

Part 4 Expansion of utilization of survey results

1 Advanced use of statistical information

(1) More advanced statistical analyses and dissemination of results

<Background and current situation>

Statistical data should be utilized more practically as public common property. The increasing and diversifying demands for such data are closely associated with social and economic developments. To respond to these needs, it is important that information collected through statistical surveys should be analyzed and processed to a more advanced degree, in order to make the most of the available information.

It is also necessary for information on statistics and their characteristics to be presented positively from the viewpoint of correct understanding and utilization of statistics, and of their availability to users.

Many of the area divisions in major central government statistical surveys are based on prefectures, municipalities, and population size hierarchies. However, it is required that the results of major central government statistical surveys should be prepared in an area-wise style, in response to such factors as recent expansion of jurisdiction due to the merger or consolidation of municipal governments associated with the promotion program of decentralization, or changes in local residential zones and areas of economic activity.

A great deal of information on local regions is now being accumulated in the database systems at the Cabinet Office and ministries, and it is expected that these data will be rounded-out with information provided by the Geographical Information System (GIS).

<Basic direction>

- (1) Efforts should be made to analyze and process statistical survey data at more advanced and higher levels, to achieve maximum utilization.
- (2) Efforts should be made to actively provide information on statistics and their characteristics, for the purpose of providing maximum convenience to users.
- (3) Efforts should be made to promote a review of area indications, taking into account factors such as expanded jurisdiction due to the merger or consolidation of municipal governments, changing residential zones or areas of economic activity, with the aim of providing more complete data on local areas.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) Cabinet Office and ministries to conduct further analysis of information collected through

statistical surveys in accordance with the characteristics of the surveys, not only the average and sum values but also various statistics values relating to distribution, from the viewpoint of offering the maximum convenience to users, with reference to examples of previous analyses and information.

Specific studies should be conducted into efficient and effective methods for processing statistical data at the research facility that is due to be established (see 3-10 “Promotion of Research into Statistical Survey Technology”).

- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries should initiate a study into the nature of ideal area indications, including small-area statistics, timed to coincide with large statistical surveys such as the population census. Efforts should be also made to extend the provision of area data through GIS.

(2) Positive utilization of databases for establishments and enterprises

<Background and current situation>

With regard to databases for establishments and enterprises, the preparation of a Statistical Frame for Business Enterprises and Establishments (tentative name) has been suggested as a population information resource for business enterprises and establishments in “New Strategies for Government Statistical Services for the Coming Decade”. The MPHPT has been promoting preparation of the frame as the “Establishments and Enterprises Information Database System (EEIDS)” since 1996, and part of the database has been operative since 1998.

Following that initiative, the MPHPT began developing the “Statistical Frame of Establishments and Enterprises (hereafter SFEE)” in 2000. This resulted from the “Streamlining Plan” statement that the MPHPT should unify population information, including existing survey history, via the “SFEE”, by utilizing the results of statistical surveys held by the Cabinet Office and ministries, and available administrative records. The Streamlining Plan also states that the Cabinet Office and ministries should correct overlapping questionnaire respondents by utilizing the above database when selecting respondents for statistical surveys. Since June 2002, the MPHPT has provided the Cabinet Office and ministries with information for elimination of duplication of respondents for statistical surveys.

Population information for the “SFEE” has been prepared from the Census of Manufacturers, Census of Commerce, Financial Statements Statistics of Corporations by Industry, and data from the private sector (information from Teikoku Databank Ltd.), based on data from results of Establishment and Enterprise Census. It is necessary to provide population data in the early stages. The database contains some list information based on administrative records. Therefore, it is necessary to make the population information more reliable, and to prepare information by effectively utilizing those data.

In addition, the “SFEE” is expected to be utilized for a variety of applications, which will include sampling support through the use of population information for various statistical surveys, utilization for data links between statistical surveys through the use of establishment codes, and data presentation for the identification of institutions and business enterprises whose true nature is not immediately obvious, e.g., SOHO professionals.

