

Approved

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Data Revision Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

This revision policy defines the rules and principles of the statistical data revision, in accordance with the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#) (hereinafter referred to as CoP), adopted by the European Statistical System Committee (ESSC) in November 2017 and with the [European Statistical System \(ESS\) guidelines on revision policy for Principal European Economic Indicators](#), 2013 edition, which includes the principles of a common revision policy of European statistics.

The revisions are broadly defined as any change of the values of a statistical indicator disseminated to the public, in printed or electronic version.

In order to produce statistical data in a timely manner, the process must be carried out quickly. In this regard, there are situations where it is not possible to publish the final data quickly enough and as a result, they are disseminated as preliminary data. This involves revising the data at least once, which in the statistical production process, happens frequently.

In this regard, revisions should be considered as a normal phenomenon, the aim being to progressively increase the quality of statistical data. This may occur because of various reasons, for ex.:

- Update/adjustment of data by respondents in order to correct the initial questionnaires containing errors, missing data, etc.;
- New methodologies or/and improvement of existing methodologies used in the production of statistics;
- Conceptual changes (e.g.: new definitions, new classifications, etc.);
- Changes in data sources (e.g. availability of new data sources, replacement of the statistical data with administrative data, etc.);
- Adjustment of seasonal effects for short-term series;
- Errors in the calculation of statistics because of technical reasons, etc.

The confidence in the statistics is maintained if the users are informed about revisions that will take place according to a pre-set calendar. If the policy, procedures and calendar are published, it will be obvious that revisions are not carried out on an ad-hoc basis and for political interests. When errors are identified, it is essential that the statistical office should report them to the public as soon as possible and provide explanations to users. The revision policy is an important aspect of good governance in the field of statistics.

In order to improve the transparency of the revision processes and to ensure reliable and effective communication with users, the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS) presents in this document a set of general and specific guidelines and principles governing the revisions of statistical information. More detailed information regarding the specific revisions on statistical areas is published in the [reference metadata](#) available on the NBS website.

This policy is based on the fundamental principles of the official statistics established in Article 5 of [Law no. 93 of 26 May 2017 on Official Statistics](#), as well as the following principles and indicators of the Code of Practice:

Principle	Indicator
6. Impartiality and objectivity	6.6 Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies.
8. Appropriate statistical procedures	8.5 Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.
12. Accuracy and reliability	12.3 Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve source data, statistical processes and outputs.
15. Accessibility and clarity	15.7 Users are kept informed about the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the quality criteria for European Statistics.

2. TYPES OF REVISIONS

Considering the variety of revision factors, as well as the periodicity of statistical data production and dissemination, the revisions are classified into: *planned revisions* and *unplanned revisions*.

2.1. Planned revisions

The **planned (scheduled)** revisions are carried out periodically, according to a predetermined calendar. These can be routine revisions and major revisions.

2.1.1. Routine revisions

The routine revisions are inherent in the data production process for some statistical fields and contain information that is revised regularly, once or several times a year. The routine revisions usually follow the revision policy and are published according to the revision calendar (e.g. each time new statistical data are published, the previous month's revised data are also published). The most common reasons are:

- estimated values for missing responses are replaced by reported values;
- preliminary data are replaced by final data;
- seasonal adjustments;
- data consolidation (correcting inconsistencies between different estimates where there are two data sources for the same target variable with different frequencies, for example quarterly and annual estimates of value added from different sources).

2.1.2. Major revisions

The major revisions are changes to published data, often substantial, which do not occur every year and can affect any statistical area. In general, major revisions can be caused by:

- The availability of a new structural source that is collected only at long intervals (5-10 years) (such as census, input-output tables, labour cost surveys, etc.);
- Methodological changes, including:
 - ✓ updating the base year weights of a series of indices, often every five years;
 - ✓ change in concepts, definitions and/or classifications used to produce the time series (*e.g. development of a new classification or changes in international statistical standards*);
 - ✓ new sampling scheme, etc.
- The enter in force of a new legal act.

