



EUROPEAN
STATISTICAL
SYSTEM

PEER REVIEW REPORT

ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE
AND FURTHER IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL
STATISTICAL SYSTEM

CYPRUS

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cyprus is a small country, and its National Statistical Institute (CYSTAT) is a rather small entity, functioning administratively under the Ministry of Finance and housed in government premises in Nicosia. Nevertheless, CYSTAT's professional independence is firmly rooted in a modern and comprehensive Official Statistics Law. This law not only governs the national statistical system but also outlines CYSTAT's coordinating role. Furthermore, the institute has solidified its position through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Finance, as well as a Commitment on Confidence in Statistics approved by the Council of Ministers. These legal foundations, coupled with CYSTAT's high-performing staff, have garnered significant appreciation from stakeholders and instilled trust within society at large.

CYSTAT has a broad legal mandate for access to data in its Official Statistics Law. This is not only the case for administrative data, but the law also enables access to privately held data, provided free of charge. While the practical implementation of accessing privately held data is an ongoing endeavour, obtaining administrative data has become a streamlined process, especially since the establishment of a Government Data Warehouse. CYSTAT's success in maintaining consistently high response rates for survey-based statistics can be attributed to the accessibility of its staff and their proactive approach in addressing non-response issues.

CYSTAT is equally high performing in other respects, especially when considering its size. For instance, the institute has effectively implemented a robust and well-structured multiannual and annual programming framework, ensuring the systematic planning and execution of statistical activities. This process also serves as the venue for embedding emerging user needs in future activities and helps create a balance between new needs and available resources.

Recognising the paramount importance of quality in statistical production, CYSTAT has recently taken significant strides to enhance its quality management practices. This includes the establishment of a dedicated Quality Management Unit and a Quality Management Committee. These initiatives underscore CYSTAT's commitment to governing and managing quality-related aspects throughout the statistical process, resulting in a more streamlined and centralised approach to quality assurance, thereby enhancing the consistency and comparability of statistical outputs.

In the area of coordination, CYSTAT has recently outlined a clear vision to move forward on implementing its coordination role within the national statistical system. A Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics was established, and process quality guidelines were shared with the Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics. As for cooperation with other statistical bodies, CYSTAT is well informed about practices developed throughout the European Statistical System, uses the experience and visibly implements some of those tools and practices within its own office. Due to its relatively limited human resources, CYSTAT's statistical officers and managers often have to combine different operational and managerial tasks, leaving only limited time for innovative projects and the development of new products or methods. Nevertheless, the peer review team observed a genuine willingness to innovate, with some notable practices already in place, such as the use of machine learning for the automatic coding of economic activities and occupations and the use of geographic information systems and data from handheld electronic devices for building and housing statistics.

In the area of dissemination and communication, CYSTAT's primary avenue for communicating with users remains a combination of press releases and data publication in a dissemination database. CYSTAT has recently revamped its website to offer a comprehensive array of information in various formats, including metadata and statistical governance documents. Additionally, the website now presents a wealth of content in English, catering to a broader audience.

In a significant development, the website features a key addition - a database built on the PxWeb platform. This database not only enhances user access but also facilitates data queries through Application Programming Interfaces. Furthermore, as part of its communication strategy, CYSTAT has introduced infographics to convey information effectively. To stay connected and engage with its audience, CYSTAT is active on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

The three Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics observed during this peer review are all comparatively small entities, requiring them to prioritise their work on a daily basis. They all manage to comply with the European legislation underpinning their statistical areas, with the Health Monitoring Unit even regularly delivering data ahead of the prescribed schedule. All three Other National Authorities reviewed rely on close bilateral relations with CYSTAT and look to it for guidance and good practices.

The Ministry of Health has put forward a Bill to ensure the professional independence and responsibility for statistical matters of the Health Monitoring Unit and its Head as well as comprehensive access to administrative and privately held data and metadata. This draft Bill is rooted in the ES CoP; it establishes all the elements of a modern statistical law for the Other National Authorities and could be exemplary for Other National Authorities in Cyprus and even throughout the European Union.

Generally, the peer review team considers that CYSTAT demonstrates a high level of compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice (ES CoP). However, the peer review team identified four compliance-relevant and thirteen improvement-related recommendations which would strengthen CYSTAT and the national statistical system of Cyprus. The recommendations are grouped under four major headings as listed below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Strengthening the national statistical system's coordination, collaboration and overall compliance with the ES CoP

The national statistical system of Cyprus comprises CYSTAT and thirteen Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics. Such a high number is remarkable for a relatively small country such as Cyprus. Full implementation of the ES CoP by all the Other National Authorities would require resources well beyond what is currently available and what will be available in the future. A leaner and more centralised organisation would be beneficial and could make CYSTAT's coordination efforts more effective.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

1. *CYSTAT should review the division of responsibilities within the national statistical system with a view to optimising the use of the available capabilities for the implementation of the ES CoP. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.1 and 1bis.3)*

Once the reorganisation of the national statistical system, is on track, it will be necessary to reinforce the coordination of the remaining Other National Authorities. Their professional independence will have to be strengthened and their compliance with quality requirements monitored, so as to ensure full compliance with the ES CoP.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

2. After consultation with the Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics, CYSTAT should draw up a roadmap and an action plan for coordinating the systemwide implementation of the ES CoP. CYSTAT should take an active approach in its implementation and conduct regular monitoring. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2 and 1bis.3)

The peer review team observed that the Other National Authorities' awareness of each other's practices is low and that there are only very limited interactions between the Other National Authorities. It was confirmed during the peer review that this holds for all, and not only for the three Other National Authorities reviewed. Actively fostering a systemwide statistical culture, e.g. through common training or a common release calendar, could promote the exchange of good practices, develop and enhance skills and yield efficiency gains. At the same time users would benefit from the establishment of a systemwide common identity as they were confused about which authorities belong to the national statistical system.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

3. CYSTAT and all Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics should strengthen the culture and sharing of good practices within the national statistical system by enhancing cooperation between all its members and by developing a common identity, thus making it clear to users that they are part of the national statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2 and 10.4)

While practices vary across the Other National Authorities reviewed, none of them have described their processes, so the strengths and weaknesses of the work routine cannot be objectively assessed, hampering the continuous improvement of process quality. Only the Health Monitoring Unit has formalised its quality assurance procedures and reports systematically on data quality, even though metadata and quality reporting on European Statistics should be ensured by all Other National Authorities.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

4. The Other National Authorities reviewed (the Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior, the Health Monitoring Unit in the Ministry of Health, the Deputy Ministry of Tourism) should draw up the necessary documentation of their processes and methods. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism and the Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior should formalise their quality assurance procedures in order to inform users about data quality. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 8.4, 4.3 and 1bis.2)

The Deputy Ministry of Tourism operates under the control of the Deputy Minister of Tourism, while, from a legal perspective, the Director General of the Deputy Ministry is the officer responsible for the exercise of the administration. While European methodologies are observed during data collection and processing, most procedures are not formalised, e.g. documented procedures are not in place for the planning, monitoring and improvement of the quality of the statistical processes, and there is no internal document delegating decision-making powers regarding European Statistics to the Statistical Head of the Other National Authority. There are also a number of other gaps in the Deputy Ministry of Tourism's compliance with the ES CoP, such as the methodology, release calendar, quality policy and revision policy not being publicly available. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism therefore needs to systematically address its gaps in complying with the ES CoP, identifying – in collaboration with CYSTAT – efficient and effective solutions and drawing up a comprehensive roadmap and an action plan to address them all.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

5. *The Deputy Ministry of Tourism, in consultation with CYSTAT, should ensure that its statistical function complies fully with the ES CoP in a sustainable manner. This should include formalisation of the statistics function's professional independence and elimination of all non-compliance issues. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1.3 and 1.4)*

The statistical function is not visible in the Ministry of the Interior's Asylum Service. At the time of the peer review visit, the Asylum Service had no appointed head and was operating directly under the permanent secretary of the Ministry of the Interior. Asylum and migration are sensitive issues and there is no real organisational setup behind the function – meaning that European statistics are currently produced by one person and an assistant who also supervise on-site activities in the asylum camps. A clear delineation of statistical duties and their proper positioning in the organisation are essential to safeguard the objectivity and reliability of data and to ensure statistical confidentiality throughout the statistical process. A new organisational solution should also include deeper involvement with users and independent handling of dissemination and communication.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

6. *The Ministry of the Interior should ensure that the statistics on asylum and migration can be produced and disseminated in a professionally independent manner. To this end, an independent statistics section, which is responsible for the production and dissemination of official statistics, including decisions on the date and time of statistical releases, the content and timing of press releases and contacts with users and the media, should be clearly delineated and formalised within the organisation. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1.3 and 1.4)*

II. Optimising the use of administrative data and introducing the use of privately held data

The creation of a Government Data Warehouse offers many opportunities which are not yet fully exploited as not all public sector institutions provide data through the Government Data Warehouse. CYSTAT obtains data from sources outside the Government Data Warehouse by means of Memoranda of Understanding, and these data sources were not - at the time of the peer review - assessed regarding their importance for the production of official (including European) statistics. The conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding could be accelerated, prioritising those with the highest urgency or importance for the production of official statistics.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

