



Implementation of a public opinion poll on data users' satisfaction with official statistics disseminated by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova

Terms of Reference

Participation is open to all legal persons, participating either individually or in a grouping (consortium) of tenderers, which are effectively established in the Republic of Moldova.

1. Background information

The National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS; Romanian: Biroul Național de Statistică, abbr. BNS) is the National Statistical Institute that coordinate and manage the National Statistical System of Moldova and is the main producer of official statistics in the country. It is responsible for the impartial collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of all statistical information relating to Moldova's people, society and economy.

The EU funded project "Technical Assistance to Support the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova" (ParStat) is currently implemented by a Consortium led by the Italian Geographical Society in partnership with the National Institutes of Statistics of Italy, Poland, and Denmark. The main project objectives are:

- to strengthening the National Bureau of Statistics coordination role of the National Statistical System and its capacity to access and use administrative registers and other data sources of Moldovan institutions for statistical purposes aimed at enhancing public trust, high quality and accurateness of data provided and processed;
- to promote harmonisation of statistics in line with the EU and international standards by enabling efficient and effective production, analysis and dissemination of official statistics, following best practices as implemented in the European Statistical System by adopting new technologies and methods for data collection and processing.

Through its activities, the Project aims to support NBS in ensuring standards to statistical production, and provide relevant, accurate, timely, comparable, coherent, and complete statistical data to be used by central and local public administration, NGOs, academia, enterprises, and other groups of national and international data users.

Availability of reliable and accurate statistical data contributes to the ensuring of an appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the national strategies and programs, as well as to increasing the credibility of national statistics, raising public understanding of statistical indicators and methodologies, and building a consensus within all types and groups of users.

One of the Project's intended outcomes is the public access to statistical data through improvement of dissemination systems, practices and tools to meet users' requirements. Measuring the level of users' satisfaction with available data has an important role in monitoring the development of the process which aims at achieving this goal. The regular feedback from the data users helps the NBS and other producers of official statistics to assess the user satisfaction and to develop measures, having a favourable impact on the efficient use of statistical information, and contributing to the continuous development of the national statistical system.

The European Statistics Code of Practice, as well as the Law of RM on Official Statistics, aims to show to users that European and national statistical authorities are impartial and that the statistics they produce and disseminate are trustworthy, objective, and reliable. To follow the timeliness and principles of these documents, the dissemination of statistics should take into account user requirements as much as possible. Also, according to relevance principle, Official Statistics must



meet the needs of users through developing processes for consulting users, monitoring their needs in the field of statistical information, and advising them on their emerging needs and priorities, as well as through periodical undertaking of user satisfaction surveys.

NBS has recently started to conduct short and regular user satisfactions surveys on specific products and services, but is missing an overall opinion poll to collect the various points of view about the visibility of statistics and the way in which it is perceived, the quality of official statistical data produced, its accessibility via internet, number and quality of statistical publications, the monitoring of users' requests, etc. The last opinion poll concluded that the official website of NBS was the main tool used by data users to create an appropriate image of the institution and to appreciate the quality of the statistical data and products provided.

NBS is generally described by users as an institution which is trying to introduce modern elements and gradually give up on bureaucratic restrictions. In recent years, the Institute has made considerable efforts to improve relations with the users and demonstrated its openness towards the main users of statistics, the timeliness in the dissemination of statistical data and the observance of the schedule of deadlines. At present, the accessibility of statistical data is being improved by creating a new user-friendly website of the statistical institute and by increasing the number of digital publications, maintaining a comprehensive databank, making available interactive tools which allow further processing by the users.

Efforts have been made to increase the data users' confidence in the quality of statistical data through dissemination of metadata on main statistical surveys, statistical fields and indicators representing more detailed and clearer documentation being made available to users and easing their access and understanding. Supporting users in understanding, interpreting and applying the data for policy monitoring and analysis has received relevant attention so far. Activities focused on seminars, roundtables, statistical publications accompanied by analytical texts, generally supported data dissemination and were aimed to contribute to the wider result of increased statistical literacy among data users.