<Basic direction>

With regard to the “SFEE”, efforts should be made to provide information on the elimination of overlapping questionnaire respondents, and to provide population information in the early stages of various statistical surveys. Functions of the database should be expanded toward support for implementation of statistical surveys, such as sampling support, data linkage between statistical surveys, and the preparation of panel data on business enterprises. There should also be a study into policies for utilizing the database in a variety of applications.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) With regard to the “SFEE”, the MPHPT should provide information for the elimination of overlapping questionnaire respondents (which information has been already put into practice), in close liaison with the Cabinet Office and ministries, and should begin providing population information in fiscal year 2003. At the same time, the ministry should look at procedures for using the database for the presentation of population information, and ways of presenting such information.
- (2) The MPHPT should support sampling and preprinting activities for various statistical surveys by utilizing the “SFEE”, and should study procedures for utilizing the database and methods for providing information, by fiscal year 2005.
- (3) The MPHPT should promptly initiate studies into more advanced analyses, such as the elimination of overlapping survey items through data linkage with establishment codes, new statistical analyses with two or more crossover results of statistical surveys, the arrangement of enterprise information in panels, and the preparation and presentation of enterprise frames. The ministry should also research geographical information that would allow effective area analyses.
- (4) The MPHPT should, by fiscal year 2005, attempt to utilize list information based on administrative records, in addition to various statistical surveys accumulated in the database, toward preparation of lists for supplementing statistical surveys for institutions and business enterprises, updating population information, and making the information more reliable. The ministry should also consider providing information to establishments and enterprises whose true nature is not immediately obvious, such as SOHO professionals.
- (5) The ministry should install a meeting for deliberation to reflect opinions from the Cabinet

Office and ministries when studying (1) to (4) above.

(3) Promotion of sharing data as compiled results of statistical surveys between Cabinet Office and ministries, central government and local governments

<Background and current situation>

The sharing of data as compiled results of statistical surveys will serve to provide more efficient administrative services by promoting efficient and effective utilization of statistical data, and will improve services to both the public and enterprises, thus making the public more aware of the value of statistical surveys.

With regard to data sharing, the “Streamlining Plan” states that the Cabinet Office and ministries should promote the preparation of databases for compiled results individually or jointly, and should try to share results of statistical surveys through Kasumigaseki WAN. In addition, the Outline of Administrative Reform (decided by the Cabinet on December 1, 2000) states that, with regard to various types of information in administrative agencies, more and more databases should be actively prepared, and information sharing should be promoted. The Outline also states that efforts should be made, as a general rule, to provide a good deal of such information to the public and enterprises.

In response to the above, the Cabinet Office and ministries are engaged in promoting the preparation of more databases for data as compiled results of statistical surveys to be shared via Kasumigaseki WAN and the Internet, based on the document, “Promotion of the Preparation of More Databases for Data as Compiled Results of Statistical Surveys and Making More Information Open to the Public” (the common consent for the Promotion Committee for “General Plan statistics-related items Relating to the Basic Plan concerning the Promotion of Streamlining and Efficiency of Administrative Organizations”, May 31, 2001).

As a result, the Cabinet Office and ministries are engaged in the preparation of databases for 173 (50.3 percent) of the 344 statistical surveys covered. Databases are to be prepared by fiscal year 2003 for 142 of the remaining 171 statistical surveys (80.3 percent). However, it is desirable to further promote the preparation of additional databases for compiled results of statistical surveys by expanding database functions and making further details of the data provided, as such preparation serves as a basis for the sharing and electronic presentation of the statistical data.

With regard to sharing and provision of statistical data, such data are now provided on 129 (37.5 percent) of the 344 statistical surveys covered via the Internet, as tabulated below, to promote sharing and presentation of statistical information. (see Table 3)

Table 3 Statistical data available on the Internet

(As of June 2002)

Type	Number of statistical surveys covered	Statistical surveys with statistical data already available on the Internet	Statistical surveys with statistical data to be posted on the Internet			
			Fiscal 2002	Fiscal 2003	Fiscal 2004	Total
Designated statistical surveys	60	40	8	10	1	19
Approved and notified statistical surveys	284	89	55	103	23	181
Total	344	129	63	113	24	200

(Note: Statistical survey results either compiled as databases, opened to the public or shared between ministries, September 2002. Researched by the Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts, and Telecommunications).