7. *CYSTAT should systematically explore the full potential of the administrative data available within the country to serve statistical purposes. In this context, CYSTAT should prioritise and accelerate its actions on signing Memoranda of Understanding with holders of administrative data, taking into account data accessibility and the data's potential for statistical use. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.6, 8.7, 9.4 and 10.3)*

Not only are most existing data transmissions from various data sources to CYSTAT based on informal agreements, but the transmission channels are also diverse in terms of technology, and sometimes outdated. Typically, datasets are obtained using USB drives, portable disks or similar media. This means that datasets need to be physically copied and then moved between organisations, which does not always guarantee the highest security. The peer review team was told that these media are usually password protected, but the process did not seem to be administered in a traceable way. More contemporary, security-proof and manageable solutions are desirable.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

8. CYSTAT should work with providers of administrative data to implement more modern and secure data transmission channels wherever feasible. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 5.5 and 8.7)

The Official Statistics Law provides CYSTAT with the right to access and use all administrative data and private data records that are necessary to produce official statistics, promptly and free of charge. This is a remarkable opportunity for CYSTAT to implement up-to-date experiments in data access. There are already a few good examples using web-scraping technology or barcode scanner data in retail trade; however, as regards large unstructured datasets privately held by businesses (e.g., larger service providers or financial companies in the country), this opportunity has not yet been explored.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

9. CYSTAT should invest in accessing privately held data sources to reduce the response burden, create new products, increase accuracy and attain efficiency gains. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.4, 8.7 and 9.4)

CYSTAT, the Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics and other public authorities already possess a wide range of information with possible interrelations, but these relationships are not explored more deeply. However, emerging user needs could be served by taking into account the potential wealth of data already available. By using data linking and integration techniques, CYSTAT could proactively develop new statistical products to better serve national and European needs. This approach would allow for the creation of innovative statistical products, which could further enhance the relevance of the national statistical system.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

10. CYSTAT should explore potential opportunities for developing new statistical products, including through data linking and data integration techniques. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 9.6, 9.4 and 9.5)

III. Enhancing process quality and standardisation

Quality monitoring in CYSTAT is not systematic and does not regularly involve all levels of the hierarchy. Although quality guidelines are in place, quality indicators are not yet regularly reported and monitored. The publicly available information on quality indicators remains rather limited. At the same time, the evaluation reports of the annual statistical programme are too general and short, and are published with considerable delay.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

11. CYSTAT should enhance its quality monitoring procedures by implementing a comprehensive assessment of process and output quality throughout all statistical operations, including the use of administrative data. This should involve actively engaging middle and senior management in addressing the results of the assessment. The key findings of quality assessments and the annual statistical programme evaluation should be disseminated in a timely and informative manner. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 4.4, 8.4, 1.5, 15.6 and 15.7)

Rules on confidentiality are rather general and mostly cover the processing and physical handling of paper questionnaires. They do not cover pseudonymisation of identifiable statistical units in databases and do not determine how electronically recorded unit-level datasets should be handled after use. Data are

usually stored on local computers, without provisions on their further protection or their end-of-life treatment.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

12. CYSTAT should review and detail its confidentiality policy, taking into account best practices in the European Statistical System, with an emphasis on the confidentiality of digital data (i.e., archiving and data retention as well as pseudonymisation of data). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 5.4 and 5.5)

The production of statistics in CYSTAT is still largely silo-based, with thematic units driving all statistics production processes, from data collection to dissemination. Applied methods for statistical disclosure control remain basic. While CYSTAT has already invested in the standardisation of data collection and dissemination systems, as well as in generic tools for some statistical sub-processes such as sampling and statistical modelling, further standardisation of processes and procedures would bring efficiency gains.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

13. CYSTAT should increase its efforts to document and standardise its processes, including the implementation of modern statistical disclosure control methods and tools. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 10.4 and 5.4)

IV. Unlocking human potential while putting the user at the centre

Human resources in CYSTAT are unbalanced in terms of levels of education and workload. Many staff members, especially the statistical officers, work on multiple statistical areas and are confronted with a heavy workload without assistance. This situation is not sustainable in view of the ever-growing demand for data and indicators, but also the need to develop and apply new methods, and could thus potentially hamper innovation and motivation. Long commuting distances are another element of demotivation, especially as options for teleworking and working from local offices are lacking. On the other hand, there are 115 full-time interviewers with lower qualifications. With an increased use of administrative and other data, some of them could be redeployed within CYSTAT for clerical tasks.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

14. CYSTAT should develop a forward-looking human resources policy, taking into account possible new demand and data requirements. This policy should also enable an upgrade of staff qualifications as well as more flexible working conditions. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

Since the last peer review, CYSTAT has improved its services and the dissemination of its products. However, there are still statistical products in the annual statistical programme 2023 for which dissemination activities are not envisaged, allegedly due to lack of public interest or resources. The peer review team is of the opinion that CYSTAT needs a proactive communication strategy to better meet the needs of users. This could include the creation of a centralised portal where the complete portfolio of the national statistical system would be visible. In addition, the releases of statistical results on CYSTAT's website could be made more attractive and accessible.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

15. CYSTAT should develop a more proactive communication strategy to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of its products to meet the needs of different user segments. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 11.3 and 15.1)

The peer review team noted that in some instances, statistical releases are not published under the CYSTAT logo only but concurrently under the logo of the Ministry of Finance. This should be avoided, as it could create confusion among users.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

16. CYSTAT should ensure that all its releases and publications are clearly associated with CYSTAT only. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1.6)

The peer review team noted that stakeholders and the media would be interested in more guidance on statistical matters, i.a. in the form of dedicated training sessions. By offering such guidance, CYSTAT could enhance statistical literacy with these multipliers and consequently in society at large. Additionally, providers of administrative data were not always aware of the methods used for the statistical treatment of their data, nor of the necessity of providing adequate metadata. This could be remedied by providing more or better information on metadata and different actions targeted to specific audiences to improve their statistical literacy.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

17. Building on already existing initiatives and on experience throughout the European Statistical System, CYSTAT should invest further in fostering statistical literacy. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 15.6 and 15.7)

In the spirit of continuous improvement integral to the European Statistical System (ESS), the NSI will interpret the recommendations, formulated in this report, into improvement actions for implementation within the national statistical system (NSS).

2. INTRODUCTION

It is recognised that quality is one of the European Statistical System's (ESS) comparative advantages in a world experiencing a growing trend of instant information and new challenges, driven by exceptional circumstances or the continuous need for faster but quality-assured data. The European Statistics Code of Practice (ES CoP) is the cornerstone of the ESS common quality framework, and the ESS statistical authorities have committed themselves to adhere to it.

In this context, it is crucial for the ESS to be equipped with a review mechanism, the peer reviews, supporting with credible evidence this self-commitment to adhere to the ES CoP. The objective of this review mechanism is to enhance the integrity, professional independence and accountability of the ESS statistical authorities. The first round of peer reviews was carried out in 2006-2008, followed by a second round in 2013-2015.

In 2017, the ES CoP was reviewed and extended and now encompasses 16 principles. This revised version of the ES CoP triggered a third round of peer reviews, being carried out in the Member States of the European Union and of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and Eurostat from 2021 to mid-2023. This round of peer reviews aims at improving the quality and trust in European statistics by assessing the compliance of the ESS with the principles of the revised ES CoP. The peer reviews cover the ESS statistical authorities (Eurostat, the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and selected Other National Authorities (ONAs)) developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. The peer reviews will be followed by a period of annual monitoring of the implementation of the improvement actions developed by the NSIs to address the recommendations laid down in the peer review reports.

The third round of peer reviews has the following two objectives:

- To review the compliance/alignment of the ESS with the ES CoP, in order to demonstrate to the ESS and to external stakeholders that the ESS is a system based on the principles of the ES CoP;
- To help NSIs, ONAs and Eurostat in their further improvement and development by indicating future-oriented recommendations; at the same time, they should stimulate government authorities to support the implementation of these recommendations.

Each peer review is conducted by a team of four statistical experts (both from inside and outside the ESS). The peer review has four phases: completion of the Self-Assessment Questionnaires (SAQs) by a country; analysis of these SAQs by the peer review team; a country visit by the peer review team; and the preparation of the final report and ensuing recommendations by the peer review team. These recommendations are of two types:

- Compliance-relevant (ensuring compliance/alignment with the ES CoP);
- Improvement-related (less critical/technical supporting improvements).

A combination of an audit-like and a peer review approach is used when assessing the national statistical systems (NSS) in the countries to benefit from the positive aspects of both approaches. The audit-like approach requires the provision of documents as evidence, the ownership of the recommendations by the peer review expert team, and the right for the NSIs to express diverging views on the recommendations and to formulate the corresponding improvement actions. Whereas the peer review approach allows for common agreement within the ESS on the methodology, the objectives, scope and implementation arrangements, the focus on improvements and a peer learning process.

Although all principles of the ES CoP will be reviewed for all countries through the SAQ, the peer review experts are free to customise the country visit to concentrate on those principles where more clarification/explanation is needed. However, certain principles such as those concerning professional independence and coordination and cooperation, as well as principles including elements of modernisation, will be assessed during the peer review visit for every member of the ESS.