Overall NBS is now better prepared to respond to the different and increasing information needs of the users and to follow the international standards, priority being given to - EU requirements and those applicable in the national context.

The mentioned above progress and measures undertaken by NBS since the last opinion poll were aimed to bring improvements into the level of satisfaction of data users. For the institutional development of NBS, it is important to understand at certain periods of time how users of statistical information perceive and assess the organization which oversees the production and dissemination of official statistical information, the soundness of the methodologies it uses, the ways information is published and made available and how all these complies with their needs for statistical information.

With the present consultancy work, the NBS intends to conduct the next user satisfaction survey to measure both, the satisfaction level of users and the completeness, timeliness, accuracy of statistical information disseminated. The survey will aim to identify the services and products published by the NBS that users are most and least satisfied with, as well as reasons of dissatisfaction; to determine which are the most important NBS services and areas of much-needed improvement; to establish the significance of products and services from data users' point of view.

2. Objectives and scope of the work

The main objective of this consultancy is to contract a legal body with relevant experience in user satisfaction surveys that would carry out a public survey to determine users' satisfaction level with



the statistical information and services provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova.

It will be the comprehensive fifth user satisfaction survey conducted for NBS since the establishment of the Institute and will sample the major groups of data users: central and local public administration, academia, civil society and non-governmental organizations, representatives of international organizations, private enterprises, embassies, mass-media and libraries.

The immediate objectives of the survey and its analysis are as follows:

- to find out key data users' opinion regarding the quality of the statistical information produced and disseminated by NBS and the soundness of the statistical methodologies and determine whether this information fits the current needs of the data users;
- to consider statistical data user evaluations concerning selected statistical domains, describing the perceived strengths of the NBS and producing a set of recommendations for necessary improvements and measures;
- to assess users' awareness levels, understanding and general attitude towards NBS, its image and role as a coordinator of the national statistical system;
- to assess the efficiency of the channels of statistical data dissemination;
- to assess public opinion on progress and changes produced in the quality of data and services provided by NBS and the effectiveness of NBS efforts to meet the informational needs of different users' categories;
- to introduce updates to the previously applied methodology and set of indicators for regular public opinion research on NBS activities and services, and to provide subject matters recommendations to the NBS.

In the long run, such surveys are intended to facilitate the dialogue between NBS and the general public, as well as promotion of users' participation in the process of statistics' reform and continuous improvement. This is also an important source of information for the NBS Board in the establishment and functioning of a monitoring and evaluation system of the NBS activity.

3. Proposed methodology

The Survey questionnaire should include three types of questions about: i) the satisfaction with the quality of statistical data (by criteria: relevance, reliability, periodicity, comprehensiveness, opportunity, etc.); ii) satisfaction with the dissemination activity (timeliness, dissemination tools used etc.) and iii) about the image and role of the NBS.

The Survey should provide answers, but not be limited, to the following interconnected issues:

- Statistical Data User Profile: characteristics and categorization of NBS's data users (features, awareness, level of data use, etc.) summarized in a statistical data User Profile;
- NBS data and services:
 - characteristics of most frequently (and the least used) statistical information;
 - ways and available tools of accessing statistical data, metadata, methodologies, etc;
 - quality of statistical data and methodological information compiled by the NBS, including assessment by mentioned above quality-related criteria, level of data



- detailing and disaggregation, user-orientation of the methodological notes and available analytical materials, guides, etc.;
- appraisal of the level of usage of statistical information out of the available range of statistics disseminated by NBS;
- Coverage of user information needs:
 - data users' needs by user category, destination/purpose of use, etc. versus availability of data and explanatory information;
 - categories of data users' satisfaction/dissatisfaction with provided statistical and methodological information, dissemination tools and guidance materials, etc. and appraisal of the level of this satisfaction/dissatisfaction;
 - possible factors, causes, premises, etc. which impact the level of data users' satisfaction/dissatisfaction;
- Data users' attitude regarding NBS:
 - general attitude towards NBS, its image and credibility;
 - awareness and impression of data users regarding the NBS's role of coordinator of the national statistical system;
- Other issues proposed by the Contractor.

