

LAW OF GEORGIA ON OFFICIAL STATISTICS

CHAPTER I: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1. Purpose and Scope of the Law

The goal of the law is to ensure the production of independent, objective, and reliable official statistics in the country, in accordance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the European Statistics Code of Practice, and internationally recognized methodologies.

The Law defines the essence, goal, and principles of official statistics. It prescribes the legal foundations for producing, storing, and disseminating the information derived as a result of producing the statistics and conducting the censuses. Additionally, it defines the system of bodies responsible for official statistics and their functions.

The Law applies to all resident legal entities and individuals, as well as to all non-residents on the territory of Georgia, in accordance with Georgian legislation.

Article 2. Georgian Legislation Governing the Field of Official Statistics

The Georgian legislation governing the field of official statistics comprises the Constitution of Georgia, international agreements and treaties of Georgia, the present Law, and other legislative and sub-legislative normative acts.

Article 3. Definitions

Definitions used in this Law are the following:

- a) **Official Statistics** – the system of statistical activities carried out within the framework of the Statistical Work Programme and statistical data produced on the basis of internationally recognized methodologies and standards, which describe the country's social, economic, demographic, and environmental phenomena, as well as official statistics produced by National Bank of Georgia based on the Organic Law of Georgia “On the National Bank of Georgia”;
- b) **National Statistical System** – a set of bodies and units producing official statistics in Georgia, responsible for collecting, processing, and disseminating official statistics;
- c) **Statistical Work Programme** – an annual and long-term program approved by the Government of Georgia, which includes a list of work to be carried out, their implementers, the frequency of observation, and dates of publication;

- d) **Use for statistical purposes** – the exclusive use of data for the development and production of official statistics, statistical analyses, and statistical services, encompassing all activities regulated by the present Law;
- e) **Statistical survey** – the primary collection of individual data from respondents of a given population, carried out exclusively for statistical purposes by a producer of official statistics, using a systematic approach based on statistical methodology;
- f) **Census** – the survey, during which data is produced on the number and structure of the population, residential houses, economic units, buildings, and agricultural farms on the basis of complete coverage with specific characteristics;
- g) **Statistical unit** – the bearer of statistical characteristics, either an individual or legal entity;
- h) **Respondent** – a statistical unit that submits individual and other data to producers of official statistics for statistical purposes;
- i) **Statistical methodology** – theory and methods of data collection, processing, and analysis;
- j) **Development** – the activities to set up, strengthen and improve statistical methods, concepts, standards, and procedures used for the production and dissemination of official statistics;
- k) **Production** – all the activities related to the necessary collection, processing, analysis, and storage of data to compile official statistics;
- l) **Dissemination** – the activity of making official statistics, statistical analyses, statistical services, and metadata accessible to users;
- m) **Release** – the dissemination activity by which official statistics, including revised statistics, become publicly known for the first time;
- n) **Administrative data** – data collected by, or on behalf of, the body as defined in Subparagraph A, Paragraph 1, Article 2 of the General Administrative Code of Georgia for administrative purposes in conformity with legal bases other than statistical legislation;
- o) **Statistical register** – lists of statistical units and their characteristics, including identifiers that are necessary for statistical production;
- p) **Individual data** – the most detailed level of data about statistical units, including personal data, as defined by the “Law on Personal Data Protection”;
- q) **Aggregated data** – the result obtained through the processing of individual data (for example, the sum);
- r) **Confidential Statistical Data** – any information that is collected for statistical purposes and allows identification of a statistical unit;
- s) **Identifier** – a set of characters that allows the unique identification of a statistical unit, including its name, through a precise geographical location, or identification number. Through the identifier, it is possible to identify directly, that is, to identify a separate statistical unit based on one identifier or a combination of identifiers. Identification by any other means shall be treated as indirect identification;

t) **Metadata** – data and other documentation that describe statistical data and statistical processes in a standardised way by providing information on data sources, methods, definitions, classifications and data quality.

u) **Geostat** – Legal Entity of Public Law “The National Statistics Office of Georgia”.

v) **Household** – a group of people who are subject to common rules of living in one dwelling unit and have a common budget, are connected to each other by a common budget or part of it and have kinship and/or non-kinship relationships. A household may consist of one person.

CHAPTER II. THE PURPOSE AND MAIN PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Article 4. Purpose of Official Statistics

1. The purpose of official statistics is to provide timely, high-quality statistical information for the development and monitoring of economic and social policies, as well as decisions of public institutions and business entities, conducting scientific research, and informing the public and other categories of users.

Article 5. Main principles of official statistics

1. All producers of official statistics shall conduct their activities by internationally recognized standards and the following fundamental principles of official statistics:

- a) **Professional independence** – the producer of official statistics independently, without political or any other pressure or interference, makes decisions on the development, production, and dissemination of statistics, including the selection of data sources, concepts to be used, definitions, methods, and classifications, as well as all forms of dissemination about time and content. Producers of official statistics, within their competence, can publicly express an opinion on statistical issues and misuse of statistics;
- b) **Impartiality and objectivity** – development, production, and dissemination of official statistics should be done in a neutral, reliable, and impartial manner, by professional standards, and free from any political statement or opinion. All users should be given equal and simultaneous access to official statistics;
- c) **Accuracy and reliability** – official statistics must accurately and consistently reflect reality and be based on scientific criteria used for the selection of sources, methods, and procedures;
- d) **Coherence and comparability** – statistical data should be internationally consistent and comparable across time, regions, and countries;
- e) **Clarity and transparency** – official statistics must be presented clearly and understandably, and the methods and procedures used must be transparently communicated to users to ensure correct interpretation;
- f) **Statistical confidentiality and exclusive use for statistical purposes** – individual data collected or received by the producer of official statistics, relating to natural or legal persons, must be strictly confidential and used only for statistical purposes;

- g) **Relevance** – Ensuring compliance with users' current and expected needs and the degree of protection of citizens' right to access information.