In addition to the common principles to be addressed for every member of the ESS, the peer review team also placed emphasis on statistical confidentiality, human resources, burden on respondents and cost effectiveness. Statistical confidentiality was reviewed in detail as it was not evident that the measures in place were in accordance with best practices. Guidelines on confidentiality (Indicator 5.4) and measures on the security of statistical data (Indicator 5.5) are de facto in place but the content of such documents is not always detailed or up-to-date. Human resources seemed to be an issue and were discussed, since staffing seemed unbalanced in terms of level of education and workload (Indicator 3.1). From the written documentation it was clear that not all currently available possibilities to reduce the burden on respondents were being used (Principle 9), which was confirmed during the visit. Finally, the team saw a need to review the potential for improvement in the field of cost effectiveness (Principle 10).

Also, although the reports should not be used to compare one country to another, much effort has been made to ensure the harmonisation of the reports and the ensuing recommendations across the countries so that all countries are treated equitably.

The peer review of Eurostat was conducted by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Legislation

The Official Statistics Law of 2021 (Law No 25(I)/2021) provides the legal framework for the development, production and dissemination of official statistics in the Republic of Cyprus. This law, which entered into force on 18 March 2021, replaced and repealed the Statistics Law of 2000 (Law No 15(I)/2000) and is in line with the Regulation on European Statistics (No 223/2009, as amended).

The Official Statistics Law defines the national statistical system, which includes CYSTAT and the Other National Authorities that develop, produce and disseminate European statistics on the basis of EU legislation. It specifies CYSTAT's coordinating role within the national statistical system and delegates specific responsibilities to its Director in this context. A Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics has been set up to support the coordination of the national statistical system. The Statistical Council, composed of 13 members, acts as an advisory body to the national statistical system on the statistical programmes and on issues related to professional independence, impartiality, objectivity, reliability, statistical confidentiality and cost effectiveness. Furthermore, the Official Statistics Law defines the quality criteria governing the statistics produced, strengthens the mandate regarding access to and use of administrative and privately held data for statistical purposes and shapes the framework for cooperation with the Central Bank of Cyprus. It contains provisions on mandatory data collection, protection of confidential data, access to confidential data for research purposes and processing of personal data in accordance with GDPR requirements. Finally, the Official Statistics Law includes provisions relating to offences and penalties.

A “Commitment on Confidence in Statistics” was approved by the Council of Ministers, by Decision No 85.964, dated 16 October 2018, by which the Cyprus Government assumed responsibility for the country's level of compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice.

Organisation

CYSTAT is a government department which functions administratively under the Ministry of Finance. CYSTAT has its head office in the capital Lefkosia (Nicosia). Small regional offices also exist in the four main towns (Lefkosia, Lemesos, Larnaka and Pafos), which are mainly engaged in fieldwork activities. CYSTAT is organised in four main Divisions, each headed by a Chief Statistics Officer, including a) the division on National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics; b) the division on Business, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming; c) the division on Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics and d) the division on Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society.

There are also three supporting sections: Registry, Accounts, Data Processing and Technical Support.

Appointment procedure for the head of the NSI

The selection procedure for the appointment of the Director of CYSTAT is the same as that followed for all civil servants and is governed by the Public Service Law. The post, once vacant, is advertised in the Official Journal of the Republic of Cyprus by the Public Service Commission, which is the independent body responsible for all appointments in the public sector. Applicants fulfilling the requirements are called for an interview. The Scheme of Service of the Director's post (published in the Official Journal of the Republic of Cyprus, Annex 8 No 4071 of 8 March 2006) sets out the requirements, which explicitly include statistics

competences in terms of both education and experience. Selection of the most suitable candidate for the post rests exclusively with the Public Service Commission on the basis of a transparent procedure set down by law. The Director holds the position of a civil servant and remains at his/her position until retirement age. She/he can only be dismissed by the Public Service Commission on grounds of severe misconduct, embezzlement or breaching the provisions of the Public Service Laws.

Statistical programmes

Pursuant to Article 8 of the Official Statistics Law, a multiannual programme of statistical activities shall be compiled for a period of three to five years, which shall include the surveys or other work scheduled to be carried out during this period. It shall refer to the scope and the general description of any survey or other work, the estimated cost and the time schedule for the publication of the results. The programme is communicated to the Statistical Council for its opinion and is approved by the Council of Ministers. Annual statistical programmes elaborate further on the activities referred to in the multiannual programme.

Around 90% of the work foreseen in the multiannual programmes of statistical activities stems from obligations laid down in EU legislation on statistics and needs to be performed in accordance with uniform standards and harmonised methods.

The previous multiannual programme of statistical activities referred to the period 2018-2022 and the current one refers to the period 2023-2027. The multiannual programme of statistical activities for 2023-2027 and the annual statistical programme for 2023 include, for the first time, not only CYSTAT's activities but also the activities of the Other National Authorities, thus covering the entire national statistical system.

Resources

CYSTAT is a small office with 107 employees at the end of 2022, of which 91 in statistical posts. In addition, 115 persons are employed on an indefinite contract and mainly undertake field work duties as interviewers. Additional persons are engaged on short-term contracts to cover any additional needs for interviewers that may arise during the year.

On top of all these, 21 statistical posts are currently vacant.

Budget appropriations for 2022 amounted to 11.2 million Euro, of which around 5.5 million Euro related to the Census of Population and Housing.

Coordination of the National Statistical System

The Official Statistics Law of 2021 defines the national statistical system (NSS) as comprising the Statistical Service of Cyprus (the NSI-CYSTAT) and the Other National Authorities (ONAs), i.e., the ministries, departments and services of the Republic or public corporations responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. CYSTAT is responsible for coordinating all statistical activities and fulfils this role by coordinating the programming of statistical work, offering methodological advice and guidance, coordinating representation at Eurostat expert groups, coordinating the national position in the European Council working party on statistics, communicating information on ESS activities and initiatives, issuing quality guidelines to Other National Authorities, monitoring quality, transmitting data to Eurostat via eDAMIS for selected ONAs, monitoring compliance with the EU legal acts and related data flows, promoting training activities, etc.

The national statistical system comprises thirteen ONAs which have been designated as such, on the basis of being given a clear responsibility for the production of a specific and identifiable part of European statistics. The statistical heads of the ONAs sit on the Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics, which is convened and chaired by the Director of CYSTAT.

No written agreements currently exist between CYSTAT and the ONAs, but they are envisaged to be gradually concluded.

Other National Authorities participating in the peer review

For this peer review, three out of the 13 ONAs were selected, taking into account their share in the provision of European Statistics in terms of datasets transmitted to Eurostat and costs (financial resources spent and full-time equivalents employed) for producing European statistics as well as the importance of the statistics produced by the ONA for national needs.

The Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior

The Asylum Service is a state organisation that was established in 2004 according to an amendment of the Refugees Law of 2000, replacing the Refugee Authority. The Asylum Service comes under the direct supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. At the time of the peer review visit, the Service had no appointed head and was managed by the Ministry's permanent secretary. The production of European Statistics on international protection within the Asylum Service is carried out by dedicated experts, without any organisational structure within the Asylum Service. There is only one person, a statistics expert, working full time on asylum statistics, but this person is seconded to the Asylum Service from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) under a fixed-term contract until January 2024. Apart from that, one employee of the Asylum Service contributes to statistics-related matters and also acts as the manager responsible for official statistics duties throughout the organisation, but on a part-time basis. The same person is heavily involved in the physical supervision of asylum applicant reception centres in Cyprus and also fulfils other administrative tasks related to the registration of asylum seekers. The Asylum Service was selected for the peer review on the basis of the growing demand for data in this domain as a result of the great influx of migrants and asylum seekers that Cyprus has been experiencing in recent years. The Asylum Service submits reports and statistics based on European regulations directly to the EUAA and transmits data on asylum applications via CYSTAT to Eurostat.

The Health Monitoring Unit in the Ministry of Health

The Health Monitoring Unit (HMU) was established in 2004 as part of the Ministry of Health. Led by the coordinator, it is responsible for providing causes of death statistics, a domain which is very much in the public focus as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It also provides some other national health statistics (Cancer registry, Medical birth registry). Its 8 FTE, of whom 3 are Statistics Officers seconded from CYSTAT to the HMU, specialise in statistics and data coding. Once validated by the HMU, causes of death statistics are transmitted to Eurostat via CYSTAT and disseminated in parallel via the HMU's website. The coordinator reports to the First Health Officer, who refers directly to the Secretary General of the Ministry of Health. The HMU was selected for the peer review mainly on the basis of the resources it invests on an annual basis for European statistics.