Upon agreement with the NBS and contracting body (ParStat), the Contractor is requested to detail the identified survey methodology. The description should also include a description of the survey sampling and the processing and tabulation of survey results.

The agreed survey methodology should include both, quantitative and qualitative research techniques. The qualitative part of the research (such as focus groups – minimum 5 groups proposed, in-depth interviews – minimum 5 interviews proposed) is aimed to assist with development and pre-testing of the questionnaire, methodology and appropriate terminology, as well as validation of the results of quantitative survey. The quantitative research is aimed to obtain reasonably accurate answers to the questions posed in the survey.

To ensure quality of the study, the contractor will make sure that interviewers are of sufficient number (the exact number to be agreed with the NBS and Parstat) and qualified to ensure that interviews are conducted professionally in an objective and unbiased manner, and that sensitivities are well addressed.

The Contractor will ensure that the survey is conducted at national level and is representative. The Survey Report should also include a stratification and a disaggregation of users of statistical information (i.e., by gender, age, users of the NBS website, non-web users, urban/rural, etc.).

All the activities implemented within the given assignment will be carried out according to the national legal framework and internal regulations of the NBS (Law on Official Statistics, Regulations of NBS, Dissemination Strategy, etc.).

4. Main activities and tasks

The selected Contractor will be responsible for the following:

- Detailed survey design, in collaboration with the NBS and ParStat.
- To develop the methodology and a toolkit of the Survey: on the basis of previous opinion poll to design the sample and its frame (ensuring representativeness of data users' groups),



to draft the questionnaire (consulting recent international good practices) and data collection method coordinating their content and format with the NBS;

- Set up and manage the survey: conduct the data collection through fieldwork activities on the basis of the agreed methodology, sample size and designed questionnaire;
- Provide logistics arrangements, i.e., travel, accommodation, allowances, awareness campaign, communications, and stationery;
- Develop an appropriate database for data entry in consultation with NBS;
- Assure quality of field work data collection and data entry;
- Process and analyse survey results: quality control, data processing, tabulations and production of statistical annexes (tables and diagrams), data analysis in the form of a report, drafting of conclusions, improvement recommendations and follow-up activities;
- Produce the final presentation and reports in draft and final versions (in both Romanian and English).
- The Contractor will inform ParStat and the NBS about the Team of experts to be involved in the assignment, any changes in the team composition should be coordinated with ParStat and NBS. It is the responsibility of the Contractor to recruit and supervise a suitable team of field workers. NBS may decide to provide technical support to the Contractor at key stages of the assignment which may include: the appraisal of technical submissions; review of designed survey toolkit; monitoring of the quality control system to evaluate progress and refocus if necessary; review of first draft report and recommendations for production of the final report.
- The Contractor will make sure the exercise follows the agreed time schedule and will be accountable for the qualitative delivery of the survey's outputs to the Project Manager, who will approve contractor deliverables. The NBS and ParStat will supervise the progress and quality at each stage and the overall survey process.

The National Bureau of Statistics will be responsible to:

- Nominate the responsible staff to support the Contractor in accomplishment of the present assignment;
- Provide necessary informational and logistical support;
- Provide the contractor with relevant background documents and reports available related to the purpose of this survey. Such reports will be used solely for this activity and are not for other purposes unless permission is granted by NBS;
- Promptly, in reasonable time, endorse the products and materials produced and submitted by the Contractor.

5. Expected results and timeframe

- Report on Data Users' Satisfaction Survey
- A report of up to 50 pages in both Romanian and English, hard and electronic copy, which will meet the objectives required (see point 2.) and cover the contents indicated above (see Point 3.). The report will contain a presentation and analysis of the survey results, including but not limited to the following:
 - Overview and assessment of public awareness, understanding, perceptions and attitudes on NBS;



- Overview and assessment of users' opinion on the availability and quality of the information, data sources and services identified and the recommendations to improve them.
- Public Opinion Survey Manual
 - Up to 20 pages Public Opinion Survey Manual containing guidelines and methodology (in Romanian and English).
- Copies of Questionnaire, Survey Responses, Database
 - All hard and digital files related to the Survey: (i) interview questionnaire; (ii) responses collected within the survey and recorded in a database, including in electronic format agreed with NBS/ParStat; and (iii) other related tables and graphics and instructions for accessing, extracting, and using the data.

