Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina

General revision policy of the Agency for statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina

CONTENT

Introduction

This document defines the general revision policy of the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: the Agency), which encompasses the principles and types of revisions, their causes, as well as the methods for disseminating revised data and informing users. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish clear principles and rules for data revision within the Agency.

Since users of statistical data, on one hand, demand the most up-to-date information, and on the other hand, require statistics that are accurate and reliable, official statistics often face the challenge of balancing timeliness and accuracy. These two aspects represent fundamental principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP), which statistical institutions follow when disseminating statistical results.

In an effort to meet these requirements, statistical institutions strive to provide data that are both timely and as accurate as possible, while being aware of the numerous challenges associated with this process. Statistical data are subject to change; therefore, conducting data revisions is of key importance to ensure users receive information that is not only timely but, above all, accurate and reliable. Employees of statistical institutions devote significant effort and time to meeting these quality requirements.

To make data available to users as quickly as possible, initial results are often published with a certain degree of uncertainty. Preliminary results are calculated and published for various statistical domains (e.g., education statistics) based on incomplete data sources. As the database is gradually updated and improved, initial results are replaced through the revision process with final data of higher quality. Statistical data may also be revised due to methodological or conceptual changes. These revisions serve to ensure quality and modernize statistics so that they align with international standards, changing contextual conditions, and user needs.

From the perspective of official statistics, publishing a general revision policy contributes to greater transparency and understandability of revision procedures for users outside the statistical system, thereby strengthening trust in official statistics and improving their usability. Statistics aim to provide users with the highest quality information at all times, which makes the revision policy an important element of communication with users of official statistics. Timeliness and accuracy, as well as precision and reliability, are fundamental principles of official statistics in the context of data quality. Revisions constitute one of the key mechanisms for timely meeting users' needs for accurate and reliable information.

1. Concept and Importance of Statistical Data Revisions

Revision, in its broadest sense, is defined as any subsequent change to the values of already published statistical data.

The primary purpose of revising statistical data is to improve their quality. Revisions are conducted to incorporate new and improved data sources and information, to enhance statistical methodologies and methods applied in statistical production, as well as to align with methodological changes or to correct identified deficiencies in source data.

This document does not cover procedures for unplanned revisions arising from dissemination errors, nor errors that may occur during the processing, calculation, or compilation of statistical data. These matters are addressed in more detail in the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Dissemination Strategy.

Statistical revisions are essential for ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and credibility of official statistics. Because initial estimates are often produced under time constraints and based on incomplete information, revisions allow statistical data to be refined as more complete, accurate, or improved data sources become available. In this way, revisions are a normal and necessary part of the statistical production process rather than a weakness.

Revisions play a crucial role in improving data quality by incorporating methodological improvements and aligning statistics with updated standards and concepts. Through systematic revision analysis, statistical institutions can identify weaknesses in data collection, estimation methods, and processing procedures, leading to continuous improvements in statistical production.

From a user perspective, revisions enhance transparency and trust in official statistics. Clearly communicated revision policies help users understand why data change over time and how to interpret preliminary and final results. This is particularly important for policymakers, analysts, and researchers who rely on early data for decision-making, as awareness of potential revisions allows them to account for uncertainty in initial estimates.

Overall, statistical revisions contribute to better-informed decision-making, higher data quality, and stronger confidence in official statistics, making them a fundamental component of sound statistical governance.

2. Principles of the General Revision Policy

Regardless of the differences between individual statistical domains and types of revisions, it is possible to establish general criteria that the general revision policy must meet, based on the standards set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice. According to the Code of Practice, the principles directly related to revisions are:

- **Principle 6: Impartiality and Objectivity – Indicator 6.6:** The public is informed in a timely manner of significant methodological changes or revisions prior to data release;
- **Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures – Indicator 8.6:** Revisions are conducted based on standardized, well-founded, and transparent procedures;
- **Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability – Indicator 12.3:** Revisions are regularly analyzed to improve statistical processes.

In accordance with these principles and the implementation of the general revision policy, the Agency commits to:

- ensuring that the general criteria governing the revision of statistical data are publicly available to all users;
- clearly defining, through the revision policy, the specific principles applied depending on the type of revision (regular, major, and unplanned);
- ensuring that all revised results are disseminated and clearly explained to the public;
- in the case of major revisions, ensuring that revised data are accompanied by additional information that helps users understand and correctly interpret the results;
- in cases where a revision can be anticipated in advance (e.g., due to methodological changes), informing users in a timely manner before its implementation;
- ensuring that any error correction, regardless of its cause or nature, is documented and made available to users as soon as possible;
- regularly conducting analyses of revisions with the aim of improving the statistical production process.