The Deputy Ministry of Tourism

The Deputy Ministry of Tourism (DMT) was established and operates in accordance with the provisions of the Law of 2018 providing for the Establishment of a Deputy Ministry of Tourism, the Appointment of a Deputy Minister of Tourism to the President and for related matters (Law 123(I)/2018). The DMT performs

a number of functions with respect to the organisation and promotion of tourism in Cyprus, one of which concerns the licensing and supervision of the operation of tourist accommodation establishments. Through the relevant national legislation governing the operation of these accommodation establishments, statistical data is collected by the DMT and reported according to the provisions of Regulation (EU) No 692/2011 concerning European statistics on tourism. The development, production and dissemination of European statistics within the DMT is carried out by the research unit: Centre for Research, Data and Intelligence on Tourism (CReDIT), which has the relevant technical expertise. It provides statistics on the capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments. Hierarchically, CReDIT reports to the Directorate of Financial Planning and Coordination of the Deputy Ministry which, in turn, reports to the Director General. The DMT has appointed an official to act as “statistical head”. The statistical head decides on statistical methods, standards and procedures as well as the content and timing of statistical releases. The DMT was selected on the basis of the relative importance of the tourism sector within the Cyprus economy, as tourism is one of the main contributors to the GDP of Cyprus and has a large employment share in the labour market.

Data access

Article 13(2) of the Official Statistics Law of 2021 explicitly lays down the obligation for administrations, enterprises and individuals to respond to statistical data collections, provided that these data are absolutely necessary for the production of official statistics. Sanctions are foreseen for not responding to statistical enquiries.

Article 14 specifies that, in order to reduce the burden on respondents and improve the quality of statistics, CYSTAT shall have the right to access and use, promptly and free of charge, all administrative data and privately held data that are necessary to produce official statistics and shall integrate those sources in its production process, to the extent necessary for the development, production and dissemination of official statistics.

CYSTAT has started to prepare written agreements with the holders of administrative data sources in order to operationalise these provisions.

Relations with users/Dissemination of statistical products and services

When preparing the multiannual programme of statistical activities and annual statistical programmes, CYSTAT ensures that it consults and receives sufficient information on the needs for statistical data from various groups of users, such as the broader public sector, the business world, the social partners, the academic and research community, the media and the public in general.

Additionally, CYSTAT carries out an annual online “User Satisfaction Survey”, which covers various topics such as user profiles, use of statistics, perceived quality of statistics and web portal usability, and invites suggestions and comments.

The dissemination of statistical products and services is governed by CYSTAT's dissemination policy, which sets the dissemination principles (user orientation, clarity of statistical information, equal, non-discriminatory and simultaneous access to statistical data for all users, availability and copyright, accessibility, independence, professionalism and transparency, timeliness and punctuality, coherence and comparability, statistical confidentiality and data protection). Moreover, the policy describes the means of disseminating statistical information and the main statistical products and services provided. It also specifies CYSTAT's data revisions and error treatment policy. According to the recently revised dissemination policy, privileged pre-release access for users has been terminated.

CYSTAT's statistical products (announcements, interactive tables and graphs via CYSTAT-DB, predefined tables (Excel tables), metadata, infographics and publications) are disseminated through CYSTAT's web portal and social media (Facebook and Twitter).

CYSTAT's web portal provides access to data via a database, including an Application Programming Interface (API), predefined tables, publications and infographics with download options in PDF and Excel format. The metadata pages comprise i.a. an overview of main data areas, metadata files for a number of statistical products according to the Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) standard, information about CYSTAT's surveys and a collection of all questionnaires. Interactive forms facilitate user contact. With few exceptions, the web portal is bilingual (Greek – English) and all information provided is available free of charge. It is updated at 12 noon every working day.

CYSTAT offers a variety of services to users of official statistics, comprising a user support telephone hotline and support via email, an alert service, tailor-made requests, provision of microdata for scientific research, RSS Feeds, an annual release calendar, an iCalendar and CYSTAT's Library. These services are described in more detail in CYSTAT's Dissemination Policy.

4. PROGRESS/ADVANCEMENT IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

A modern legal framework aligned with the latest European trends, including data access

After the second round of peer reviews, based on the findings and recommendations of the peer review visit that took place in June 2015, the Statistical Service of Cyprus started a revision of the legal act on statistics from 2000 to incorporate the latest developments in European legislation into the national legal system. The Council of Ministers approved the proposed new text of the legal act at the very end of 2019. The new Official Statistics Law was then submitted to the House of Representatives and after some delay during the Covid-19 pandemic, it passed into legislation in 2021 (Law No 25(I)/2021). The new Official Statistics Law, as a central element of development, introduced several contemporary measures in official statistics.

The new Official Statistics Law clarified the definition and mandate of statistical authorities, established CYSTAT's coordination role and responsibilities in official statistics and stipulated a coordinating body (Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics). It regulated CYSTAT's data access to administrative and privately held data and strengthened the protection of individuals' personal data, based on the GDPR provisions that entered into force in the meantime.

The Official Statistics Law – in combination with the Commitment on Confidence in Statistics - offers a compact and clear organisational approach, safeguarding CYSTAT's professional independence, and provides a very modern background for developing, producing and disseminating official statistics in Cyprus.

Improvements in statistical data collection

CYSTAT has successfully extended the use of administrative data in recent years. In 2016 there were around 180 electronic data files received from 50 data holders, while at the time of the peer review visit in 2023, around 250 administrative data files were being acquired in electronic format per year, from 80 data holders. Administrative data are widely used, mainly to complement survey data and, as such, are decreasing the reporting burden on both households and enterprises.

The Covid-19 pandemic also imposed changes in surveys. Business and household surveys that were previously paper-based are now mostly conducted via telephone or web (CATI or CAWI), while personal interviews are assisted by portable devices. The developments in survey technology have also led to developments in quality assurance and process monitoring. Questionnaire design and some process indicators are now centrally managed and monitored, enabling a future path to standardise data collection processes and explore their quality aspects further.

Quality management structures and a range of process and product documentation

CYSTAT has taken steps to improve its quality commitment by establishing a Quality Management Unit and a Quality Management Committee. These organisational structures now deal with the governance and operational management of quality-related phenomena in statistics production. Based on these organisational reforms, some statistics production steps (e.g., sampling) have been centralised. CYSTAT has also drawn up a set of documents for quality standardisation and – among other topics – the treatment of confidential data. Policies and a compilation of basic quality guidelines are now available on CYSTAT's website, while IT security, data protection and confidentiality issues are regulated in a series of internal documents. Although the range and coverage of documentation is not yet complete, and there are still shortcomings especially in quality reporting, the improvements are significant.

Improved communication with users

Several recommendations in the previous peer review round encouraged CYSTAT to improve its interactions with users. CYSTAT was invited to reinforce user relations, including its cooperation with academia, to establish new and contemporary forms of dissemination, enhance microdata access for research purposes and improve its website. In the meantime, most of these issues were addressed and successfully handled by CYSTAT, resulting in significant achievements.

The information on release dates is presented in a release calendar and other web-based services are now also available to users. Users are proactively consulted about their needs and opinions. The main channel for informing users is the series of press releases and the publication of data in the dissemination database. CYSTAT's website has been updated and now provides an extensive set of information in different forms, metadata and statistical governance documents, also offering a wide range of information in English. A new website was launched in November 2021. A main new feature was the launch of the CYSTAT-DB database on PxWeb basis, which also supports the use of APIs for data queries. Infographics were also introduced in communication and use is made of social media (Facebook and Twitter). Web analytics take place with the help of a service called MATOMO. The first report on the webpage usage was produced for the reference period Q4 2022.

5. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND FUTURE ORIENTATION

5.1 STRENGTHS OF THE NSI AND THE PARTICIPATING ONAs IN RELATION TO THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE

Institutional environment

Cyprus has a modern and comprehensive Official Statistics Law, governing the national statistical system and CYSTAT's coordinating role. All the principles of the ES CoP's institutional environment are underpinned by legal provisions, which also provide for access to and use of privately held data for statistical purposes.

While CYSTAT functions administratively under the Ministry of Finance, it is noteworthy that the Official Statistics Law explicitly protects the statistical system from any "(...) actions that circumvent and affect the professional independence of the Statistical Service and other national authorities" with the threat of a fine and/or imprisonment (Article 19(6) of the Official Statistics Law of 2021).

This is further reinforced by the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the Ministry of Finance and CYSTAT, as well as the "Commitment on Confidence in Statistics" approved by the Council of Ministers, by which the Government of Cyprus assumed responsibility for the country's level of compliance with the ES CoP, particularly in relation to the institutional framework. The Commitment on Confidence in Statistics also addresses those provisions of the ES CoP which are outside CYSTAT's remit and control such as, for example, adequate resources. (Decision No 85.964 of 16 October 2018).

High level of trust, stakeholders' appreciation of CYSTAT's responsiveness and service orientation

The credibility and trustworthiness of CYSTAT as a whole and the competence and accessibility of its staff was confirmed by the stakeholders interviewed during the peer review visit. The main users pointed out that CYSTAT's data are accurate and timely (e.g., monthly public finances) and tailor-made requests are for the most part quickly served. Stakeholders perceive CYSTAT as a very professional and responsive institution, renowned for the service-mindedness of its staff. Any uncertainties regarding published data are clearly explained by CYSTAT's staff. Data providers and users referred to a good and trustworthy cooperation on a long-term basis.

Exemplary access to administrative and privately held data

Access to administrative data in Cyprus is facilitated through the Government Data Warehouse, a central repository of integrated government data. Based on its broad legal mandate, CYSTAT's access is in practice facilitated by clearly defined procedures providing sustainable access, once the parameters have been specified by CYSTAT and approval has been granted by the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection. In cases where administrative data have not yet been made available through the central repository, CYSTAT is working to formalise the procedure through Memoranda of Understanding.