2. Producing the statistics and disseminating the information derived from producing the statistics shall comply with international standards and practice.

CHAPTER III. ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Article 6. National Statistical System

1. The National Statistics System of Georgia consists of the following bodies producing official statistics:

- a) Geostat, which is the leading body of the National Statistics System;
- b) The National Bank of Georgia;
- c) Other bodies producing official statistics, in accordance with the Statistical Work Programme.

2. The National Bank of Georgia shall develop and produce official statistics in its area of competence according to Subparagraph H, Paragraph 3, Article 3 of the Organic Law of Georgia on the National Bank of Georgia and in line with the principles of official statistics provided by this law.

3. Geostat and the National Bank of Georgia closely cooperate in terms of the production and dissemination of official statistics within the scope of authority and competence granted to them by this Law and the Organic Law of Georgia on the National Bank of Georgia.

4. Other bodies producing official statistics are administrative bodies that develop, produce and disseminate official statistics based on the Statistical Work Programme, in line with the basic principles of official statistics defined by this law.

5. Criteria and rules for determining other producers of official statistics shall be approved by the Government of Georgia in compliance with this Law.

6. The list of other producers of official statistics shall be determined in compliance with the annual programme of statistical work.

Article 7. Geostat

1. Geostat is a legal entity of public law, established according to the legislation of Georgia, for the development of statistics, production, and dissemination of statistical information, which independently carries out its activities based on the legislation of Georgia.

2. Geostat is the leading producer of official statistics in the country and coordinates the national system of statistics and all kinds of statistical activities related to the development, production, and dissemination of official statistics, except for the activities of the National Bank of Georgia.

Article 8. Competences of Geostat

1. The following shall be the competencies of Geostat:

- a) Developing a unified policy in the field of official statistics and ensuring coordinated work with other bodies producing statistics;
- b) Development of the Statistical Work Programme;
- c) Coordination of the implementation of the Statistical Work Programme;
- d) Conduct of statistical surveys;
- e) Collecting, processing, and storing data by the best professional practices, including ensuring the protection of scientific principles and professional ethics;
- f) Conducting censuses in line with Chapter 8 of this Law;
- g) Definition of terms, methodology, classifications, and nomenclature of official statistics, by international concepts and classifications as far as possible;
- h) Creating, producing, and updating various statistical registers;
- i) Development of criteria for determining other bodies producing official statistics and the procedure for their recognition;
- j) Facilitating dialogue between producers and users of official statistics on the need for statistics for national, regional, and local policy development, monitoring, and evaluation purposes;
- k) Introduction and protection of quality management concepts in the National Statistics System, except for the National Bank of Georgia;
- l) Facilitating the correct interpretation of statistical data;
- m) Promoting the perception of the role and importance of statistics in society;
- n) Ensuring equal access to official statistics for all users;
- o) Presenting the national statistical system when discussing current or future issues of official statistics at the international level;
- p) Preparation of Geostat's annual progress report;
- q) Promotion of subject-oriented teaching of the employees of Geostat and other bodies producing official statistics;
- r) Establish statistical territorial units and define their scope of work;
- s) Draw the administrative offence record and file it in court, within the area of competence;
- t) Carry out other activities as defined in the present Law and the Charter of the Geostat;

2. Based on a relevant agreement, Geostat shall be authorized to produce statistics which is not envisaged by the Statistical Work Programme.

3. Geostat may not carry out any activity which contradicts the basic principles of official statistics as defined in Article 5 of the present Law and the goals and priorities identified by the State.

4. Specific competencies of Geostat shall be defined in the charter of Geostat. The charter Geostat shall be submitted by the Executive Director of the Geostat and be approved by the Government of Georgia.

Article 9. Funding Sources of Geostat

The sources of funding the Geostat shall be:

- a) From the state budget of Georgia, on an annual basis, and by the law of Georgia on state budget;
- b) Fees charged for the statistical services provided;
- c) Grants issued by a donor as defined in Article 3 of the Law of Georgia on Grants;
- d) From other sources as allowed by the Georgian legislation.

Article 10. Executive Director of Geostat

1. Geostat shall lead by the Executive Director, who is appointed to the position by the Prime Minister, with the approval of the Parliament of Georgia, by this article and Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia, for a 4 (four) year term.

2. The candidate for the position of Executive Director is selected by an independent Competition Commission established by ordinance of the government, based on a publicly announced open competition.

3. The composition of the independent competition commission, the procedure for conducting an open competition, and the mandatory qualification requirements for candidates for the position of Executive Director are determined by the decree of the Government of Georgia.

5. Prime Minister of Georgia shall present two candidates selected as a result of the competition for the position of Executive Director to the Parliament of Georgia for approval.

5. Executive Director may not be a member of a political party or engage in other political activities during the term of office.

6. the same person can be appointed as Executive Director no more than twice.

7. Executive Director, at the same time, is the Chairperson of the Board of Geostat and the Chairperson of the Advisory Board of Geostat.

8. Executive Director shall have one or more deputies. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director carries out his/her responsibilities based on the

relevant legal act. The number of deputy executive directors is determined by the Charter of Geostat.

9. Deputy Executive Director shall be appointed and dismissed by the Executive Director according to the procedure determined by the legislation of Georgia.