Efforts should be made to further promote presentation and sharing of data on compiled results of statistical surveys, because this can contribute to the implementation of more efficient statistical surveys.

The presentation and sharing of data as compiled results of statistical surveys between the central government and local governments has been promoted by means of electromagnetic recording media. However, the foundation was laid for online statistical data sharing with completion of the Local Government Wide Area Network (LGWAN). In response to this, it is necessary to promote the sharing of such data between central and local governments to an even greater degree, in line with developments in information and communications technologies.

Efforts should be made to promote local governments' commitment to statistical data sharing with the central government, at a steady pace, with necessary support from the Cabinet Office and ministries.

<Basic direction>

- (1) Efforts should be made to further promote the sharing of data as compiled results of statistical surveys by positively utilizing not only Kasumigaseki WAN or LGWAN, but also the Internet, for the presentation of greater volumes of statistical data.

In addition, the statistical data and portal sites mentioned in Part 4 2-(1) "Advanced Dissemination of Statistical Results via the Internet" are a general window for a guide to governmental statistics, are linked with statistics sites and databases of the Cabinet Office and ministries, and are designed to take advantage of the Internet as an information medium. Given the effectiveness of these sites in sharing and making available data as compiled results of statistical surveys, efforts should be made to utilize these sites as avenues for data sharing between the Cabinet Office and ministries, and between central and local

governments.

- (2) Sharing of data between the central government and local governments should be promoted in line with the commitment to sharing data as compiled results of statistical surveys between the Cabinet Office and ministries.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The Cabinet Office and ministries should continue to promote the preparation and sharing of databases for compiled results of statistical surveys, and the sharing of data between the Cabinet Office and ministries via Kasumigaseki WAN and the Internet, on the basis of the document “Promotion of the Preparation of More Databases for Data as Compiled Results of Statistical Surveys and Making More Information Open to the Public” (the common consent for the Promotion Committee for the “Streamlining Plan”, May 31, 2001).
- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries should try to prepare databases for the most urgent of the three major surveys: designated statistical surveys, approved statistical surveys, and notified statistical surveys, by fiscal year 2003; and other statistical surveys by fiscal year 2005.
- (3) The MPHPT should promote the sharing of data between the Cabinet Office and ministries, and between central and local governments by promptly creating a mechanism for the sharing of recorded basic data through Kasumigaseki WAN and LGWAN, relating to the “System of Social and Demographic Statistics” (SSDS), which is scheduled to be developed and commissioned during fiscal year 2003, as a data system common to the Cabinet Office and ministries. The system involves the systematic recording of statistical data by area, covering economic and social statistical data, such as population, households, economic infrastructure, education and workforce, based on results of statistical surveys by the Cabinet Office and ministries, and local governments. At the same time, the ministry should record all information.
- (4) The Cabinet Office and ministries should support local governments in making a commitment to the sharing of data between central and local governments.

2 Advanced dissemination of statistical results

(1) Advanced dissemination of statistical results via the Internet

<Background and current situation>

Governmental statistical data are now provided to the public and enterprises through statistics sites operated by the Cabinet Office and ministries. “Location guide functions” have also been prepared. However, there are no sites that enable governmental statistical data to be viewed from associated sites. Therefore, the Internet linkage is not necessarily providing adequate availability of such data.

“Basic Policies for Economic and Financial Management and Structural Reform 2002” states that “primarily, the MPHPT should develop a mechanism for allowing advanced utilization of statistical information held by the Government by making such information available on the Internet”. It is necessary to develop a mechanism for presenting governmental statistical data so that they can be utilized to a greater degree, for a variety of applications. On the other hand, statistics sites of the Cabinet Office and ministries are required to contain information that has real value for the users. It is also important to secure an organic linkage for statistical data between the central government and local governments.