The Official Statistics Law provides for CYSTAT to be actively involved in the design, development, amendment or possible discontinuation of administrative data. This requirement was explicitly communicated to other public administration bodies by the Ministry of Finance in Circular No 1717, dated 8/11/2022. The document informed all ministries, departments, services, public corporations and local government authorities about the requirements of the legislation and even notified them that, if they

wanted to apply to the Ministry of Finance for budgeting provisions for IT systems and databases, they would need to demonstrate to the Directorate of Budget and Fiscal Control that CYSTAT had been appropriately consulted and involved in the process.

The Official Statistics Law also explicitly enables access to privately held data free of charge, in “such a manner that the identification of statistical units is not allowed”. Articles 14 and 2 of the Official Statistics Law foresee access to practically all kinds of privately held data. However, in practice such access is subject to “cooperation mechanisms”, which first need to be established by CYSTAT with the holders of private data.

Successful and far-sighted work with administrative data providers

CYSTAT has a long-term cooperation with the holders of main administrative data, which at the time of the peer review is based more on personal contacts than on concluded agreements. The peer review team observed that the main data holders are familiar with the Ministry of Finance's Circular No 1717. They confirmed during the interviews that they are well informed about CYSTAT's needs and their shared commitment to provide data for official statistics in a sustainable way. In practice, changes in administrative data sources have to be agreed with CYSTAT.

CYSTAT acts pro-actively and uses opportunities to obtain data owned by municipalities. Anticipating the forthcoming administrative reform, during which the number of municipalities is going to be decreased, CYSTAT has initiated negotiations with the Ministry of the Interior to promote the creation of a centralised municipal statistics database, possibly within the Government Data Warehouse, thus sustaining the possibilities to obtain municipal data for statistical purposes.

High level of awareness of European Statistical System practices and participation in ESS-wide initiatives

Because of or despite its size, CYSTAT gave the impression of being well informed about ESS-wide practices and visibly implemented tools and practices stemming from a wide range of ESS members within its office. This is implemented through bilateral exchanges with several National Statistical Institutes on topics such as social media presence or implementation of IT tools. CYSTAT also participates in the European Statistics Competition and is aware of the outcomes of ESS Vision 2020 projects and their potential for CYSTAT.

High response rates for both household and business surveys, not least due to active follow-up of non-response by CYSTAT

CYSTAT tends to establish good cooperation with its respondents. All questionnaires and letters addressed to respondents (as well as telephone interviewers) make clear reference to the scope of the survey and to the mandatory nature of the data collection, as well as the sanctions provided for in legislation with regard to non-response. Reference is also made to CYSTAT's web portal, where the results of previous rounds of the survey can be found, together with other relevant information on data protection by CYSTAT, information regarding statistical confidentiality, etc. CYSTAT has also developed an application, available on its website, to foster trust. Enterprises or private individuals can look up the phone number of an interviewer and verify that the caller in the telephone interview represents CYSTAT. All these actions, together with reminders to submit data, have resulted in remarkably high response rates (over 85%) both for business and household surveys.

Other National Authorities

The three ONAs participating in this peer review are all comparatively small entities, ranging from 1 FTE (in the case of the Asylum Service) to 8 FTE (in the case of the Health Monitoring Unit), requiring them to

prioritise their work on a daily basis. Nevertheless, they all manage to comply with the respective EU legislation underpinning their statistical areas, and the Health Monitoring Unit even regularly delivers data ahead of the prescribed schedule. All these ONAs rely on close bilateral relations with CYPSTAT and look to it for guidance and good practices.

At the time of the peer review, the Ministry of Health had put forward a Bill to ensure the statistical independence of the Health Monitoring Unit (HMU) also in legislation. Inspired by the strong provisions of the CYPSTAT legal framework, the draft Bill establishes all the elements of a modern statistical law for this ONA. It comprises guarantees for the professional independence and responsibility for statistical matters of the head of the HMU as well as comprehensive access by the HMU to administrative and privately held data and metadata. The principles of the ES CoP guide the draft Bill's provisions for the development, production and dissemination of HMU's health data, including provisions for statistical confidentiality.

Innovative practices

- *CYPSTAT data can be accessed via an Application Programming Interface (API)*

CYPSTAT's new web portal, which went live in November 2021, provides an API service.

- *Online access to real-time administrative data systems*

CYPSTAT has obtained online access to the accounting system of the national treasury (FIMAS). Co-developed by CYPSTAT, the system allows real-time access to public finances for the production of government finance statistics, enabling CYPSTAT to disseminate data 10 days after the monthly, quarterly and annual accounting periods. Similar online access is envisaged for the social insurance and tax department (to identify tax declarations on a daily basis). This was developed as a result of the financial crisis to provide the most comprehensive information possible to all stakeholders at national and international level.

- *National budget procedures reinforce CYPSTAT's role vis-à-vis holders of administrative data*

The Ministry of Finance issued a circular to the whole administration to notify that proof of CYPSTAT's consultation and involvement is required as a prerequisite for budgeting IT systems and databases in the public administration.

- *New technologies used for building permits' statistics*

Statistics on building permits are received on a monthly basis, whereas the Regulation only requires quarterly data. The information is now digitalised, linked with the land plot identification, codified and analysed to produce the final results. The aim is to sample the building permits annually in order to monitor and follow up the construction of new housing.

An MS Access graphical user interface was developed to display digital images of building permits, record information, perform checks, automatically backtrack and present previous relevant permits and survey cases, export and present the parcel's satellite image.

GIS information systems and GPS electronic devices are used to get simultaneous satellite views of multiple areas of a survey sample and to accurately trace parcels during the field work of the Building Permits and Housing Survey.

An MS Access process was developed to produce annual construction progress reports at microdata level. These link and present historical information on building projects throughout the years, as recorded by the year-on-year Building Permits and Housing Survey.

5.2 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Strengthening the national statistical system's coordination, collaboration and compliance with the ES CoP

Apart from CYSTAT (the National Statistical Institute), the national statistical system of Cyprus comprises thirteen Other National Authorities (ONAs) developing, producing and disseminating official statistics. These are ministries, departments and services of the Republic or public corporations responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. Such a high number of ONAs is remarkable for a relatively small country such as Cyprus. Most of these ONAs are responsible for a small fraction of European statistics only and their de facto responsibilities in several cases do not exceed those of providers of administrative data. Moreover, many ONAs rely on a minimum of qualified staff; often only one or two persons are working on European statistics. Consequently, at the onset of actively pursuing its coordination role, it became apparent to CYSTAT that the full implementation of the ES CoP by all ONAs would overburden the national statistical system. It would require resources well beyond what is currently available and what will be available in the future. The current high number of ONAs seems to fragment the national statistical system unnecessarily, potentially diluting responsibilities and duplicating efforts. A leaner and more centralised organisation with fewer but stronger ONAs would be beneficial and could make CYSTAT's coordination efforts more effective.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R1. CYSTAT should review the division of responsibilities within the national statistical system with a view to optimising the use of the available capabilities for the implementation of the ES CoP. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.1 and 1bis.3)

At the time of the peer review, CYSTAT outlined a clear vision to move forward on implementing its coordination role within the national statistical system. The first meeting of the Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics was held in September 2022 when the provisions and requirements of the new Official Statistics Law and the ES CoP were presented. Process quality guidelines have already been shared with the ONAs. These efforts will need to continue and be reinforced, even once the reorganisation of the national statistical system is on track. CYSTAT's co-ordination of ONAs will need to focus on strengthening their professional independence and monitoring their compliance with quality requirements, so as to ensure full compliance with the ES CoP. To this end, training of ONAs needs to be envisaged and monitoring procedures will have to be established.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R2. After consultation with the Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics, CYSTAT should draw up a roadmap and an action plan for coordinating the systemwide implementation of the ES CoP. CYSTAT should take an active approach in its implementation and conduct regular monitoring. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2 and 1bis.3)

Strong bilateral relationships exist between CYSTAT and the ONAs reviewed. ONAs can turn to CYSTAT for support and guidance and have good relationships with relevant officers and the management of CYSTAT. However, the peer review team observed that there are only very limited interactions between ONAs

themselves, hampering benchmarking, the exchange of good practices and development of a common culture within the national statistical system as a whole. By way of example, ONAs are generally unaware of the statistics work that other ONAs are doing or of their progress in quality assurance. It was confirmed during the peer review that this holds for all, and not only for the three ONAs reviewed. This lack of cohesion within the national statistical system hinders the development and enhancement of skills and benefits from efficiency gains through common developments and solutions, such as common training, a common release calendar and/or publication of their statistics under a common umbrella. At the same time, and as a sign of a non-coherent national statistical system, the peer review team observed that users were not aware of which authorities were part of the national statistical system and were confused where to go for which data. While data can be centrally accessed through CYSTAT's website, the ONAs lack a common identity or branding, which would visually reinforce the data from the national statistical system and make it clear to users.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R3. CYSTAT and all Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics should strengthen the culture and sharing of good practices within the national statistical system by enhancing cooperation between all its members and by developing a common identity, thus making it clear to users that they are part of the national statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2 and 10.4)