10. Law of Georgia on Conflicts of Interest and Corruption in Public Service shall apply to Executive Director.

11. The term of office of the Executive Director may be terminated on the basis of:

- a) Personal application;
- b) Termination of Georgian citizenship;
- c) Declared legally incapable or missing or dead by a court; or to be recognized as a recipient of allowance, unless otherwise determined by the court's decision;
- d) Entry into legal force of the judgment of conviction against him;
- e) Violation of the requirements of the “Law of Georgia on the fight against corruption”;
- f) Expiry of a term of the office of the Executive Director;
- g) Death.

12. In the cases listed in paragraph 11 of this Article, the Executive Director shall be dismissed from his/her position by the Prime Minister of Georgia by the relevant legal act.

13. The termination of the Executive Director's authority automatically results in the termination of powers of the Board of the Geostat and the Advisory Board.

14. As provided in paragraph 12 of this article, before the appointment of the new Executive Director, the duties of the Executive Director, the Chairperson of the Geostat Board, and the Chairperson of the Advisory Board are performed by the deputy executive director, by the decision of the Prime Minister.

Article 11. The functions of the Executive Director of Geostat

The functions of the Executive Director shall be as follows:

- a) Leading the Geostat;
- b) Developing a Statistical Work Programme in agreement with the director after consideration by the Geostat Board and submission to the Government of Georgia for approval;
- c) Developing the programmes for the General Population Census and Agricultural Census and submitting them for approval to the Government Commission for the Coordination of Population Census;
- d) Developing the programmes for the Economic census and submitting them for approval to the Government;

- e) Developing and approving statistical standards, classifications, and methodologies to be used in the production of official statistics, as well as recognizing international standards, classifications, and methodologies;
- f) Designing and approving the methodology for various censuses;
- g) Appointing and dismissing Advisory Board members of the Geostat;
- h) Preparing the staff list and payroll budget of the Geostat and submitting them to the Geostat Board for approval;
- i) Appointing and dismissing employees of the Geostat;
- j) Working out the draft budget of the Geostat;
- k) Submitting the criteria and rules for the determination of other bodies producing official statistics, developed by Geostat, to the Government of Georgia for approval;
- l) Submitting Geostat's annual progress report to the Geostat Board for review and approval;
- m) Submitting Geostat's annual progress report to the Government of Georgia and the Parliament of Georgia no later than 1 May of each year;
- n) Ensuring publicity of Geostat's annual progress report;
- o) Developing the rules and conditions for the delivery of printed statistical publications by Geostat and submitting them to the Geostat Board for approval;
- p) Developing the rules for determining the type of service and fees for additional processing of statistical data by Geostat outside the Statistical Work Programme and submitting it to the Geostat Board for approval;
- q) Carrying out other functions as defined by the charter of the Geostat and Georgian legislation.

2. Geostat's annual progress report shall include information for the previous year:

- a) The statistical work carried out during the last year;
- b) Fulfilment of the Statistical Work Programme;
- c) The performance of the Geostat budget.

3. The Executive Director shall be authorized to invite foreign or local experts on a contractual basis in accordance with the recommendations of the members of the Geostat Board to ensure the effective operation of the Geostat.

4. The Executive Director shall be authorized to delegate some of the functions provided for in the Geostat Charter, in addition to the functions provided for in this article, to duly authorized persons determined by him/her.

5. The Executive Director shall be authorized within his/her competence to issue a normative act (order) in accordance with the present law and the Organic Law of Georgia "On Normative Acts".

Article 12. Other Producers of Official Statistics

1. Other Producers of Official Statistics shall be professionally independent entities within their competence in matters of development, production, and dissemination of official statistics.
2. Other Producers of Official Statistics carry out these functions in full conformity with international methodologies and standards or the analogies approved by the Executive Director of Geostat.
3. Other Producers of Official Statistics, central and local self-government bodies, and any legal entities who contribute to the development and implementation of the Statistical Work Programme, are obliged:
 - a) To provide Geostat with all kinds of information, documents, and records required to ensure the exercise of the powers provided for in Article 8 of the present law, unless otherwise established by the legislation of Georgia;
 - b) Perform all the duties assigned to them by the Statistical Work Programme.
4. It is not allowed for the authorities provided in this article to impose a corresponding fee for Geostat in return for the performance of their duties.
5. Other Producers of Official Statistics cannot be assigned responsibilities that are in contradiction with the provisions and principles of Article 5 of the present Law.

CHAPTER V. BOARD OF GEOSTAT

Article 13. Board of Geostat

1. Board of Geostat (hereinafter, the Board) shall function at the Geostat.
2. Board is a body established for the strategic development of official statistics and the professional independence of its producing bodies.
3. Board shall consist of 9 members. One of them is the Executive Director of Geostat, who at the same time is the chairman of the Board.
4. Out of the 9 members of the Board, one member shall be a representative of the National Bank of Georgia, one – a representative of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia, and one – a representative of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.
5. The other five members of the Board shall not be public servants.

Article 14. Selection and Appointment of the Board Members

1. The managers of relevant agencies defined by paragraph 4, Article 11 of the present Law shall submit for approval the nominations of the candidates to the Prime Minister of Georgia.