Usually, with major revisions, statistical data producers introduce new methodologies and/or improve existing methodologies. This is considered as good practice as it leads to the elimination of too frequent revision processes. Therefore, it is clear that major revisions are not driven by a single cause, but by a combination of several causes.

2.2. Unplanned revisions

The unplanned data revisions are not predictable and are not announced in advance, either because they are the result of unforeseen events, such as errors, or because of the lack of a planning procedure.

The unplanned revisions can affect any statistical area and can occur as a result of unexpected or sudden events such as:

- Errors (either from the data provider or from the compilation), detected after the statistics were officially published;
- Changes to the content of administrative data sources used for the purpose of producing official statistics;
- Revising data from other data producers that have been incorporated into official statistical calculations;
- Unforeseen events that are exogenous to the production process, but significantly affect the statistics (*e.g. the Covid19 pandemic*).

In the case of unplanned revisions, it is necessary, at the time of detection of the error, using previous practical knowledge, to determine the amplitude and impact on the statistical data series. If the error identified is significant and affects recent data, it will be corrected as soon as possible. In the case of minor errors, which do not substantially affect the interpretation of published data, or if revisions affect past data, they may be corrected in the next publication or first scheduled revision.

3. PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES IN THE REVISION PROCESS

3.1. General principles and rules

- a) The general revision policy is published on the website of the NBS;
- b) A calendar of planned revisions will be published on the website of the NBS and annually updated;
- c) The revision policy applies to all statistical sectors;
- d) The domain-specific revisions are periodically updated and published in the [reference metadata](#) on the website of the NBS;

- e) For the revision of statistical data of major importance, increased communication measures are taken, such as the publication of a press release and the presentation of changes at conferences and workshops;
- f) The impact of the revision is analysed and, when it is relevant, the analysis is published;
- g) The planned revisions are included in the annual Program of Statistical Works (PSW), approved annually by Government Decision;
- h) The NBS periodically consults the users of statistical data regarding revision processes (practices);
- i) The NBS carries out revision processes regularly, by applying the best statistical practices recognized at European and/or international level, depending on the statistical product. The effects of the revisions on the statistical results, considered as priority at one time by the NBS, are monitored, in order to improve the quality of the final results provided to all categories of users.

a) Practices for routine revisions

- b) The domain-specific revisions, published in the reference metadata, are included in the annual revision calendar;
- c) In the case of changes to the calendar, users are informed promptly.

3.2. Practices for major revisions

- a) After the revision is carried out and new data are produced, users are informed, in a timely manner, about the relevant changes; breaks in time series, if any, or plans for retrospective recalculations according to the new methodologies/classifications are announced;
- b) The reasons for major revisions are clearly explained and properly documented (on an ongoing basis and ensuring consistency and coherence).

3.3. Practices for unplanned revisions

- a) The unplanned revisions are an exception and the NBS will make efforts to avoid them where it is possible;
- b) The revisions are carried out without delay once the causes have been identified and their impact on the data has been assessed;
- c) The users of statistical data will be promptly informed of significant errors identified in published statistics that have led to the need for unplanned revisions. Revised results shall be published promptly in an open and transparent manner;
- d) Corrections are accompanied by adequate explanations of the type and implications of the revision.

References:

1. [Czech Statistical Office, CZSO \(2015\). Data Revision Policy;](#)
2. [ESS Committee \(2017\). ESS Code of Practice;](#)
3. [Eurostat \(2013\). Methodologies & Working papers. ESS Guidelines on revision policy for PEEIs. Luxemburg, 2013;](#)
4. [Federal Statistical Office of Germany, DESTATIS \(2016\). General Revision Policy;](#)
5. [Hellenic Statistical Authority, ELSTAT \(2018\). Revision Policy;](#)
6. [Institutul Național de Statistică din România \(2015\). Politica de revizuire a datelor statistice;](#)
7. [Law no. 93 of 26 May 2017 on Official Statistics;](#)
8. [OECD, Eurostat Guidelines on Revisions Policy and Analysis;](#)
9. [Quality Assurance Framework of the ESS, 2019 edition \(Version 2.0\). Luxembourg.](#)