Statistical data are available on foreign portal sites, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Examples of portal sites for statistical data in foreign countries

Country name	Organization	Designation	Functions and information provided
United States	Federal government	FEDSTAT	Retrieval across sites of statistical data of ministries Linkage to associated statistical agencies Main statistical information list by state
Canada	Statistics Bureau Canada	-	Presentation of governmental statistical data by category, such as economy, geography, population, lifestyle, etc. Presentation of business-related information for private enterprises
United Kingdom	National Statistics Bureau	National Statistics Online	Presentation of time series data through databases Data in the form of graphs and analysis are possible.
Australia	Australian Bureau of Statistics	-	Main statistics list Presentation of major data by category, such as population, prices, employment, and GDP Data in the form of graphs and analysis are possible.
Korea	Korea National Statistical Office	KOSIS	Main indexes in graphic form Analysis and process functions through database

(Note: The table lists information on statistical data provided on foreign portal sites.)

<Basic direction>

- (1) Efforts should be made to provide statistical information to the public and enterprises in a more advanced manner through the Internet, in line with developments in information and communications technologies.
- (2) In line with “Basic Policies for Economic and Financial Management and Structural Reform 2002”, a portal site providing a general gateway to governmental statistical data should be built as a site common to the Cabinet Office and ministries for the provision of statistical information. The portal site shall be made easy to understand, rapidly accessible, and shall have a range of functions such as analysis and representation in graphic form.

Efforts should be made to achieve close liaison between the Cabinet Office and ministries when building and operating the portal site.

- (3) There should be a function that serves as a conduit for statistical data between central and local governments, through linkage of the portal for statistical data to the statistics sites of prefectural governments.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The MPHPT should build a portal site as a joint site for the Cabinet Office and ministries, and start operating the site during fiscal year 2003.

The portal site should be configured as follows:

- a) A snapshot of the nation as seen through statistics
 - The Government's key statistical indicators should be provided in a simple form featuring tables and graphics.
 - Key indicators can be listed by category, such as population, macro-economic indicators, economic statistics, and social statistics.
- b) A general gateway to the sites of the Cabinet Office and ministries
 - The portal should provide a site map showing the statistics sites provided by the Cabinet Office and ministries, statistical database, and the latest data released.
 - The portal can be linked to statistics sites provided by the Cabinet Office and ministries, statistical database, and the latest data released.
- c) A general guide to governmental statistical data
 - Governmental statistical data can be efficiently and effectively searched and retrieved in the Japanese Kana phonetic alphabet, and by using free words.
- d) Primary statistical database
 - Primary governmental statistical data should be provided in the form of databases.
 - With retrieved data, the following is possible: preparation of statistical tables, map representations, graph representations, and analysis with related statistics.

Efforts should be made to provide the portal with not only the above, but also an English-language version to enhance the site's appeal (and audience).

In addition, efforts should be made to link the portal to the statistics sites of prefectural governments, in order to create a systematic linkage between central and local governments.

- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries should aim to perfect the content provided for their statistics sites.

Efforts should be made to prepare and make the contents and functions of the portal complete, in close coordination with the Cabinet Office and ministries. To achieve this objective, there should be an ongoing "collaboration conference" between the Cabinet Office and related ministries.

(2) Promotion of prompt and diverse release and dissemination of statistical data

<Background and current situation>

Utilization of information and communications technologies can reduce the costs and time associated with information distribution. This will facilitate the exchange of highly complex information.

There are a wide variety of demands for those types of statistics that are designed to capture social and economic developments quantitatively and objectively, and to provide information on these changes in a timely and effective manner. This situation makes it imperative to utilize information and communications technologies in order to release accurate information quickly, and to provide information in analyzable and processable forms, appropriate to how the information will be used.

In addition, information on the release of statistical survey results is extremely important to users, who utilize statistics in a planned and efficient way. It is therefore necessary to improve the service through earlier announcement of information release dates.