2. The Board member, as envisaged by Paragraph 4, Article 13 of the present Law, shall be appointed as a result of open competition by the Prime Minister of Georgia with the consent of the Parliament of Georgia, in accordance with the rules established by this Article.
3. The competition of those Board members, who are not public servants, shall be announced by the Geostat, and the competition commission shall be established by the competition commission established by the second paragraph of Article 10 of the present law.
4. The mandatory qualifications required of the Board members and relevant procedures for their appointment shall be defined in the charter of the Board based on the present Law.
5. The Prime Minister of Georgia shall present at least 8 candidates, from the persons selected as a result of competition, for the existing 5 vacancies to the Parliament of Georgia for approval; in case the number of vacancies is less than 5, the number of candidates shall exceed the total number of vacancies by at least one.
6. The Parliament of Georgia shall give consent to the appointment of the members of the Board to the Prime Minister of Georgia, by the rules established by the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia.
7. After the Parliament of Georgia in accordance with the Rules of Procedures of Parliament shall give consent to the Prime Minister of Georgia, the members of the Board shall be appointed to the position by the Prime Minister.
8. The term of office of the Executive Director as a member of the Board shall be determined by the period of his /her term as Executive Director.
9. After the expiration of the term in office of the Executive Director, the same person shall be eligible to become a member of the Board following the rules established by the same Chapter.
10. The term of office of the members of the Board determined by Article 13 paragraph 4 of this Law shall be determined by the term of office of the relevant positions held by them in public service.
11. The term of office of the members of the Board determined by Article 13 paragraph 5 of this Law shall be 4 (four) years.
12. After the termination of the authority of the Board member, the same person has the right to participate in the open competition of the Board members.

Article 15. Functions of the Board

1. The functions of the Board shall be as follows:
 - a) Submit relevant recommendations with regard to the statistical activities of Geostat;
 - b) Review the Statistical Work Programme submitted by the Executive Director of Geostat and work out relevant recommendations;
 - c) Periodically review the implementation of the Statistical Work Programmes;

- d) Review and approve the annual report of Geostat submitted by the Executive Director of Geostat;
 - e) Review the criteria and rules for determining other bodies producing official statistics developed by Geostat and develop relevant recommendations;
 - f) Work out relevant recommendations for the general population census program;
 - g) Review and approve the list of staff and the salary funds of Geostat;
 - h) Review the draft Geostat budget and prepare appropriate recommendations;
 - i) Determine types and prices of services by processing statistical data outside the scope of the Statistical Work Programme, with the submission of the Executive Director of Statistics;
 - j) Within the framework of the Statistical Work Programme, provide statistical data in hard copies and determine the manner and conditions of delivery of printed publications, with the submission of the Executive Director of Geostat;
 - k) Prepare and approve the Board Charter, which shall determine the operational and decision-making procedures of the Board;
 - l) Approve the procedure for providing access to confidential data for research purposes;
 - m) Carry out other activities determined by this Law and the Charter of the Board.
2. The Board is authorized, within its competence, to adopt a normative act (resolution) in accordance with the present law and the Organic Law of Georgia on Normative Acts.
3. Information on the composition, mandate, as well as its work shall be public.

Article 16. The Basis for Termination of the Authority of the Board Member

1. The basis for termination of the authority of a member of the Board shall be the following:
- a) Personal application;
 - b) If he/she is declared by the court as missing or as a person with limited legal capacity, declared as dead, or recognized as a beneficiary of support, unless otherwise determined under the court decision;
 - c) Entry into legal force of the judgment of conviction against him;
 - d) Death.
2. In addition to the basis set out in paragraph 1 of this Article, the basis for termination of authority shall also be the following:
- a) In the case of the member of the Board envisaged by paragraph 13, Article 11 of the present Law:
 - a.a) Violation of the requirements of the Law of Georgia on the fight against corruption;
 - a.b) Termination of activities in a relevant position in public service;

b) In the case of a member of the Board determined by Article 13 paragraph 4 of the present Law:

b.a) Expiration of the term of office of a member of the Board;

b.b) Failure to carry out the authority as a member of the Board for 2 months for an illegitimate reason;

b.c) Assumption of office in public service.

3. The authority of a member of the Board shall be terminated by the Decree of the Prime Minister of Georgia.

CHAPTER V. ADVISORY BOARD OF GEOSTAT AND OTHER ADVISORY BODY

Article 17. Advisory Board of Geostat and its Functions

1. The Advisory Board of Geostat is an Advisory Body to Geostat. Members of the Advisory Board shall be appointed and dismissed by the Executive Director, with the term of appointment being equal to that of the Executive Director.
2. In case of early termination of the Executive Director's term of office, the members of the Advisory Board continue to perform their duties until a new Executive Director is appointed.
3. The Advisory Board of Geostat shall consist of at least 9 members. One of them is the Executive Director who, at the same time, shall be the Chairperson of the Board.
4. The qualifications required for the Advisory Board members, the functioning of the Advisory Board, and its decision-making rules are defined by the Charter of the Advisory Board of Geostat approved by the Executive Director of Geostat.
5. The Geostat Advisory Board shall have the following functions:
 - a) To provide consultation to Geostat regarding statistical activities and to submit recommendations within its authority;
 - b) To perform a scientific analysis of the statistical standards and methodologies to be used in statistical activities and to prepare recommendations for the Executive Director;
 - c) To review modern methods of statistical activities and to provide consultation and submit proposals to the Executive Director regarding the improvement of statistical methodologies;
 - d) To carry out other activities determined by this Law and the Board Charter.
6. Advisory Board decisions have the nature of recommendations.
7. Information on the mandate and composition of the Advisory Board and their activities shall be public.

Article 18. Other Advisory Body

1. To support strategic and methodological activities in the field of official statistics, the Executive Director of Geostat is authorized to create another advisory body. Its members are selected within the National Statistical System (NSS) or outside its scope.
2. The mandate and composition of the other Advisory Body, as well as its work, shall be public.

