



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA

Report on Consumer Price Index
(January 12-16, 2026)

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Acronyms

API	Application Programming Interface
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose
CPI	Consumer Price Index
EA	Elementary Aggregate
EAN	European Article Number
GEKS	Gini–Eltető–Köves–Szulc – price index methodology
GTIN	Global Trade Item Number
HBS	Household Budget Survey
HFMCCE	Household Final Monetary Consumption Expenditure
HICP	Harmonized Index of Consumer Price Index
NA	National Accounts
TA	Technical Assistance
TalTech	Tallinn University of Technology

Summary of Mission Outcomes and Priority Recommendations

1. **A technical assistance (TA) mission was conducted during January 12–16, 2026, to assist Statistics Estonia in its efforts to use new data sources and methodologies to modernize the Consumer price index (CPI).** This was the first mission under the initiative, with no previous price statistics missions having taken place.
2. **The mission focused on scanner data methodologies, cross-border online purchases, and data-quality measures across the CPI production process.** The mission objectives were to assess methodology and provide guidance in these areas.
3. **Statistics Estonia is introducing scanner data from retail chains starting with the January 2026 index.** The statistical office has received scanner data for approximately four years, with coverage improving gradually over time; during the past two years, the data have covered four supermarket chains, representing roughly 60 percent of the total food market. The new price indices are compiled using a multilateral price index methodology, specifically a GEKS-Törnqvist price index based on a 14-month time window. Rolling time windows are spliced to previously published figures using a mean splice. The new price indices cover COICOP (Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose) Division 01 (Food and non-alcoholic beverages) and Division 02 (Alcohol beverages and tobacco). The mission recommended methodological refinements and provided additional guidance on the future use of scanner data.
4. **Statistics Estonia has launched a CPI research project with Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech) to support the modernization process of the CPI.** The project runs from December 2025 to November 2026. Several of its topics overlap with this mission, making coordinated and consistent recommendations essential. Meetings were held with TalTech as part of the mission.
5. **Cross-border online purchases are currently not included in the Estonian CPI.** The mission recommended a step-by-step procedure for introducing them, beginning with the inclusion of streaming services (films, music, gaming) and AI-based digital services. Key data-quality indicators useful at both the operational and strategic levels were also discussed and agreed upon during the mission.
6. **The implementation of new data sources and methodologies in the CPI has the potential to enhance index quality by expanding item, outlet, and time coverage, thereby producing a more reliable and accurate measure of inflation which is essential for informed policymaking by the authorities and the IMF.** Furthermore, the use of modern data sources is expected to reduce field data collection costs.
7. **The priority recommendations of this mission are summarized in Table 1.** Further details on the priority recommendations and the related actions/milestones can be found in the work plan under Detailed Technical Assessment and Recommendations.

TABLE1. Priority Recommendations

Target Date	Priority Recommendation	Responsible Institutions
February 2027	Scanner data: Include discount retail chain(s) in Division 01	Statistics Estonia
February 2027	Cross-border online purchases: Include streaming services (music, films, gaming) and AI-based digital services in the CPI	Statistics Estonia
February 2027	Implement geometric average at EA-level for indices based on field data collection	Statistics Estonia

Detailed Technical Assessment and Recommendations

TABLE 2. Work Plan

Priority	Action/Milestone	Target Completion Date
<i>Outcome: Alternative data sources used in the compilation of CPI</i>		
High	Scanner data: Test new thresholds for the price-relative filter to include volatile product groups	June 2026
High	Scanner data: Replace the low-sales filter with a dumping filter to prevent phased-out items from introducing a potential downward bias in the index	February 2027
High	Scanner data: Include discount retail chain(s) in Division 01 and 02	February 2027
High	Scanner data: Link outgoing and incoming GTINs that are essentially the same item by expanding the Division 02 solution to Division 01	February 2027
High	Scanner data: Estimate the empirical effects of using EA level-shift factor for implementation in official index	January 2026
Medium	Scanner data: Classify non-food items (GTINs) to COICOP	November 2026
Medium	Scanner data: Start negotiating with do-it-yourself (DIY) and clothing chains for the delivery of transaction data	December 2026
High	Cross-border purchases: Analyze the extent of online purchases, both domestic and cross-border	May 2026
High	Cross-border purchases: Check alternative data sources for estimating weights, such as bank data, and, where possible, disaggregate by product group	May 2026

