the analytical value of data compiled through various censuses and other surveys conducted by SORS.

The access to [microdata](#) is ensured for scientific research purposes only, with the respect of the principle of statistical confidentiality and protection of respondent identity (physical/natural persons and organizations).

SORS, as an authorized producer of official statistics, provides anonymized data upon the placed request and in accordance with *the Procedure of access to individual data without identifiers*.

11. Custom-designed analyses

Apart from the data released on the SORS internet page, in accordance with the Program and Plan of statistical surveys, users may place requests concerning data related to lower territorial levels or lower level of classification.

Custom-designed analyses are produced in accordance with *the Rules on the method of using and disseminating data produced by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia*. The requested data are provided without jeopardizing the principle of statistical confidentiality and they have to be representative to the extent as appropriate.

SORS does not publish the results of custom-designed analyses.

12. Relations with mass media

The communication with media plays a significant role for statistical dissemination, since media are key users of statistics and present an extremely important bond between the producers of official statistics and public at large.

Especially important are press conferences organized on special occasions to mark new statistical projects, with the aim to launch and provide information about novelties in statistical production or major changes in statistical surveys. A regular annual SORS press conference is held at the Serbian Government premises, when the economic developments and actual statistical indicators are assessed.

SORS follows the extent to which relations with media are efficient. An agency is engaged to follow the released texts (in printed and electronic form) that deal with SORS activities. These releases can be seen every day at the Agency web-portal. SORS Dissemination and PR unit is active in reviewing the media releases and, with the approval by the Director, it takes decisions on actions to be taken.

In case of improper and inadequate use of statistics by media, SORS shall take actions in order to avoid that the reliability and validity of official statistics is jeopardized. In addition, SORS shall undertake measures in cases when due to the lack of proper knowledge or supervision, wrong conclusions are made (e.g. wrong interpretation or inadequate comparison of data). In accordance with *the Procedure of issuing denials*, SORS shall give a notice to explain the proper use of the released data, while observing the principles of impartiality and objectivity.

13. Publishing activities

SORS maintains own publishing activity, which includes the preparatory activities, printing and realising of publications, methodological papers and promotional editions, all in compliance with *the Guidelines for publishing activities*.

With the aim to ensure best availability and maximum circulation, publications are placed at disposal of users in electronic form.

The SORS publishing activity in printed form need to be limited to those publications that have to be printed due to their special characteristics and tradition, such as are the Statistical Yearbook of Serbia and the Municipalities and Regions of the Republic of Serbia. SORS is inclined to reduce the volume of publishing activity in printed form, but to produce good

quality electronic publications; however, efforts are taken to provide a sufficient number of copies of printed publications for the SORS Library, as well as for the needs of other public libraries and regular subscribers.

Printed publications are offered at disposal of users at the SORS [Library rooms](#), where the printed publications can be purchased, wholly or partially copied or downloaded on CD.

[Price list](#) of printed publications is available at the SORS site. The prices are created so that they basically cover the production costs.

On annual basis maintained is [Catalogue of publications](#) and it is released at the SORS site.

14. Copyright policy

The information concerning the results of official statistics are regarded as public information and may be used and disseminated by other institutions, companies or individuals.

Pursuant to [Law on copyright and related rights](#) (Article 49 (5)), SORS shall allow further use of statistical information for commercial and non-commercial purposes. The general provision stipulating the use of data is that *Data use is subject to quoting the source* (e.g. source abbreviated: STAT YBOOK SERB 2016).

The data resulting from custom-designed analyses or those exchanged between institutions according to concluded contracts and agreements may be subject to special terms of use envisaged thereby.

15. User satisfaction survey

User-oriented approach is a general principle of the SORS dissemination policy. In order to have a proper insight into the needs and satisfaction of the users of statistical products and services, SORS conducts the following activities:

- [User satisfaction survey](#) is implemented on regular biennial basis, whereupon the results are released at the site, as well as the replies_ to the questions that users used to ask during the survey;
- Analyse the comments of users who take part in the survey on the SORS site, through the applications [What do you think about our web site](#);
- Record the comments placed by users at social networks; and
- Record the comments received through official email address: stat@stat.gov.rs.

All these activities shall necessarily result in implemented actions aimed at meeting the defined demands of users.

16. Promotion of statistical products

SORS undertakes promotional activities in order to provide information for professionals and potential users about its statistical products.

Following are the SORS activities of statistical promotion that are expected to upgrade the usage and access to statistics and direct contacts with users:

- Press releases;
- Organized conferences;
- Events marking release of publications, survey results, etc.;
- Lectures for primary school pupils, high school/secondary school and university students;
- Distribution of promotional leaflets and brochures;
- Participation at international exhibitions and other events;
- Cooperation with other institutions, etc.

17. Conclusions

- Official statistical data to be accurate, reliable, consistent, and comparable over time and across territories.
- Official statistics need to be updated and timely released in compliance with the previously announced Calendar of releases.
- Official statistics shall be accessible to all users at the same time, on impartial basis, while respecting the principle of objectivity.
- Releasing of statistics shall be grounded on the principle of professional independence, under the conditions stipulated by the Official Statistics law.
- Statistical data are published together with the respective metadata, in accordance with the national and international criteria, with the aim to facilitate proper interpretation.
- Statistical data produced by SORS can be further disseminated free of charge; users are advised that the data can be accessed and taken over gratis, however further use is subject to quoting the source.
- Quality and accessibility of statistics are subjects of permanent assessment to the effect that continual upgrading of dissemination activities is ensured.