CHAPTER VI. COORDINATION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM AND STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

Article 19. Coordination of the National Statistical System and Statistical Activities

1. Producer of Official Statistics shall use uniform, internationally agreed concepts, definitions, classifications, and methods wherever possible. Geostat promotes common practices across the National Statistical System.
2. Geostat shall be responsible for the coordination of the National Statistical System regarding all activities for the development, production, and dissemination of official statistics in the country, except the National Bank of Georgia.
3. Geostat shall be in charge of coordinating the development and relevant reporting of the statistical programmes, quality monitoring, methodologies, data transmission, and coordination of the activities carried out in the National Statistical System throughout the country.
4. The responsibilities of Geostat, as a coordinating body extends to all bodies producing official statistics responsible for the development, production, and dissemination of official statistics following the statistical programme, except for the National Bank of Georgia.

Article 20. Statistical Work Programme

1. The Statistical Work programme is the main tool for effective strategic and operational management and coordination of activities within the National Statistical System.
2. Geostat shall be in charge of preparing the statistical programme, in active cooperation with users, respondents, and administrative data providers. Other Producers of Official Statistics shall be involved in the process and provide Geostat with the necessary inputs.
3. Geostat, based on the relevant transparent and documented processes, their activities, and expected results, shall decide on the inclusion of other producers of official statistics in the draft statistical programmes, using the following criteria:
 - a) The producer demonstrates its capability and willingness to comply with the provisions of the present Law and the principles of official statistics as defined in Articles 1 and 5;
 - b) Activities (activity) planned by the Producer of Official Statistics, and their results shall not duplicate those conducted by other producers' activities (activity) and the results.

4. Geostat, in close coordination with the Other Producers of Official Statistics, shall be in charge of reporting on the implementation of the statistical programme. The present report shall be submitted for opinion to the Board of Geostat.

Article 21. Multi-year statistical programme

1. A multi-year statistical programme shall be established for the National Statistical System to define the strategic development of official statistics of Georgia, aiming at satisfying existing and emerging user needs.
2. The multi-year statistical programme shall provide a concept and priorities for the development of the National Statistical System for the next 4 or more years, as well as the measures and resources needed to achieve its main goals.

Article 22. Annual statistical programme

1. The annual statistical programme, shall be the main tool through which Geostat produces and/or other producers of official statistics produce official statistics to provide the information needed by users.
1. An annual statistical programme shall be established each year, to update the list of Producers of Official Statistics and to provide the legal basis for:
 - a) For all official statistics to be released;
 - b) For all statistical surveys to be carried out by the Producers of Official Statistics;
 - c) For all cases of providing administrative data to the Producers of Official Statistics or transferring data from other sources;
 - d) For all existing and future statistical registers;
 - e) For the development and implementation of statistical standards and methodologies, new statistical surveys, and relevant indicators.
3. Geostat shall be in charge of preparing the statistical programmes, in close consultation with other producers of official statistics.

Article 23. Adoption of statistical programme

1. Geostat shall submit the Statistical Work Programme to the Board of Geostat for opinion and subsequently to the government for adoption no later than 1 month before the start of the reference period of the programme.
2. When approving the statistical programmes, the government shall not interfere with issues covered by professional independence, or with statistical activities of autonomous national authorities.
3. The Producer of Official Statistics shall be granted adequate human, financial and technical resources necessary for the implementation of the statistical programmes.

CHAPTER VII. DATA COLLECTION

Article 24. The mandate for data collection

1. The Producer of Official Statistics shall be entitled to select data sources based on professional considerations and collect the necessary data to compile official statistics directly from respondents if sufficient data are not already available in the National Statistical System and cannot be obtained from existing data/register, for example, those maintained by administrative authorities outside the National Statistical System.
2. Unless otherwise provided for by the legislation of Georgia, with the view of fulfilling its functions the Geostat shall be authorized to request and receive from administrative bodies, physical and legal persons all kinds of statistical data and other information, including confidential information and/or information containing personal data, in line with the "Law on Personal Data Protection".
3. Data collection shall be designed with due consideration to the quality of statistics, costs of data provision and response burden.
4. Irrespective of the data collection methods and sources, data obtained by Producers of Official Statistics are under their ownership and shall be processed, stored and disseminated in full compliance with the provisions of the present Law.

Article 25. The Rights and Obligations of the Respondent

1. Respondents shall be informed about the purpose and scope of statistical surveys and the measures to ensure the confidentiality of data and the rights and obligations of respondents.
2. Unless otherwise provided for by the legislation of Georgia, legal entities registered in the Register of Entrepreneurial and non-commercial legal entities are obliged to provide Geostat, upon the written request of Geostat, including such request in electronic form, with the available information (including confidential information) in paper or electronic form.
3. Participation in the statistical survey is mandatory for the selected respondent.
4. The respondent shall be obliged to provide the producers of official statistics with reliable and complete data in the form and rule established by the producers of official statistics.
5. In case of failure to provide information to Geostat required under the statistical activities program approved by the Government of Georgia, legal entities registered in the Register of Entrepreneurial and non-commercial legal entities shall be liable to proceedings stipulated in the Code of Administrative Offices of Georgia.
6. Deadlines for providing information to Geostat stipulated by paragraph 2 of this Article shall be determined by Geostat, taking into consideration the periodicity of the relevant statistical surveys. Such deadlines should not be less than 7 calendar days after submission of the information request to the addressee (and/or receipt of the information request by the addressee) in a written, including electronic, form.