Priority	Action/Milestone	Target Completion Date
High	<i>Cross-border purchases: Include streaming services (music, films, gaming) and AI-based digital services in the CPI</i>	February 2027
Medium	<i>Cross-border purchases: Develop an index for delivery services</i>	February 2027
High	<i>Monitor response rates, the share of imputed prices, and CPI errors over time as key strategic and operational indicators</i>	December 2026
Medium	<i>Test the coefficient of variance (CV) to assess whether sample size is adequate</i>	March 2027
Medium	<i>Consider using seasonal adjustment tools for analytical purposes and for identifying irregular price changes</i>	March 2027
High	<i>Implement geometric average at EA-level for indices based on field data collection</i>	February 2027
High	<i>Consider publishing more detailed index and weight information online</i>	February 2027
High	<i>Check for appropriate data sources for regional weights</i>	February 2027

A. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX OF ESTONIA – CURRENT STATUS

8. The CPI staff consists of six technical staff responsible for the compilation of the CPI, in addition to a team lead who supervises the entire process of data collection and editing to compilation, analysis, and dissemination. Statistics Estonia has experienced significant staff turnover, and the current CPI team has limited experience. The team is still in process of building its knowledge base and currently lacks a senior member with whom methodological issues and historical practices can be discussed. Because of ongoing training needs across the team members, it will take time before the team reaches full efficiency. With respect to scanner data indices, one staff member is fully dedicated to development. The workload of the team lead is high, and the mission recommended greater delegation of tasks going forward. The data collection activities undertaken by the CPI team should be reduced as much as possible, with an assessment of whether these tasks could be transferred to other units within the organization. In addition, documentation of existing procedures is limited, particularly with respect to the rationale for past methodological choices.

9. There has been considerable external pressure from key stakeholders to make improvements in the CPI. One initiative undertaken in response is the establishment of a CPI research project in collaboration with TalTech. The project was launched in December 2025 and will run to November 2026. It is an ambitious initiative, divided into several work packages, including comparisons with similar countries, assessing new data sources, proposing and testing new methodologies, and developing recommendations and guidelines. The academic project overlaps with this mission on certain topics, making it important that the resulting recommendations are considered in a coordinated and mutually consistent manner. To ensure this can be done efficiently, the research project could build on the recommendations made during this mission.

10. Statistics Estonia compiles and disseminates a monthly CPI based on annually updated weights from the Household Budget survey (HBS). The HBS is conducted every five to six years, with quarterly projections produced in the interim, projections for year y-1 are used as basis for the annual weights. Other relevant data sources are also used at detailed levels. The data are preprocessed by the National Accounts (NA) division, but the expenditure weight data used in the CPI is not classified as NA data. The national index of Estonia is following a resident concept, under which the expenditure covered should reflect resident consumption expenditure regardless of where the consumption takes place.

11. As of the January 2026 index, Statistics Estonia, and like other European countries, is implementing the COICOP 2018 classification in both the national CPI and the Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices (HICP). The national CPI follows international guidelines, such as the Consumer Price Index Manual, while the HICP is compiled according to EU regulations to ensure comparability across member states. In line with HICP requirements, the price indices should be compiled retrospectively back to the early start of 1996. Several other methodological changes are also introduced with the January index. The national CPI currently uses 1997=100 as the index reference period and December y-1 as the price reference period. The index reference period of the national CPI will not be updated as of January 2026 index. Under normal circumstances, when major methodological changes are introduced alongside a new classification standard, the mission would recommend updating the index reference period as a signal to users that the index has been updated. However, given current time constraints, it is unlikely that the CPI team will be able to implement such a change for the January index. For the HICP, the index reference period is planned to be updated to 2025=100. Over time, Statistics Estonia could consider streamlining the index reference periods across the national CPI and HICP.

12. CPI data are collected from five larger regions, which are further divided into ten different localities of Estonia. The regional indices are aggregated into a national index using income and population figures. No regional indices are disseminated. Conceptually, the CPI weights, also across regions, should reflect the Household Final Monetary Consumption Expenditure (HFMCE). While income information may be a proxy for consumption expenditure, the mission recommended to check for more suitable weighting sources going forward. If the HBS does not provide the necessary regional disaggregation, proxy approaches may be used. Currently, regional weights are approximated using population counts multiplied by average household income due to lack of direct expenditure data.

