Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA

Federal Statistical Office FSO
Resources and International Affairs

FSO quality, process and risk management policy

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1 Preface

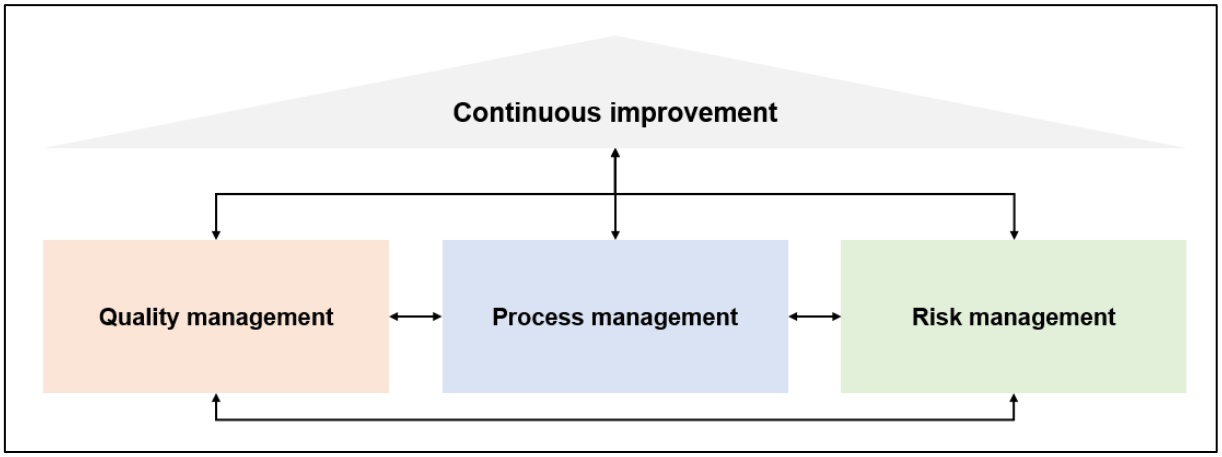
The notion of "quality" is of considerable importance in official statistics. As Switzerland's main producer of official statistics, the FSO continuously strives to maintain user confidence in the statistics it produces and disseminates, particularly by offering assurance of its professional independence and the high quality of its products and services. This document attests the FSO's commitment to its quality management activities and is in keeping with the continuity of its mission and guiding principles. Quality, process and risk management (QPR) are key activities for the FSO, assisting it in the operational and strategic management of its tasks. To ensure the functioning and coordination of QPR management activities, various principles, tools and organisational measures are used and explained hereafter.

2 The FSO's quality, process and risk management principles

Principle 1: Commitment to quality

The FSO strives to ensure that all of its statistics are of high quality and are continuously improved.

To affirm its commitment, the FSO actively uses and develops its system for managing quality, processes and risks as well as the tools related to these (QPR system). Quality, process and risk management offer different perspectives to the challenges faced by the FSO and these areas complement one other.



Principle 2: Improving the FSO on an ongoing basis

The FSO is committed to continuously improving its statistical production and all of its internal and external services:

- by defining an annual work programme concerning the activities to be implemented in the fields of quality, process and risk management;
- by regularly evaluating its production, support and management activities through internal quality reviews;
- by periodically revising its operational management documents and policies and ensuring their implementation within the FSO;
- by recording key activity processes and periodically revising the corresponding process descriptions;
- by regularly examining its risks and possible measures to reduce these;
- by ensuring conformity with the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP);

- by offering its staff training opportunities in these areas through internal or external courses;
- by carrying out a management review at least once a year, making it possible to evaluate the implementation of the work programme and the QPR system;
- by regularly communicating to all of its staff the main activities in place in the areas of quality, process and risk management and relevant results for these fields.

Principle 3: Quality assurance for statistical production

The FSO is committed to producing statistics that comply with national and international constraints and best practices applicable in this field, notably:

- the main legal bases such as the Federal Statistics Act and its ordinance;
- the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
- the Charter of Swiss Official Statistics;
- the CoP and its implementation tool (the quality assurance framework - QAF).