<Basic direction>

To meet varying requirements for statistical data, efforts should be made to release data on statistical results through the use of information and communications technologies, and to provide such data in diverse forms, so that the users can analyze and process such data according to their particular requirements. Efforts should also be made to announce release dates as early as possible.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The Cabinet Office and ministries should try to speed up the release of data on statistical results by pre-releasing partial tabulations and tentative figures. Efforts should also be made to announce the date of release in compliance with the standard (three months before the date of release) operated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries should aim to diversify the methods of releasing such data, by publishing not only in government gazettes and publications, but also on the Internet.
- (3) The Cabinet Office and ministries should look at using CD-ROMs for the convenience of users when a large volume of data for major surveys (e.g., periodic surveys) is being presented.
- (4) The Cabinet Office and ministries should continue to promote the supply of data through databases, so that users can process and analyze them easily.

(3) Dissemination of information relating to statistical surveys

<Background and current situation>

Results of statistical surveys are very useful information. It is important that these results should be understood clearly and used correctly. It is therefore essential to provide explanatory information on the method used for preparing statistics, such as survey methods, estimation methods, and on sampling error, when providing results of statistical surveys.

Provision of such explanatory information leads to not only improvement in the availability of such information to users, but also to increased public confidence in statistics. It is therefore necessary to positively promote the provision of such information.

In response to the development of information and communications technologies, developed countries now provide these types of information via the Internet. Commitment to providing such information by these methods is already gaining traction in Japan, too. However, some of these types of information are still not adequately provided via the Internet. It is therefore necessary to accelerate efforts in this direction.

<Basic direction>

Efforts should be made, in respect of designated statistical surveys, to expand the provision of explanatory information on statistical surveys and the characteristics of statistics, and to promote the provision of such information by electronic means such as the Internet.

Efforts should also be made to promote the provision of explanatory information on approved statistical surveys and notified statistical surveys, as recommended above for designated statistical surveys.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The Cabinet Office and ministries should provide the following information in reference to designated statistical surveys in the case of top-shelf handling of information in various statistical surveys:
 - a) Explanatory information on statistics
Objectives of survey, history, coverage, period of survey, survey items, questionnaire samples, survey method, size of survey, notes for users, description of terms, contents of compiled lists without reports contained therein, and references
 - b) Error information
Sampling method, sampling rate, collection rate, compilation, estimation method, and attainment errors
 - c) Seasonal adjustment information
- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries shall make an effort to provide firm information on statistical surveys, for which the above types of information have been already provided. They should also attempt to provide information on approved statistical surveys and notified

statistical surveys, in proportion to the statistical surveys, as described for the designated statistical surveys.

- (3) The Cabinet Office and ministries should promote the provision of information not only in print publications, but also on the Internet.

3 Construction of infrastructure for promoting the use of statistical data

(1) Reflection of opinions and requirements of statistical users, and prompt release of statistical results to meet user needs

<Background and current situation>

To promote the utilization of statistical data, it is important that we heed the users of statistical data. With regard to designated statistical surveys, users' opinions and wishes concerning relevant statistics are reflected in survey plans through deliberation at the Statistics Council, which comprises academic experts in statistics. In the case of some national statistical surveys conducted by the nation, opinions and requests from the users of statistics may be received on a home page, for example, if the information on the results of statistical surveys has been provided via the Internet. These opinions and comments are reflected in the next survey plan.

Looking at a total 312 statistical surveys (designated statistical surveys, approved statistical surveys and notified statistical surveys) conducted in fiscal year 2001, and processed surveys prepared in the same fiscal year, interaction took place with users of statistics, as follows: 108 surveys (34.6 percent) involved dialogue with users of statistics, and 4 surveys (1.3 percent) involved the receipt of opinions and wishes from the public.

The fiscal year 2001 statistical services report (prepared by the MPHPT Statistical Standards Department) on statistical surveys conducted via primary statistical survey sections of prefectural governments indicates that there were about 3,000 opinions, desires or complaints from public users (users of statistics and reporters) relating to statistical surveys, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Development of number of consultations about statistics

Unit: case

	Utilization of statistics	Opinions and desires	Complaints	Others	Total	Viewing and lend-out
Fiscal 1998	38,262	745	3,179	3,499	45,685	72,012
Fiscal 1999	49,846	685	2,732	5,932	58,655	102,005
Fiscal 2000	45,901	983	4,349	6,468	57,701	98,026
Fiscal 2001	42,618	620	2,526	4,108	49,872	95,885

(Note: From the nationwide compiled data obtained at statistics consultation windows of prefectural governments.)