7. The submission of a written request to an addressee shall be confirmed with a relevant document. In case of refusal to receive the letter, it is considered to be delivered.
8. An electronic notification sent to the e-mail address of the legal entity registered in the register of entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) entities is considered officially delivered to this person.
9. Imposition of administrative liability does not exempt the person from the obligation to submit the information.
10. The Producers of Official Statistics are entitled to follow up with respondents if no reply is received by the deadline, or if inconsistencies or gaps are detected.

Article 26. Access to administrative data

1. Unless otherwise provided for by the legislation of Georgia, upon the request of Geostat, the administrative body shall be obliged to provide available information on physical persons and legal entities of private law to Geostat, including confidential information and/or information containing personal data in line with the "Law on Personal Data Protection".
2. If the providers of administrative data plan to develop a new data collection or carry out a major revision in their data collection or processing in a way that may affect data provided for official statistics, they shall consult Geostat and, where appropriate, the Other Producers of Official Statistics, in advance of the decision.

Article 27. Statistical register

1. Geostat shall create and maintain statistical registers exclusively for statistical purposes:
 - a) To provide statistical databases when conducting statistical surveys;
 - b) As a piece of information means when carrying out the statistical analysis of all statistical units and their trends;
 - c) As an instrument for the dissemination of statistical information.
2. Statistical registers shall be created based on the data from statistical surveys and administrative data sources.
3. Based on the request of natural and legal persons, Geostat provides information on the data available in the statistical registers.

CHAPTER VIII. CENSUS

Article 28. Purpose of the Census

1. According to this law, Geostat shall have the right to conduct a census to obtain data on the size and structure of the population, dwellings, economic units, buildings, and agricultural holdings/farms.

2. The census shall be conducted to identify the priorities for the country's social and economic development and to obtain the necessary data for informing the public at large.
3. Types of the census are population census, agricultural census, and economic census.
4. Census data may be obtained from exhaustive enumeration, statistical surveys, administrative and other data sources, or from a combination of these.
5. The present Law shall be fully applicable to all stages of the census.

Article 29. Obligation of Respondent

1. Participation in the census is mandatory for every natural and legal person, as well as for all alien and stateless persons residing in the territory of Georgia.
2. The person is obliged to provide reliable data to the Geostat.
3. The Census shall not apply to aliens holding diplomatic immunity and their family members, foreign military servants and their family members.

Article 30. Basic Principles of Census

1. The following shall be the basic principles of the census:
 - a) Universality of the census;
 - b) Determination of the periodicity of the population census and agricultural census for no more than 10 years;
 - c) Conduct economic census at the time determined by the Government;
 - d) Conduct the Census in line with the unified methodology and methods and at the same time on the whole territory of Georgia, except for the cases when:
 - d.a) It is difficult to reach some mountainous places and hardly accessible settlements in Georgia in the course of the census. At such places the census shall be carried out at a certain time taking into consideration the circumstances in the settlements;
 - d.b) It is not feasible to conduct the census on the specific territory due to reasons independent of the Geostat.

Article 31. Census Date, Census Program, and Bodies Responsible for Conducting the Census

1. The date of conducting the census is determined for a specific census, based on the submission of the Executive Director of Geostat, by the decision of the Government of Georgia, no later than 3 years before the estimated date of its conducting.
2. In order to solve the matters of preparing and conducting the Census in a timely manner as well as to ensure the coordinated actions of the bodies of the executive authorities of Georgia, based on the submission of the Executive Director of Geostat, the Governmental Coordination Commission for Census (hereinafter, the Commission) is established, by the Decree of the Government of Georgia.

3. The census shall be carried out based on the census program. The Executive Director of the Geostat shall develop the census program and submit it for approval to the Governmental Coordination Commission for Census.
4. The census program encompasses the methodological and organizational issues, budget, required work, implementation timeline, and actors involved in conducting the census.
5. The Commission shall review and formulate recommendations on census methodology and questionnaires provided by the Executive Director of Geostat.
6. The Chairperson of the Commission shall be either the Prime Minister or a member of the Government of Georgia, and their appointment shall be made by the Prime Minister of Georgia.
7. The operational procedures and activities of the Commission shall be defined in the charter of the Commission. The charter shall be approved by the Government of Georgia.
8. The Commission shall complete its operations for no less than 6 months from the date of publishing the census final results.
9. The Geostat shall be responsible for preparing, conducting and processing the data obtained as well as for publishing and disseminating the results.
10. Preliminary results of the census shall be published within the period determined by the census program, and the final results shall be published no later than 18 months.
11. The census results in hard copy shall be stored until all the census results are published. The information in electronic form shall be stored with an unspecified term.

Article 32. Economic Census

1. Article 31, Chapter 8 of this Law does not apply to economic censuses.
2. The location and time for conducting the economic census shall be determined by a decree of the Government of Georgia upon the recommendation of the Executive Director of Geostat.
3. The economic census shall be carried out based on the census programme. The Executive Director of the Geostat shall develop the census programme and submit it for approval to the Government.

Article 33: Responsibilities of Other Governmental Bodies

The State and local self-government bodies, within the scope of their authority, are responsible for the issues of census organization, preparation, and census support measures.

CHAPTER IX. DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

Article 34. Observing Confidentiality of Statistical Data

1. Data collected, processed, and stored to produce official statistics are confidential if they enable the direct or indirect identification of a statistical unit. In addition, aggregated data are subject to statistical confidentiality:

a) Aggregates composed of 1 to 3 units, when the unit is a natural or legal person if one of these units could be identified indirectly, thereby disclosing individual data about this unit. Aggregates composed of more than 3 units may be declared confidential by the Executive Director if required to ensure statistical confidentiality;

b) Information declares as a state secret on the basis of the „Law of Georgia on State Secrets“.