To honour this commitment, the FSO ensures that these requirements are clear, known to and implemented by its staff.

Principle 4: Clear work regulations

The FSO strives to offer clear regulations regarding the allocation of tasks and responsibilities. The FSO ensures that the said tasks and responsibilities are clear, known to and implemented by staff and that their implementation is evaluated on a regular basis.

Principle 5: Conformity with the CoP

The FSO strives to respect the requirements of the CoP, particularly through regular monitoring of the improvement plan defined in the scope of the peer review of the 2014/15 European statistical system.

Principle 6: Documentation of processes

The FSO is committed to documenting the processes of its main activities. Effective process management requires documentation of these processes, making it possible to visualise and facilitate understanding of the FSO's activities and the identification of strengths, areas for improvement and risks. The documentation of processes also makes it possible to ensure the

transparency of working methods and to facilitate knowledge transfer. For this purpose, the FSO relies on national and international standards in this field, namely:

- the Business Process Model and Notation norm (BPMN) as the standard in process modelling;
- the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) as the generic process for producing statistics.

The FSO strives to make all process descriptions available to its staff in a transparent and simple way to facilitate both the exchange of knowledge between staff and the recycling of work methods for efficiency gains.

Principle 7: Managing the FSO's risk principles

The FSO is committed to and actively uses risk management as a tool to establish the main risks and potential challenges it faces and implements measures to reduce these. For this purpose, the FSO relies on the recommendations and requirements in force in the Confederation, in particular:

- the directives concerning the Confederation's risk management policy;
- the FFA's directives concerning the Confederation's risk management policy;
- the Confederation's risk management manual;

The FSO is also committed to developing and actively using its internal control system (ICS) to manage its financial risks. This system makes it possible to ensure and limit the main operational risks associated with financial order processes (finances, human resources, IT and logistics in particular). For this purpose, the FSO takes the following as its bases:

- the Confederation's Financial Budget Act (FBA);
- the Ordinance on the Confederation's Finances;
- the document "Leitfaden für die Umsetzung der rechtlichen Vorgaben zum Internen Kontrollsystem für die finanzrelevanten Geschäftsprozesse in der Bundesverwaltung";
- the document "Leitfaden IKS-konforme Berechtigungsverwaltung SAP";

3 Tools

The main tools used in this context are:

- In general:

  - regular communication and training in the fields of quality, process and risk management;
  - the QPR management manual that describes in detail how the FSO's quality, process and risk management system works;
  - the FSO's main regulations are described in its operational management documents and policies.

- For quality management:
  - the quality assurance manual that describes all minimum quality requirements for each statistical production step;
  - guidelines for quality reviews (approx. every 5 years) and quality reports (at the end of each production cycle);
  - self-evaluation tools in preparation for quality reviews and reports;

- For process management:
  - the FSO's process documentation and management manual;
  - the FSO's process library that can be accessed via the FSO intranet;

- For risk management:
  - the FSO's risk management manual that contains the FSO's risk scale and risk management process;
  - the document "Internes Kontrollsystem (IKS) BFS – Rahmenbedingungen und Regelbetrieb" that describes the use of the FSO's internal control system.

4 Organisational measures

The FSO's board of management is responsible for the definition, implementation and regular examination of this document. It ensures that the principles, aims and measures described in this document are always relevant to the FSO's needs and, if necessary, it commissions the QP service to carry out any required changes and to develop tools and mechanisms in this respect.

The quality and process service assists the FSO and its board of management in quality and process management. The QP service is responsible for the planning, implementation and annual evaluation of the QPR work programme and for monitoring the implementation of the FSO's tools and standards (see chapter 3). The FICO section assists the FSO and its board of management in risk management. QP and FICO make available and keep up-to-date the tools and mechanisms that are necessary for optimal use, while also considering national and international requirements and the needs of both the FSO and its staff.

The various hierarchical levels are responsible for using the tools and mechanisms that are available, for respecting insofar as possible the standards mentioned in this document and for supporting their staff in this process.

5 Entry into force

This policy entered into force on 01.03.17.

Georges-Simon Ulrich
FSO Director General