In addition, an earlier release of the results of statistical surveys will help to promote the utilization of statistical data, and is also sought by users of statistics. Data on release of the results of statistical surveys show that 42 (73.7 percent) of 57 designated statistical surveys with actual releases of the results of statistical surveys were made as early as specified (within 60 days of the monthly survey and within 12 months of the annual or periodic survey for the first release, as at March, 2003). Data on the release dates for a total 211 fiscal year 2001 approved statistical surveys and notified statistical surveys indicate that 177 (83.9 percent) actual releases of results took place as early as specified above.

<Basic direction>

- (1) To reflect opinions and desires expressed by users of statistics, efforts should be made to interact with them.
- (2) Efforts should be made to release the results of designated statistical surveys, approved statistical surveys and notified statistical surveys as early as possible, in response to the needs discovered through communication with users of statistics.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The Cabinet Office and related ministries should introduce dialogues with users of statistics (including reporters) from fiscal year 2003, excluding the following statistical surveys:
 - a) Statistical surveys that are not suitable for dialogues with the users of statistics, because the utilization objective is limited to specific administrative applications.
 - b) Statistical surveys that have already elicited opinions from related agencies, including users of statistics.
- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries themselves should evaluate the utilization of results of statistical surveys, including responses to recently conducted statistical surveys, by utilizing the policy evaluation system.
- (3) With regard to designated statistical surveys, the Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should aim to release results of surveys in line with the target release period already specified. For approved statistical surveys and notified statistical surveys, they should also aim to do

the same, in proportion to the target period for release of designated statistical survey results. The MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department) shall organize and announce the release timetable for these statistical surveys, once a year.

The MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department) should also during fiscal year 2003 study release timing and release methods designated by law, for government gazettes or publications. It is necessary to study methods for releasing the results of statistical surveys from the viewpoint of achieving wider utilization.

(2) Study of “statistical data archives” for promoting the utilization of statistical data

<Background and current situation>

“Statistical data archives” organize and store individual data and anonymous sample data (for a definition, see 3-(4) “Preparation and Utilization of Anonymous Micro Data”), for the purpose of providing data for secondary utilization. They have been established in many Western countries. There is an example of a statistical data archive installed at a university research institute, for statistical surveys conducted by private agencies in Japan.

The storage of data on individual questionnaires and related documents after completion of designated statistical surveys conducted by the Cabinet Office and ministries is set forth in survey rules for individual cases and is not necessarily unified across the Cabinet Office and ministries. The storage of data on individual questionnaires for approved statistical surveys has been left to the discretion of the Cabinet Office and ministries.

Consequently, it is desirable that data on individual questionnaires should be organized and stored under a uniform protocol, following the compilation of statistical surveys that have so far been conducted by the Cabinet Office and ministries. It is also desirable that the function of statistical data archives should be studied, so that such data can be utilized in secondary applications, such as administrative policies, education, and research.

<Basic direction>

The installation of statistical data archives should be studied, together with their necessity in relation to statistical data.

<Concrete measures>

The Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should, during fiscal year 2003, provide a mechanism for studying the installation of statistical data archives, in order to gain an appreciation of actual organization, storage, and utilization or disposal of data on individual questionnaires, following the release of results of statistical surveys. They should then, during fiscal year 2004, study the basic concept of installation of statistical data archives, including the range of statistical surveys that

would be suitable for these archives, and the storage and utilization of data on individual questionnaires. At the same time, they should also study (i) legal issues in reference to the Statistics Law, and (ii) the issue of package management of data on individual questionnaires.