2. Confidential data shall be used exclusively for the purposes of producing statistics in accordance with this law.

3. Statistical data about the administrative body cannot be considered confidential information, except for the information determined by the Law of Georgia "On State Secrets".

4. Individual data obtained from publicly available sources, which are defined as public information in accordance with the legislation of Georgia, shall not be considered confidential information.

5. Confidential (individual) data may be published if there is written consent from the statistical unit regarding the publication of such data.

6. It is not allowed to disseminate and distribute confidential data or use it for non-statistical purposes.

Article 35. Secure data processing and storage

1. Each producer of official statistics must ensure the protection of individual and confidential aggregated data from unauthorized persons.

2. Data protection shall be implemented according to the relevant administrative regulatory norms, and organizational and technical measures.

3. Individual data containing statistical unit identifiers received/collected to produce official statistics are processed and stored for the time necessary for statistical purposes, unless otherwise established by the legislation of Georgia;

4. All original data collection forms that include identifiers shall be destroyed as soon as they are no longer needed for statistical purposes, and paper forms shall be destroyed within three months after publication of the statistical information

Article 36. Access to individual data of the National Statistical System

1. The Producers of Official Statistics shall not disclose individual data to any users, except as outlined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this article and article 37, on public use files and access to individual data for research purposes.

2. The Producer of Official Statistics may produce and release to the public sets of individual data only if identifiers have been removed and natural or legal persons cannot be identified in any way, either directly or indirectly, besides the cases provided by this law. All relevant means should be taken to avoid indirect identification.
3. Other Producers of Official Statistics are obliged to deliver to Geostat individual data, including identifiers.
4. Geostat may deliver to other producers of official statistics individual data on statistical units under the following conditions:
 - a) The data are used exclusively to produce official statistics;
 - b) The data do not allow the identification of natural or legal persons.
5. All such transmissions mentioned in this Article and their conditions shall be documented in a mutually signed agreement.
6. Information on all such transmissions shall be made publicly available.

Article 37. Access to confidential data for research purposes

1. The Producer of Official Statistics may, on request, grant access to their individual data for independent scientific research projects, in accordance with the Georgian legislation.
2. The data provided for research purposes should not contain identifiers and should contain only the data necessary for research purposes. In addition, personal data should be processed by the „Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection”.
3. Before the Geostat authorizes access to individual data subject to statistical confidentiality, it shall ensure that the receiving party has the relevant technical and organizational infrastructure and takes responsibility to protect the confidentiality of the data in compliance with the present Law.
4. If authorisation is granted, all persons who will participate in the handling of data during the research project shall sign a contract so as to commit:
 - a) Not to attempt to identify natural or legal persons by any means, including by matching data with other individual data;
 - b) Not to disclose any individual data to unauthorised persons or to use them for purposes other than those indicated in the request;
 - c) Not to disclose any aggregates derived from the individual data that may allow indirect identification of units;
 - d) To quote the source in all published products;
 - e) To destroy the individual data once the research project is completed.
5. The Producer of Official Statistics may set a price as compensation for the additional costs incurred by preparing the data, as regulated in the agreement signed by the parties.
6. A list of such transmissions shall be made available on request.

7. The board of Geostat approves the rules for providing access to confidential data provided in this article for research purposes for the bodies producing official statistics, except for the National Bank of Georgia.

Article 38. Confidentiality commitments

1. Producers of official statistics shall apply all regulatory, administrative, technical, and organizational measures to protect confidential data and prevent their disclosure.
2. Employees of producers of official statistics, who have direct access to individual data through their official functions, as well as all persons participating in the census processes outside the national statistical system, are obliged to protect the confidentiality of the mentioned data during the period of work and after the termination of work.
3. Persons of the categories referred to in paragraph 2 of this article do not have the right to use individual data for other purposes, except for the statistical one.
4. Persons of the categories referred to in paragraph 2 of this article shall sign a confidentiality agreement upon being hired.
5. The confidential statistical data collected and processed for statistical purposes shall not be used or disseminated either for personal, academic, research or any other activities, by the employees of the producers of Official Statistics.

Article 39. Violation of the provisions of the law (including the principle of statistical confidentiality)

1. The violation of the provisions of this law by the employees of other producers of official statistics will result in the responsibility established by the relevant legislation.
2. Violations of the confidentiality provisions laid down in Article 38 of the present Law shall be prosecuted as regulated by the norms of the applicable law.

Article 40. The third party (subcontracting)

1. The Producers of Official Statistics may subcontract parts of tasks of statistical production to a third party only when the full protection of statistical confidentiality can be ensured.
2. Third parties shall use and maintain the data exclusively for the operations and only for the duration defined in the subcontract.

CHAPTER X. QUALITY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Article 41. Quality Commitment

1. The Producer of Official Statistics shall be committed to assessing and improving the quality of official statistics continuously, according to the principles of Article 5 of the present law.
2. To guarantee quality, official statistics shall be developed, produced and disseminated on the basis of common standards and harmonized methods on the scope, concepts, definitions, units and classifications of official statistics.
3. The Producer of Official Statistics shall be entitled to edit data and validate data, and combine and compile data from different sources exclusively to improve the quality of statistical information.
4. The Producers of Official Statistics shall document the sources and methods used in the production process, as well as resulting data sets, in a standardized way.
5. Users shall be kept informed about the sources and methods of statistical production and the quality of statistical outputs through metadata.