3. Types of Revisions

The Agency's general revision policy distinguishes the following types of revisions:

- Regular revisions

- Major revisions

- Unplanned revisions

3.1. Regular Revisions

Regular revisions are planned revisions of published data, most often carried out to incorporate new and more complete data and information. They are typically conducted on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. Statistical data subject to regular revision include preliminary and estimated data. Final statistical data are not subject to regular revisions.

Possible reasons for conducting regular revisions include:

- improving already disseminated data due to the availability of new, more complete data;
- aligning data across different levels of aggregation;
- reconciling data of different collection and publication frequencies;
- incorporating revised or additional source data in the calculation of seasonally adjusted time series.

Regular revisions of statistical data are published on the Agency's website according to the schedule defined in the annual Work Plan. At the beginning of the year, users are provided with a Publication Calendar for the entire year, in which releases are clearly labelled as preliminary or estimated data. Final data are disseminated without any special label. In methodological explanations, as well as in tabular and graphical presentations of data published in the Agency's electronic or printed publications, it is clearly indicated whether the data are estimated, preliminary, or revised.

3.2. Major Revisions

Major revisions are planned and significant changes to already published statistical data, usually carried out at longer intervals, most often as a way to align with

methodological improvements. Since they often affect multiple statistical domains and longer time series, past data series are recalculated during these revisions to incorporate new and improved information.

Major revisions are most often conducted due to:

- methodological improvements and changes in the methods of statistical production;
- data improvements resulting from the availability of new data sources or newly collected data over longer periods;
- changes in the base year for index calculations;
- updates to weighting systems;
- changes in methods of data collection, processing, or analysis;
- alignment with legislative changes.

Major revisions are announced in advance through information published on the Agency's website and in the Publication Calendar, at least one month prior to the scheduled release date of the revised data. As part of the revision announcement, users are provided with clear and transparent information regarding the reasons for conducting the revision, its scope, the type of revised data series, and the planned release schedule. All revised data must be clearly labelled in all statistical releases and publications, accompanied by explanations on the method and reasons for the revision, as well as its impact on the results.

3.3. Unplanned Revisions

Unplanned revisions represent extraordinary changes to already published statistical data and do not fall within the normal course of the regular statistical process. They are conducted solely as a result of unforeseen events or circumstances that could not have been anticipated in advance.

Frequent unplanned revisions can undermine users' trust in the quality of statistical data. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that, prior to their implementation, the scope and impact of the planned changes on the quality, proper use, and understanding of previously published data are carefully analysed.

Unplanned revisions are conducted rarely and only when, after the publication of statistical data and indicators, deficiencies are discovered that may be caused by:

- unforeseen changes or subsequently identified errors in previously submitted statistical reports (e.g., by large reporting units), in source administrative data, or in data from other authorized producers of statistics used for compiling official statistics;

- the unexpected subsequent emergence of new data or data of significantly higher quality;

- unforeseen changes in methodology (the subsequent appearance of new, significantly improved methods or procedures for compiling results).

As a rule, unplanned revisions are published as soon as possible on the Agency's website. The published revised data are always accompanied by clear and appropriate explanations of the reasons for conducting the revision. The title or header of the statistical release or publication clearly indicates that the data are revised, specifying the time period to which they refer and the edition version. The publication also includes information on the reasons for the revision and its impact on the results.

In exceptional cases, when analysis shows that the data changes are not substantial and do not significantly affect the quality, proper use, or understanding of previously published data, the revised data may be published as part of the next regular revision or in the next release of similar data, with a clear note indicating that the data have been revised.

4. Frequency of Data Revisions

The frequency of planned data revisions must be carefully balanced with the need to ensure high data quality, while also maintaining ease of use. Data revisions should be conducted in accordance with release schedules established by European or national legislation, as well as in cases of unforeseen difficulties in the data processing and dissemination process, particularly when the results are based on incomplete coverage and do not fully provide accurate information.

5. Revision analysis

Revision analysis is an important tool for producers of statistical data as it provides a comprehensive insight into data quality, applied methodology, and production processes.

It significantly contributes to ensuring and improving data quality by enabling the assessment of the reliability of statistical results. Analysis can indicate possible systematic errors in estimated results, as well as weaknesses in data collection and processing procedures. Observed trends or unusual movements in revised preliminary estimates may point to potential issues in the production or estimation of statistical data. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to conduct regular revision analyses, not only of key aggregates but also of all-time series, with the aim of continuously improving data quality.

Revision analysis applies a set of specific indicators based on data collected over multiple revision cycles. The results of these analyses are published in standardized methodological materials, allowing users of statistical data to gain insight into the scope of possible future revisions of data released in the early stages of the cycle, as well as to assess the credibility and reliability of the published results.

For further quality improvement, it is necessary to monitor the long-term effects of data revisions and to report them regularly in quality reports of statistical surveys.