As the Official Statistics Law is relatively new, the concerned parties have not yet introduced all requirements in practice, including those stemming from the ES CoP. Among the Other National Authorities reviewed, there is a lack of detailed descriptions of their processes, which makes it difficult to objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of their work routines. This hampers the continuous improvement of the process quality. However, it is worth noting that the Health Monitoring Unit stands out as the only ONA that has formalised its quality assurance procedures and consistently reports on data quality. It is important to emphasise that all ONAs should ensure reference metadata and quality reporting on European Statistics, as this is a crucial part of their responsibilities. By providing comprehensive descriptions of their processes and implementing robust quality assurance measures, ONAs can enhance the transparency and reliability of their work, facilitating ongoing improvements in the quality of their processes and outputs.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R4. The Other National Authorities reviewed (the Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior, the Health Monitoring Unit in the Ministry of Health, the Deputy Ministry of Tourism) should draw up the necessary documentation of their processes and methods. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism and the Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior should formalise their quality assurance procedures in order to inform users about data quality. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 8.4, 4.3 and 1bis.2)

The Deputy Ministry of Tourism is aware of the ES CoP and strives to meet its requirements. This includes professional independence, which, as the peer review team could ascertain, is assured in practice. However, the Deputy Ministry operates under the control of the Deputy Minister of Tourism while, from a legal perspective, the Director General of the Deputy Ministry is the officer responsible for the exercise of the administration. While European methodologies are observed during data collection and processing, procedures are not formalised, e.g. documented procedures are not in place for planning, monitoring and improvement of the quality of the statistical processes and there is no internal document delegating decision-making powers regarding European Statistics to the Statistical Head of the ONAs. There are also a number of gaps in the Deputy Minister of Tourism's compliance with the ES CoP, such as the fact that there is no revision policy or release calendar, despite the importance of tourism statistics for Cyprus.

Moreover, a quality policy and methodological information on statistical products are not publicly available. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism thus needs to systematically address these compliance gaps, identifying – in collaboration with CYSTAT – efficient and effective solutions.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R5. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism, in consultation with CYSTAT, should ensure that its statistical function complies fully with the ES CoP in a sustainable manner. This should include formalisation of the statistics function’s professional independence and elimination of all non-compliance issues. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1.3 and 1.4)

In the case of the Ministry of the Interior’s Asylum Service, the statistical function is not visible in the organisation of the Service. The organisational and operating regulation does not contain any detailed instructions on the execution of statistical tasks and does not establish approval routes for professional decisions.

Statistical duties have no dedicated organisational position within the service. At the time of the peer review visit, the Asylum Service as such had no appointed head and was directly managed by the permanent secretary of the Ministry. There is only one person, a statistics expert, working full time on asylum statistics, but this person is seconded to the Asylum Service from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) under a fixed-term contract until January 2024. Apart from that, one employee of the Asylum Service contributes to statistics-related matters and, based on her long-term experience, she also acts as the manager responsible for official statistics duties throughout the organisation, but on a part-time basis. The same person is heavily involved in the physical supervision of asylum applicant reception centres in Cyprus and also fulfils other administrative tasks related to the applications of asylum seekers.

In this operational environment, the professionally independent functioning of statistical duties is hardly sustainable, neither from the perspective of organisational management pathways, nor from the perspective of human resources. The peer review team was informed that an organisational reform is foreseen to rearrange the different responsibilities within the Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior. In the framework of this planned reform, a clear delineation of statistical duties and their proper positioning in the organisation is essential.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R6. The Ministry of the Interior should ensure that the statistics on asylum and migration can be produced and disseminated in a professionally independent manner. To this end, an independent statistics section, which is responsible for the production and dissemination of official statistics, including decisions on the date and time of statistical releases, the content and timing of press releases and contacts with users and the media, should be clearly delineated and formalised within the organisation. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1.3 and 1.4)

5.2.2 Optimising the use of administrative data and introducing the use of privately held data

CYSTAT currently arranges administrative data transmissions partly through the Government Data Warehouse (GDW), a central data repository, and partly on bilateral channels with holders of databases and registries. Although the number of administrative data sources used for statistical purposes has increased by around 40 per cent since 2016, CYSTAT has no clear overview of the full range of available administrative datasets that could be of use for statistical purposes. An initial inventory of these sources

had been compiled by the Department of IT Services and the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy some time ago.

For cases where administrative data are not yet available through the GDW, CYSTAT makes direct contact with the responsible ministries, departments or public organisations. Except for a few sources of essential importance (Ministry of Finance, Central Bank of Cyprus) there are as yet no written agreements (Memoranda of Understanding) which would determine detailed conditions and lay down guarantees for administrative data transmission. The peer review team was informed that a template for the agreements will be available, while negotiations have speeded up with several data holders, in parallel but without any prioritisation. As such processes are demanding and the relevant human resources at CYSTAT are limited, the peer review team felt that a roadmap summarising these future activities could prove useful.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R7. CYSTAT should systematically explore the full potential of the administrative data available within the country to serve statistical purposes. In this context, CYSTAT should prioritise and accelerate its actions on signing Memoranda of Understanding with holders of administrative data, taking into account data accessibility and the data's potential for statistical use. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.6, 8.7, 9.4 and 10.3)

For access to administrative data, CYSTAT collaborates closely with the Department of Information Technology Services (DITS), which is the authority responsible for managing the Government Data Warehouse (GDW), a central repository of integrated government data. At the time of the peer review, GDW contained a limited amount of administrative data. For cases where administrative data have not yet been made available through the GDW, CYSTAT contacts data holders directly. During the interviews with the main data providers, the peer review team found that, not only are most existing data transmissions based on informal agreements, but the transmission channels are also diverse in terms of technology. Datasets are usually acquired using USB drives, portable disks or other similar media. Although the peer review team was informed that these data are received in encrypted file formats, more contemporary and manageable solutions are desirable.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R8. CYSTAT should work with providers of administrative data to implement more modern and secure data transmission channels wherever feasible. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 5.5 and 8.7)

As a major achievement in legislation, Article 14 of the Official Statistics Law of 2021 (Law No 25(I)/2021) provides for the right to access and use all administrative records and private records, including data necessary to produce official statistics, promptly and free of charge. The provisions of the Official Statistics law regarding access to privately held data grant CYSTAT a remarkable alternative to traditional data collection methods, but this opportunity has not yet been explored. It was confirmed during discussions that such attempts to obtain privately held data would be supported by other stakeholders (i.e., the chamber of commerce) or the research community.

At the time of the peer review visit, CYSTAT had no formal agreements with holders of privately held data. Nevertheless, through an informal agreement with JCC Payment Systems Ltd, CYSTAT receives tailor-made summaries on credit card transactions for use in National Accounts. Moreover, CYSTAT uses the SeaWeb online database, some data of which are shared with the Central Bank of Cyprus.

The identification of possible data sources held by private entities that could be of use for statistical purposes is an area for further improvement. CYSTAT could benefit from existing ESS practices and resources that are available for reference.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R9. CYSTAT should invest in accessing privately held data sources to reduce the response burden, create new products, increase accuracy and attain efficiency gains. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.4, 8.7 and 9.4)

The Official Statistics Law of 2021 (Law No 25(I)/2021), Article 8(5) provides that CYSTAT “shall ensure that it receives sufficient information on the needs for statistical data of various groups of users, such as the broader public sector, the business world, the social partners, the academic and research community, the media and the public in general”. Currently, in addition to the public consultation on the multiannual programme of statistical activities and the annual statistical programme, CYSTAT carries out a User Satisfaction Survey (162 responses in the last survey) and web forms for suggestions and complaints. Infographics, an online database and tailor-made data sets are at the top of the users’ wish list.

CYSTAT, the ONAs and other public authorities already possess a wide range of information with possible interrelations, but these relationships are not explored more deeply. CYSTAT’s policy so far is to wait for a specified demand from users to create new datasets and/or statistical products, so it could be more proactive in this field. Regularly reviewing and updating statistical products as well as more systematically using data linking and data integration techniques could help CYSTAT to proactively develop new statistical products and thus remain relevant and better serve user needs.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R10. CYSTAT should explore potential opportunities for developing new statistical products, including through data linking and data integration techniques. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 9.6, 9.4 and 9.5)

5.2.3 Enhancing process quality and standardisation

Monitoring of quality is carried out by the CYSTAT survey managers mostly in the data collection phase and for European Statistics products for which there is a legal obligation to produce quality reports. Quality monitoring is not systematic and does not regularly involve all levels of the hierarchy. The Quality Management Committee does not operate on a systematic basis and is dependent on available personnel.

CYSTAT issued quality guidelines for statistical processes, including a selection of quality indicators, shortly before the peer review visit. CYSTAT plans to improve these guidelines and set compulsory quality indicators to be regularly reported and monitored. CYSTAT has developed a pre-evaluation questionnaire for administrative data, but it is not used in practice to document the quality of these data. The publicly available information on quality indicators of the published statistical products remains rather limited.