(3) Tailor-made compilation

<Background and current situation>

It is a major challenge to prepare statistical data in response to users' needs as already mentioned in 3-(1) "Reflection of Opinions and Requirements by Statistics Users, and Prompt Release of Statistical Results to Meeting to Users' Needs". However, it is difficult to gauge all possible needs for statistical data to be used as basic policy data against a backdrop of diversifying administrative services. Neither is it necessarily appropriate, for cost-effectiveness reasons, to prepare probable statistical tables in advance.

Consequently, it may be considered that statistical data will be custom-compiled as a way of complying with requests from individual users of statistics.

With regard to custom compilation, "New Strategies for Government Statistical Services for the Coming Decade" states that it is also a challenge, requiring study, that custom compilation will be performed at cost, with a promise of maintaining confidentiality as a prerequisite, in response to requests from private users with individual compilation needs". With no specific studies underway, there is no mechanism presently in place for meeting individual compilation needs.

<Basic direction>

A mechanism that will permit custom compilation should be researched, with maintenance of confidentiality as a prerequisite, to meet diverse individual compilation needs, regardless of public or private requirement.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should study the definition of custom compilation, understand its requirements, the basic idea of such compilation, and problematic issues concerning introduction of custom compilation. They should then organize trials, including system-related ones, on the introduction of a system of custom compilation, during the fiscal year 2003. At the same time, they should also organize trials on a mechanism (a basis for charging fees, their amounts and method of collection) for a consignment procedure, such as the collection of fees from private compilation users.
- (2) The Cabinet Office and related ministries should study and build basic frameworks, in sequence, for the implementation of custom compilation, such as the preparation of guidelines, from fiscal year 2004, while considering the organization of the above trials.

(4) Preparation and utilization of anonymous micro data

<Background and current situation>

“New Strategies for Government Statistical Services for the Coming Decade” states that, with regard to the provision of micro data (data sampled from individual questionnaires in which individual indicators such as area classification, and household number cannot be identified because they have been erased), it is necessary to conduct exclusive and technical research for approximately two to three years as a yardstick, concerning mainly policies for maintaining confidentiality of individual sample data, foreign systems and examples of sample data provided, actual needs for such data in Japan and foreign countries, the relationship with current judicial systems, and specific methods for providing such data. In response to the above statement, the Cabinet Office and ministries concerned participated in exclusive and technical joint research exercises and, through examination, found that there is a likelihood that some sample data (hereinafter referred to as “anonymous micro data”) will be put to practical use. However, this has not occurred, to date.

The preparation and utilization of anonymous micro data is tentatively underway at universities and research institutions, in response to the above new strategies.

<Basic direction>

To meet needs for statistical data that can be compiled and analyzed by users themselves, whether they be public or private users, results of studies made so far concerning the necessity of social consensus of anonymous micro data and legal problems should be examined, with confidentiality as a prerequisite, as a step toward practical use in terms of its preparation and utilization.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should clarify the definition of anonymous micro data and the range of statistical surveys that will suit the preparation of such data, while considering results of studies made so far. They should also organize trials, including system-related ones, on the preparation and utilization of anonymous micro data, during fiscal year 2003.

At the same time, they should also study methods and places for utilizing anonymous micro data, if the utilization of such data is to be introduced.

- (2) The Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should consider organization of the above trials to study and build basic frameworks for the practical use of anonymous micro data, such as the development of a guideline for the preparation and utilization of such data, in sequence during fiscal year 2004.
- (3) The Cabinet Office and ministries concerned in the interim should prepare tentative

anonymous micro data, as required, in order to understand needs for utilizing such data and challenges with its utilization, as a trial case.

(5) Clarification of approval criteria for the use of questionnaires for purposes other than those originally intended, and implementation of prompt approval

<Background and current situation>

The use of questionnaires for designated statistical surveys for purposes other than those originally intended is banned, as a general rule, under Item 1, Article 15, Statistics Law. In the following cases, however, exceptional permission is given for such use if it is approved by the MPHPT, and the objectives of such use are publicly announced under the provision in Item 2 of the same article:

- (i) if the above questionnaires are used as administrative basic data, or
- (ii) if they are used in academic studies and these studies are highly exclusive and of a high public interest nature.