13. Statistics Estonia uses arithmetic averages at the lowest level of the compilation. For field-collected data, however, the recommended approach is to use a geometric average, i.e. the Jevons price index, across individual price observations when no item-level weights are available. The geometric mean better reflects consumer substitution, as it avoids the upward bias associated with arithmetic averaging. International standards therefore recommend the geometric average as the default elementary index when item-level expenditure weights are not available.

14. In its dissemination, Statistics Estonia publishes indices and weights only at the division level. The mission recommended publishing more detailed figures, including both weights and indices, to improve the availability of time series for external users. It is also recommended to use the official COICOP wording in the labelling to avoid confusion about the content of each time series. Over time, publishing more detailed figures could help reduce the volume of emails and inquiries from external users, thereby easing some of the pressure on the CPI team.

Recommended Actions:

- Delegate tasks from team lead and assess whether data collection can be transferred to other units within the organization
- Where HBS data are not suitable, identify and assess alternative expenditure data sources for the estimation of regional weights
- Implement the geometric average at EA-level for indices based on field data collection
- Consider publishing more detailed index and weight information on the website

B. SCANNER DATA IN THE ESTONIAN CPI

15. Statistics Estonia is implementing scanner data for the first time in the CPI as of the January 2026 index. The statistics office has had regular access to transaction data for approximately the past four years, covering roughly 60 percent of the Estonian food market. The scanner data index covers Division 01 Food and non-alcoholic beverages and 02 Alcoholic beverages and tobacco. The production system has been developed over time. One CPI staff member has been dedicated to the development of the GEKS methodology, while another staff member has handled the mapping of article codes to COICOP. Since the statistical office cannot, under statistical legislation, mandate the provision of transaction data, it will need to rely on other advantages, notably the production of a more representative and higher-quality index, to encourage data sharing. The production coding is done in R software and developed in-house.

16. Data from the two midweeks of the month are used to represent the price movements in the monthly price index. Data are delivered either as single weekly files or as monthly files covering two weeks. The mission recommended requesting weekly files as a mitigation measure, since missing one file may be compensated by the availability of another. The data are delivered during an approximately three-day period following the two midweeks of the month, covering the week of the 15th. The data are delivered via a cloud solution and must be manually transferred to the production system.

17. The use of scanner data in Statistics Estonia is transitioning from a prolonged testing phase to full implementation, making timely data delivery and early error detection essential. Currently, all initial validation checks are performed only once the compilation of the indices starts. Given the limited production time once the system is put into actual use, it is important to implement automated checks immediately after the data are received in-house. The mission provided the CPI team with the data-quality indicators for scanner data, as suggested by Eurostat, as examples of checks to be established. The mission also recommended approaching the retailers to remind them of the transition to the implementation phase and the importance of timely data delivery.

18. The use of loyalty cards and the extent to which these are captured in the transaction data should also be addressed with the supermarket retailers. Different retail chains may apply different discount strategies and use different methods for recording promotions linked to loyalty cards.

19. The scanner data-based indices are compiled directly at the national market level, and no chain-specific indices are produced. Statistics Estonia receives complete aggregated transaction data at outlet level from all four retail chains included in the sample, implying full population coverage in the product and outlet dimensions for these chains. However, the share of discount retailers in the current sample should be increased. As this segment accounts for a substantial share of the Estonian market, expanding coverage going forward will be important to ensure that the index is as representative as possible. While coverage of the largest discount chains may be challenging to achieve, efforts could be made to include smaller chains. Coverage of the discount segment is essential. The total dataset

comprises approximately four million rows (article code*outlet) each month. The absence of retailer-specific indices further increases the importance of early and systematic data validation checks, as errors can be difficult to detect once data from different retail chains are aggregated directly at national level.

20. The items in the dataset are identified using Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)¹, primary in GTIN-13 (EAN-13) format, which is commonly used in Europe. From a consumer perspective, GTINs are often too detailed; when the item is defined by its code, any price change between the outgoing and the incoming code is missed, even though the item is essentially the same. Therefore, when matching is performed at the GTIN level, it is important to link discontinued and new codes where they represent the same item. Statistics Estonia has developed an approach for linking codes for Division 02, and this approach should also be applied to Division 01.

21. It is recommended to further refine the thresholds used in the price-relative filter, as fish, fruit and vegetables are currently not adequately accommodated. One option would be to apply different filters across product groups reflecting different degrees of seasonal volatility, or to use a less restrictive threshold than the one currently applied, to allow for large seasonal price fluctuations in these items while still excluding extreme and clearly erroneous price relatives. The mission recommended testing a common filter across all product groups that excludes price relatives above 4 and below 0.25.