The latest multiannual programme of statistical activities for the period 2023-2027 was approved by the Council of Ministers on 8 February 2023. The annual statistical programme of 2023 was approved later and published on the website at the beginning of March 2023, as it is contextually related to the multiannual programme. The annual statistical programme specifies a part of the multiannual programme in more detail. Both programmes include, for the first time, not only CYSTAT’s activities but also the ONAs’ activities. At the time of the peer review visit, the latest available evaluation report on the implementation

of the annual statistical programme was for 2019. The published content of the report was rather rudimentary, containing a very limited number of performance and quality indicators.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R11. CYSTAT should enhance its quality monitoring procedures by implementing a comprehensive assessment of process and output quality throughout all statistical operations, including the use of administrative data. This should involve actively engaging middle and senior management in addressing the results of the assessment. The key findings of quality assessments and the annual statistical programme evaluation should be disseminated in a timely and informative manner. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 4.4, 8.4, 1.5, 15.6 and 15.7).

CYSTAT is housed in a government building complex. The physical security of the building is provided by the police force – there are armed guards at the main entrance of the building 24/7. A video-surveillance system is installed at the building’s perimeter.

CYSTAT has also established an organisational structure to protect data confidentiality and privacy. The five-member, interdepartmental Statistical Confidentiality Committee acts as an advisory body to the Director of CYSTAT and its primary mandate is to implement the specific provisions of Article 17 of the Official Statistics Law, on the possibility of access to confidential data for scientific and research purposes. The Data Protection Officer provides training, issues guidelines and consults users and respondents on the limits and rules applied to preserve statistical confidentiality and data protection. The Information Systems Security Officer oversees CYSTAT's Information Security Management System. The IT Security Committee is responsible for IT Security Policies.

The document entitled “Guidelines for the Protection of Confidential Data” is publicly available, and it outlines specific actions and precautions at stages of handling statistical data. However, the current rules are rather general and mostly cover the processing and physical handling of paper questionnaires. The document does not contain rules on pseudonymisation of identifiable statistical units in databases and does not determine how electronically recorded unit-level datasets should be handled after use. These data are usually stored on the statisticians' local computers, with no provisions on their further protection or their end-of-life treatment.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R12. CYSTAT should review and detail its confidentiality policy, taking into account best practices in the European Statistical System, with an emphasis on the confidentiality of digital data (i.e., archiving and data retention as well as pseudonymisation of data). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 5.4 and 5.5)

In 2018, CYSTAT made efforts to collect information for a number of selected statistical activities according to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), but exhaustive process documentation is still lacking in most cases.

The production of statistics in CYSTAT is currently decentralised and silo-based, with thematic units driving all statistics production processes, from data collection to dissemination. CYSTAT has started to invest in the standardisation of data collection and dissemination systems, as well as in generic tools covering some statistical sub-processes. For example, the Methodology and Quality Management Unit centrally provides some sub-processes to thematic units, including sampling and statistical modelling. Further standardisation of processes and procedures would bring efficiency gains.

During the peer review visit it was established that no systematic approach is used in CYSTAT to protect data confidentiality in its output tables. Figures were mainly checked manually, while the use of Argus and some packages of R software started just recently.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R13. CYSTAT should increase its efforts to document and standardise its processes, including the implementation of modern statistical disclosure control methods and tools. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 10.4 and 5.4)

5.2.4 Unlocking human potential while putting the user at the centre

CYSTAT is a small entity with limited human resources. In 2023 the office has 127 posts in total, and at the time of the peer review visit there were 21 vacancies. Many staff members, especially the statistical officers, work on multiple statistical areas and are confronted with a heavy workload. This situation is not sustainable in view of the ever-growing demand for data and indicators, but also the need to develop and apply new methods, and could thus potentially hamper innovation and motivation. Long commuting distances equally are an element of demotivation for a significant proportion of staff, especially as options for teleworking and working from the local offices' premises could easily be offered.

On the other hand, there are 115 full-time interviewers with lower qualifications. With the envisaged creation of a centralised data collection unit and increasing use of administrative and other data, some of these interviewers could be redeployed within CYSTAT for clerical tasks. Also, job descriptions for CYSTAT's permanent staff should be expanded to include skills that are needed for a contemporary statistical office, such as data science.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R14. CYSTAT should develop a forward-looking human resources policy, taking into account possible new demand and data requirements. This policy should also enable an upgrade of staff qualifications as well as more flexible working conditions. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

Since the last peer review, CYSTAT has improved its services and the dissemination of its products. A new web portal was implemented with an annual release calendar, press releases were standardised and some outreach activities aiming at fostering statistical literacy were organised. CYSTAT cares about fulfilling European obligations (as around 90% of all CYSTAT's activities arise from obligations laid down in EU statistical legislation) but is not very active in promoting statistical products at national level. There are statistical products in the 2023 annual statistical programme for which no dissemination activities are envisaged. CYSTAT explained that no interest was shown for these statistics at national level or there were no resources allocated for the dissemination of specific products.

The peer review team considers that a comprehensive and proactive communication strategy is needed to further pursue these efforts and better meet users' needs. This could include the creation of a centralised portal where the complete portfolio of the national statistical system would be visible. In addition, the releases of statistical results on CYSTAT's website could be made more attractive and accessible to the media and users, i.a. by including interactive graphs and links to data series and by offering more longitudinal data and some analysis beyond the mere presentation of the results.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R15. CYSTAT should develop a more proactive communication strategy to enhance the visibility and attractivity of its products to meet the needs of different user segments. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 11.3 and 15.1)

As the national statistical system was recently established by the new Official Statistics Law, the stakeholders' interviews revealed that CYSTAT is as yet the only recognised official statistics producer in Cyprus. Some users were informed about Ministries collecting statistics (for example, health statistics), but they did not associate such statistics with the term "official". The peer review team noted that in some instances, statistical releases are not published under the CYSTAT logo only, but concurrently under the logo of the Ministry of Finance. This should be avoided, as it could create confusion among users, especially in the case of macro-economic and/or public finance statistics.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R16. CYSTAT should ensure that all its releases and publications are clearly associated with CYSTAT only. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1.6)

Generally, CYSTAT has several activities aiming at improving statistical literacy. It organises educational school visits and organises the European Statistics Competition in Cyprus, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus Statistical Society. CYSTAT is represented in the Cyprus Statistical Society, which is involved in discussions with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth to enrich the curriculum with respect to the teaching of statistics in secondary education. Discussions are ongoing between CYSTAT and the University of Cyprus regarding the possibility of CYSTAT providing a course on Official Statistics.

Nevertheless, stakeholder interviews revealed that users are generally not well informed about existing metadata. The peer review team noted that stakeholders and the media would be interested in more guidance on statistical matters, i.a. in the form of dedicated training sessions, ranging from basic knowledge and information on new developments to methodological issues. Additionally, data providers were not always aware of the methods used for the statistical treatment of their data, nor of the necessity of providing adequate metadata. This could be remedied by providing more or better information on metadata. By offering such guidance, CYSTAT could enhance statistical literacy with these multipliers and consequently in society at large.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R17. Building on already existing initiatives and on experience throughout the European Statistical System, CYSTAT should invest further in fostering statistical literacy. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 15.6 and 15.7)

5.3 VIEWS OF THE NSI, AS THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF THE NSS AND THE PEER REVIEW, ON THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS WHERE THEY DIVERGE FROM PEER REVIEW EXPERTS' ASSESSMENT

None

ANNEX A – AGENDA OF THE VISIT

Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 1 – 6 March 2023		
9.00-09.45	Preparatory meeting	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
9.45-10.00	Welcome and programme introduction	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Director Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
10.00-11.30	Presentation of the National Statistical System	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Director Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics</p>

		<p>Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming</p> <p>Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society</p> <p>Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
11.30-11.45	Coffee break	
11.45-13.00	The Statistical Law of Cyprus	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Director Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-14.45	Financial resources	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Director Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society</p>

		<p>Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
14.45-15.30	Human resources	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Director Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Senior Statistics Officer – Data Protection Officer, Learning Cell, Business Statistics Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
15.30-15.45	Coffee break	
15.45-17.00	Statistical planning process and statistical work programme	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
17.00-18.00	Peer review expert team discussion	

Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 2 – 7 March 2023		
9.00-10.00	Confidentiality	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT:</p> <p>Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Senior Statistics Officer – Data Protection Officer, Learning Cell, Business Statistics Senior Statistics Officer – External Trade Statistics, Member of IT Security Committee Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer - Information Systems Security Officer, eDAMIS Coordinator Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
10.00-11.00	Administrative data	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT:</p> <p>Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Senior Statistics Officer – Demography, Migration and Tourism statistics</p>

		<p>Senior Statistics Officer – Census of Population, Social Protection and Crime statistics</p> <p>Senior Statistics Officer – External Trade Statistics, Member of IT Security Committee</p> <p>Senior Statistics Officer – Data Protection Officer, Learning Cell, Business Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ - Government Finance Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Health Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Agricultural Statistics and Farm Register</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Structural Business Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Income and Living Condition Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Business Register and Classifications</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Information Systems Security Officer, eDAMIS Coordinator</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
11.00-11.30	Coffee break	
11.30-12.30	<p>Other data sources – data collection and data sharing – now and in the future</p>	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator Statistics Officer - IT applications development, Blaise</p>
12.30-13.30	Lunch	