Use of the above questionnaires for purposes other than those originally intended can be found in the following situations:

- (1) Procedures for applying for approval of such use are handled according to “Instructions Concerning Applications for Approvals of Use of Questionnaires for Designated Statistical Surveys for Purposes Other Than Statistical Ones Originally Intended” (decided by Director General of Administrative Management Agency, on February 26, 1965). With regard to the current operation of these instructions, however, there are some unclear portions, such as the concept of public interests.
- (2) Examples of applications for such use, dealt with between April 2001 and the end of September 2002, show that there were repeated applications for the same use by the national government and local governments. (53 applications for Census of Manufactures, 14 applications for Census of Commerce, and 13 applications for Basic Survey on Wage Structure).
- (3) With regard to the period of applications for such use, some examples are found to have taken a considerable time for applications to reach those governments that conduct relevant surveys, and then be sent to the MPHPT (Statistical Standards Department). In addition, “the above instructions state that applications sent to the ministry should be announced publicly in the governmental gazettes within 24 days of their acceptance, as a general rule”. Except in some special cases, the time between acceptance and public announcement in the gazette for fiscal year 2002 applications averages 36.4 days (including holidays).

Other than the above, Item 2-2, Article 15, the Statistics Law, states: “The ban on the use of questionnaires for designated statistical surveys for purposes other than those originally intended does not prevent those who conduct surveys from using or allowing someone to use questionnaires

or statistical reports in ways that cannot identify those who are covered by surveys or were asked to respond". Thus, such use is left to the discretion of those who conduct surveys. However, such use is similar to the handling of national designated statistical surveys, and is permitted if it meets such requirements as "of a public interest nature".

<Basic direction>

- (1) Efforts should be made to embody and clarify standards for approving the use of questionnaires for statistical surveys for purposes other than those originally intended.
- (2) Efforts should be made to further expand comprehensive approvals relating to questionnaires for designated statistical surveys.

<Concrete measures>

- (1) The MPHPT (the Statistical Standards Department) should revise the above instructions during fiscal year 2003, mainly to clarify part of the current operation of the instructions that relate to approving the use of questionnaires for designated statistical surveys for purposes other than those originally intended. Efforts should also be made to clarify the same for approved statistical surveys and notified statistical surveys.
- (2) The MPHPT, the Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should promote a move to comprehensive approvals for repeated applications for the same purpose of use by central and local government users.
- (3) The MPHPT and the Cabinet Office and ministries concerned should improve paperwork procedures, through mutual efforts and cooperation, so that such use can be possible within the period of time set forth in the above instructions.

4 Review and revision of statistical classifications

<Background and current situation>

Standard statistical classifications, such as industry classification, play an important role as benchmarks in enhancing the possibility of making comparisons between various statistical surveys. It is necessary to assure not only the time-series characteristics of such classifications, but also their compliance with international standard classifications, in response to requests for as-required and appropriate revision in line with changing social and economic situations.

Studies relating to the revision of standard statistical classifications require that Cabinet Office and ministries concerned, in concert, properly understand and analyze trends in a wide range of fields. It is therefore necessary to establish a mechanism for joint studies by the Cabinet Office and ministries.

<Basic direction>

To revise standard statistical classifications effectively and as required, in line with changing social and economic situations, systems should be developed for studies to properly review and revise statistical classifications.

<Concrete measures>

In order to review various standard statistical classifications as required, and in a proper and planned manner to cater for a changing industrial structure, employment system and structure, and the emergence of new commodities, a permanent study organization (Statistical Classification Expert Group - tentative) should be set up during fiscal year 2003.

The Expert Group on Statistical Classification should study the following items:

- (1) Matters concerning studies of drafts for revising standard industrial classification
- (2) Matters concerning the organization of proposed revisions to standard job classification and standard commodity classification
- (3) Matters concerning other statistical classifications
- (4) Matters concerning investigations and research into statistical classifications
- (5) Matters concerning liaison and coordination in the governmental sector concerning statistical classifications