The results of the survey will become property of the NBS and Parstat and will be for internal use, thus they should not be used without permission of the NBS.

Timeframe

The Contractor will develop a detailed work plan according to the below general time schedule guidelines. Performing the mentioned above activities, the Contractor will be responsible for delivering of the following main outputs:

<u>Milestones and deliverables</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
1. Preparatory activities: i. Finalize work-plan and refined methodology ii. Develop survey tools iii. Pre-test questionnaire / methodology	Contractor, in consultation with & approval by NBS & ParStat	3 weeks
2. Qualitative analysis	Contractor, under supervision of NBS	2 weeks
3. Field survey	Contractor, under supervision of NBS	3 weeks
4. Data entry and analysis	Contractor	3 weeks
5. Draft report on the survey results	Contractor, NBS to provide comments	2 weeks
6. Final report on survey results (incl. a few printed copies of the resulted paper in Romanian and English)	Contractor, Report approved by NBS	1 week
7. Presentation: Summary of results and graphic presentation (slides, graphs, diagrams, etc.)	Contractor, NBS & ParStat invited	1 week
8. Narrative report on accomplishment of assignment and use of funds, incl. stages passed, resources used, results obtained versus expected, impact of obtained results, risks overcome, and problems faced, lessons learned, recommendations etc.	Contractor The report to be accompanied by all materials resulted from the survey.	1 week

The activities under the present assignment are expected to be implemented in a period of 16 weeks from the formal signature of the corresponding mandate, after the completion of an open procurement procedure organised according to the EU rules. The maximum budget allocated for this assignment is EUR 10,000. The budget includes all costs related to the consultancy. Payments will be disbursed according to the deliverables defined above.



The activities and deliverables must also comply with the latest *Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions* concerning acknowledgement of EU financing of the project¹.

6. Minimum eligibility and qualification criteria

Interested bodies should meet the following minimum qualification criteria which make the Applicant eligible for this assignment:

- Officially registered local legal entity or mixed organizations/ consortium;
- Active on the market and has at least 5 years experience in conducting surveys, focus-group discussions, in-depth interviews, other forms of sociological survey and/or communication awareness researches;
- Available experienced and qualified team of experts with backgrounds and experience relevant for the present assignment;
- Capacity to involve adequate quantity of trained and qualified staff (own human resources or attracted) for the field work in order to respond effectively to the ToRs requirements;
- Activities on the Technical Proposal are stipulated clearly and relevant for the achieving of the assignment objectives, tasks are well understood and properly (in sufficient detail) addressed;
- Pre-analysis used as input in the preparation of the proposal (meaning qualitative contribution to the initial Terms of Reference);
- Existence of quality assurance procedures;
- Experience in working with government/public organizations;
- Previous experience in working with international organizations and capacity to properly manage a contract/subcontract under a donor funded effort;
- Ability to deliver final products of required quality, on time and within budget.

Applicants shall reflect this ToR in the Annex 1 of the application (Organisation & Methodology).

Only the proposals of applicants satisfying the main criteria will be considered. The Applicant that will satisfy the main criteria and offer the best methodology and the lowest price will be awarded the contract. The evaluation will be implemented by a committee composed of NBS and ParStat representatives.

The Application should contain the concrete names of qualified team of professionals /experts who will be involved in the assignment, with clear description of their experience/record in Moldova and internationally. Also, there should be clear distribution of responsibilities among individual members of the Contracted institution's consultancy team. The partner organizations, if any, should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

7. Place of performance and travel requirements

The place of performance is Chisinau, Moldova. No travel is required.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/documents/communication_and_visibility_manual_en.pdf.