Article 42. Quality Assessment of Official Statistics

1. Users shall be regularly consulted regarding the quality of official statistics.
2. The Producers of Official Statistics shall seek feedback from respondents to improve the quality of data.
3. The Producers of official statistics shall collaborate with the scientific community and international organisations to assess and improve statistical methodology.
4. Assessments of the institutional environment, processes and outputs of the National Statistical System may be carried out by internal and external experts.

CHAPTER XI. DISSEMINATION

Article 43. Statistical releases

1. Official statistics shall be disseminated in a timely and punctual manner in full compliance with Articles 43-44 and the principles in Article 5 of the present Law, particularly in respect of protecting statistical confidentiality and ensuring equal and simultaneous access as required under the principle of impartiality.
2. Each Producer of Official Statistics shall establish and make public an advance release calendar that indicates the planned dates and times for the releases of official statistics.
3. Any expected divergence from the advance release calendar shall be communicated to the public before the planned release date. A new date for the release shall be set within a reasonable time and made public.
4. Releases of official statistics shall be accompanied by metadata and explanatory comments, and access shall be granted to all users free of charge.

5. Errors discovered in released official statistics shall be corrected, and the corrections shall be released and communicated to users at the earliest possible time.
6. Users are entitled to use official statistics and the related metadata in their own products with an indication of the data source.
7. Within the framework of the Annual Statistical Work Programme, Geostat shall provide all users with the statistical data in electronic form free of charge.
8. The rules and conditions for the provision of statistical data in material form are to be determined by the Geostat Board.

Article 44. Policy on the dissemination of Statistical Data and other information

1. The National Statistics Office of Georgia shall establish a data dissemination policy based on transparent procedures.
2. Preliminary releases of statistics that will be subject to later revision shall be clearly labelled as provisional.
3. Major revisions due to changes in methods shall be notified publicly in advance.

CHAPTER XII. STATISTICAL SERVICES

Article 45. Provision of statistical processing services

1. On users' request, the Producers of Official Statistics may provide statistical processing services using data in their possession.
2. Statistical processing services shall not jeopardize the production and quality of official statistics or the credibility of the National Statistical System.
3. Users shall reimburse the costs of additional services provided by the bodies producing official statistics unless otherwise determined by the legislation of Georgia.
4. The types of services and prices provided in this article shall be determined by the relevant producers of official statistics, whereas in Geostat – by the Board of the Geostat, based on the submission of the Executive Director.
5. The results of statistical processing services are not considered official statistics.
6. The confidentiality provisions of Chapter IX and the quality provisions of Chapter X of the present Law shall fully apply to the provision of statistical processing services.

Article 46. Provision of data collection services

1. Based on the client's request, official statistics-producing bodies, outside the scope of the Statistical Work Programme, shall have the right to collect additional statistical data.

2. This kind of service should not pose a threat to the production and quality of official statistics or the reliability of the national statistical system.
3. The conditions and cost of the services provided in this article are determined by the relevant agreement, and the client should reimburse the additional costs of data collection.
4. The list of data collection services should be included in the annual activity report.
5. The results of the services provided by the data collection will not be considered as official statistics.
6. It is not allowed to declare the survey carried out to provide data collection services as mandatory for the respondents or their part.
7. Compliance with the provisions of Chapter VII on data collection, Chapter IX on the Protection of Confidentiality, and Chapter X on Data Quality Protection of the present law is mandatory in all cases.

Article 47. Revenues from Statistical Services

The revenues received according to Articles 45 and 46 of this Chapter are used to maintain the activities of Geostat.

CHAPTER XIII - INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Article 48. - Participation in international cooperation

1. Geostat and Other Producers of Official Statistics, within their competence, to develop statistical standards and recommendations and their further implementation, as well as to improve the quality of official statistics and expand the scope, should actively participate in the ongoing processes and events (activities) at the international level.
2. Geostat represents Georgia in the international arena within the scope of its competence and authority.

CHAPTER XIV – TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 49. Acceptable/issuable subordinate normative acts in connection with the enactment of the law

1. The Government of Georgia shall, not later than the 30th day after the entering into force of this Law, shall have approved the Resolution on „The approval of the Chapter of the National Statistical Office of Georgia”.
2. No later than 90th day after the entering into force of the present law:

- a) Government of Georgia shall have to approve the criteria for determining Other Producers of Official Statistics and the procedure for their recognition;
- b) Board of the Legal Entity of Public Law – National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) shall approve:
 - b.a) The rule of providing access to confidential data for research purposes;
 - b.b) The procedure for determining the type of service and fee for additional processing of statistical data by Geostat outside the Statistical Work Programme and submitting it to the Board of Geostat for approval;
 - b.c) The manner and conditions of delivery of statistical publications in electronic form by Geostat.

3. The subordinate normative act adopted/issued based on Law No. 2291-rs of 11 December 2009 of Georgia „On Official Statistics” (Legislative Herald of Georgia, No. 45, 21.12.2009, Art. 320) is valid until the adoption/issuance of the relevant normative act provided for by this law unless it or part thereof is contrary to this law.

Article 50. Invalidated Normative Act

Upon the entry into force of this Law, the Law 'on Official Statistics' of December 11, 2009, shall be declared invalid (Legislative Herald Georgia, No. 45, 21.12.2009, Article 320)

51. Entry into force of the Law

This Law shall enter into force on August 30, 2023.

President of Georgia

Salome Zourabichvili

Tbilisi

May 31, 2023