13.30-15.00	Quality and metadata management	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Senior Statistics Officer – Demography, Migration and Tourism statistics Senior Statistics Officer – Census of Population, Social Protection and Crime statistics Senior Statistics Officer – Data Protection Officer, Learning Cell, Business Statistics Senior Statistics Officer – National Accounts Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer A’ – Health Statistics Statistics Officer A’ – Agricultural Statistics and Farm Register Statistics Officer A’ – Structural Business Statistics Statistics Officer A’ – Income and Living Condition Statistics Statistics Officer A’ – Business Register and Classifications Statistics Officer – Consumer Price Index Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
15.00-15.15	Coffee break	
15.15-16.15	Methodology	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics</p>

		<p>Senior Statistics Officer – Demography, Migration and Tourism statistics</p> <p>Senior Statistics Officer – Census of Population, Social Protection and Crime statistics</p> <p>Senior Statistics Officer – Data Protection Officer, Learning Cell, Business Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Health Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Agricultural Statistics and Farm Register</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Structural Business Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Income and Living Condition Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Business Register and Classifications</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
16.15-17.00	Dissemination and external communication	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team:</p> <p>All</p> <p>CYSTAT:</p> <p>Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics</p> <p>Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming</p> <p>Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society</p> <p>Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Purchasing Power Parities</p> <p>Statistics Officer - Dissemination</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget</p> <p>Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p> <p>Statistics Officer - IT applications development, Blaise</p>
17.00-18.00	Peer review expert team discussion	

Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 3 – 8 March 2023		
9.00-10.00	Meeting with the CYSTAT unit responsible for coordination	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
10.00-11.00	Meeting with ONA Deputy Ministry of Tourism	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Senior Statistics Officer – Demography, Migration and Tourism statistics Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p> <p>Deputy Ministry of Tourism: Statistical Head Officer</p>
11.00-11.15	Coffee break	
11.15-12.15	Meeting with ONA – Health Monitoring Unit	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Statistics Officer A' – Health Statistics Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>

		Health Monitoring Unit: Statistical Head Statistics Officer
12.15-13.30	Lunch	
13.30-14.30	Meeting with ONA – Asylum Service	The Peer Review Expert Team: All CYSTAT: Senior Statistics Officer – Demography, Migration and Tourism statistics Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator Asylum Service: Statistical Head Officer
14.30-15.45	Wrap-up meeting with the CYSTAT coordination unit	The Peer Review Expert Team: All CYSTAT: Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Statistics Officer A’ – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator
15.45-16.00	Coffee break	
16.00-18.00	Peer review expert team discussion	

Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 4 – 9 March 2023		
9.00-10.00	Meeting with junior staff	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Statistics Officer - CVTS, Employment and Job Vacancies, Structure of Earnings Statistics Officer - IT applications development, Blaise Statistics Officer – Short Term Statistics Statistics Officer – National Accounts Statistics Officer – National Accounts</p>
10.00-11.00	Meeting with main users – Ministries and other public/private institutions (including Central Bank as a user)	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p> <p>Ministry of Finance: Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Finance, Chairman of Statistical Council Economics Officer A' - Directorate on Economic Policy and European Affairs Economics Officer A' - Directorate on Economic Policy and European Affairs</p> <p>Central Bank of Cyprus: Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Cyprus</p> <p>EU House: Senior Economic Advisor/Member of the EC Recovery and Resilience Task Force</p> <p>Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry: Officer - Energy Service</p>
11.00-11.15	Coffee break	

11.15-12.15	Meeting with main users - business associations and federations and trade unions	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p> <p>Business Associations: Representative of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry Director of Economic Affairs & Administration Department, Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation, Member of Statistical Council</p> <p>Trade Unions: Representative from Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK), Member of Statistical Council Representative from Cyprus Labour Institute - Pancyprian Federation of Labour (INEK-PEO), Member of Statistical Council</p>
12.15-13.15	Lunch	
13.15-13.45	Meeting with main data providers	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p> <p>Treasury of the Republic: Director - Accounting Services Accountant</p> <p>Central Bank of Cyprus: Senior Officer – Head of External, Economic & Government Finance Statistics, Statistics Department Senior Officer – Head of Monetary & Financial Statistics, Statistics Department</p> <p>Department of Labour: Labour Officer</p>

		<p>Customs and Excise Department: Customs Officer A' - Head of E-Customs Customs Officer A' – Statistics</p>
13.45-14.45	Meeting with holders of new/ innovative data	Meeting canceled, no participants
14.45-15.00	Coffee break	
15.00-16.00	Meeting with main users - scientific community	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p> <p>University of Cyprus: Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics</p> <p>University of Nicosia: Professor, School of Business, Vice chair of Cyprus Statistical Society, Member of Statistical Council</p> <p>Cyprus Institute: Associate Research Scientist, Energy, Environment and Water Research Center</p> <p>Human Resources Development Authority: Officer A' - Research and Planning Department</p>
16.00-17.00	Meeting with main users – Media	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p> <p>Cyprus News Agency: Editor</p> <p>Phileleftheros Newspaper: Journalist</p> <p>Stockwatch news portal: Editor in Chief</p>

		Economy Today – Signalive news portal: Editor in Chief
17.00-18.00	Peer review expert team discussion	

Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 5 – 10 March 2023		
9.00-10.45	Clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Director Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p>
11.45-11.00	Coffee break	
11.00-12.30	Meeting with the senior management of the NSI and ONAs: conclusions and recommendations	<p>The Peer Review Expert Team: All</p> <p>CYSTAT: Director Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics</p>

		<p>Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator</p> <p>The ONAs:</p> <p>Deputy Ministry of Tourism Statistical Head Officer</p> <p>Health Monitoring Unit Statistical Head Statistics Officer</p> <p>Asylum Service Statistical Head Officer</p>
12.30-14:00	Lunch	

ANNEX B – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CYSTAT:

Director

Head of Business Statistics, Energy, Environment, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Foreign Trade Statistics, International Cooperation and Programming

Head of Demographic, Social and Tourism Statistics

Head of Methodology, Statistical Dissemination, Prices, Labour Market and Information Society

Head of National Accounts and Government Finance Statistics

Senior Statistics Officer – Census of Population, Social Protection and Crime statistics

Senior Statistics Officer – Data Protection Officer, Learning Cell, Business Statistics

Senior Statistics Officer – Demography, Migration and Tourism statistics

Senior Statistics Officer – External Trade Statistics, Member of IT Security Committee

Senior Statistics Officer – National Accounts

Statistics Officer A' – Agricultural Statistics and Farm Register

Statistics Officer A' – Business Register and Classifications

Statistics Officer A' - Government Finance Statistics

Statistics Officer A' – Health Statistics

Statistics Officer A' – Income and Living Condition Statistics

Statistics Officer A' – Quality Management and Methodology, Dissemination, Labour Statistics

Statistics Officer A' – Structural Business Statistics

Statistics Officer – Consumer Price Index

Statistics Officer – CVTS, Employment and Job Vacancies, Structure of Earnings

Statistics Officer – Dissemination

Statistics Officer – Information Systems Security Officer, eDAMIS Coordinator

Statistics Officer – IT applications development, Blaise

Statistics Officer – Methodology, ESS-MH coordinator

Statistics Officer – National Accounts

Statistics Officer – Purchasing Power Parities

Statistics Officer – Quality Management, Budget

Statistics Officer – Short Term Statistics

Deputy Ministry of Tourism:

Statistical Head

Officer

Health Monitoring Unit:

Statistical Head

Statistics Officer

Asylum Service:

Statistical Head

Officer

Main users:

Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Finance, Chairman of Statistical Council, Ministry of Finance
Economics Officer A' - Directorate on Economic Policy and European Affairs, Ministry of Finance
Economics Officer A' - Directorate on Economic Policy and European Affairs, Ministry of Finance
Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Cyprus, Central Bank of Cyprus
Senior Economic Advisor/Member of the EC Recovery and Resilience Task Force, EU House
Officer - Energy Service, Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry
Representative of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Director of Economic Affairs & Administration Department, Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation,
Member of Statistical Council
Representative from Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK), Member of Statistical Council
Representative from Cyprus Labour Institute - Pancyprian Federation of Labour (INEK-PEO), Member of
Statistical Council

Main data providers:

Director - Accounting Services, Treasury of the Republic
Accountant, Treasury of the Republic
Senior Officer – Head of External, Economic & Government Finance Statistics, Statistics Department,
Central Bank of Cyprus
Senior Officer – Head of Monetary & Financial Statistics, Statistics Department, Central Bank of Cyprus
Labour Officer, Department of Labour
Customs Officer A' - Head of E-Customs, Customs and Excise Department
Customs Officer A' – Statistics, Customs and Excise Department

Scientific community:

Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Cyprus
Professor, School of Business, Vice chair of Cyprus Statistical Society, Member of Statistical Council,
University of Nicosia
Associate Research Scientist, Energy, Environment and Water Research Center, Cyprus Institute
Officer A' - Research and Planning Department, Human Resources Development Authority

Media:

Editor, Cyprus News Agency
Journalist, Phileleftheros Newspaper
Editor in Chief, Stockwatch news portal
Editor in Chief, Economy Today – Sigmalive news portal