22. The index currently applies a low-sales filter in the compilation of the bilateral Törnqvist indices, excluding price relatives where turnover falls below a specified value in either of the two periods considered. Given that the GEKS-Törnqvist price index is a weighted index at item level, with items weighted according to their economic importance, the mission did not see the need for such a low-sales filter. Moreover, the filter may have unintended effects, such as excluding discounted items that have high current-period expenditure but very low expenditure in previous period. The low-sales filter should instead be replaced by a dumping filter, which is commonly recommended for identifying and excluding discounted items that are phased out of the market, while avoiding the potential downward bias that such prices could otherwise introduce in the index.

23. Statistics Estonia compiles a GEKS-Törnqvist price index using 14-month rolling windows, which are spliced using a mean-splice procedure. Each month, a new GEKS index is calculated based on a window covering the most recent 14 months. Because successive windows overlap (for 13 months), the resulting GEKS series must be aligned with the previously published index to ensure continuity. For the overlapping months, index relatives are calculated between the published index and the GEKS index from the latest window. This geometric mean of these relatives defines a mean-splicing factor, which represents the average level difference between the two-index series over the overlap. This mean-splicing factor is subsequently applied multiplicatively to the GEKS series from the most recent window, thereby aligning its level with the previously published index.

24. The implementation of the new indices of Division 01 and 02 in the Estonian CPI should be carried out without revising the published index series, in line with standard CPI practices. The CPI staff are recommended to evaluate the empirical effects of different linking approaches, including the use of a level-shift adjustment, before making a final implementation decision. Any potential level alignment should be considered at the elementary aggregate (EA) level. At this level, the GEKS-based price indices introduce entirely new product groups, while other product groups continue from the

¹GTIN is a global standard for identifying trade items. In Europe, GTINs are commonly referred to as EAN codes, typically in the 13-digit format (EAN-13 / GTIN-13).

previously published index, and it is a question how comparable the existing official indices are with the new GEKS price indices. Given the limited availability of directly comparable groups in the official index, one possible approach is to splice to the experimental GEKS series compiled backward. Prior to incorporation into the production system, the GEKS price indices must be rescaled to the price reference period reflecting December $y-1=100$.

25. Statistics Estonia is recommended to continue pursuing the use of new data sources and to seek new methodological solutions. A natural step forward would be to begin mapping the non-food items (GTINs) to COICOP, as these data are already in-house. Turnover from representative non-food items could also serve as an additional source for revising weights at detailed levels in the years ahead. Compiling non-food price indices based on supermarket data will in many cases require combining scanner data price indices with field data collected price indices to capture price movements across the entire market. Statistics Estonia plans approaching do-it-yourself (DIY) chains covering different product groups like for instance building materials. They are also recommended to approach clothing retailers and to reach out to colleagues in the Nordic countries to exchange experiences. Most Nordic countries now have experience introducing scanner data not only for food and beverages but also for other product groups.

Recommended Actions:

- Ask for weekly files as a mitigation issue and perform initial data checks as soon as data are in-house
- Include discount retail chain(s) in Division 01 and 02
- Link outgoing and incoming GTINs that are essentially the same item (the relaunch issue)
- Refine the thresholds used in the price-relative filter to also include volatile groups
- Replace the low-sales filter with a dumping filter to prevent phased-out items from introducing a potential downward bias in the index
- Check the empirical effects of different linking approaches for incorporating the new GEKS price indices into the published series
- Classify non-food items (GTINs) to COICOP
- Start reaching out to DIY chains and clothing retailers to ask for test data files

C. CROSS-BORDER ONLINE PURCHASES

26. There are often measurement challenges related to the coverage of cross-border online purchases in the CPI. In many countries, this type of consumption is either not covered or only partly covered due to the difficulties involved in measuring these transactions. Cross-border online purchases in CPI should cover both goods and services and, if deemed significant, for example, if they account for more than 0.1 percent of total HFMCE, following a CPI rule of thumb, should be included in the CPI. Currently, cross-border online purchases are not included in the Estonian CPI. E-commerce reports indicate that the Estonian residents frequently purchase products online from both domestic and international retailers.

27. When focusing on cross-border online purchases, the assessment should also consider the appropriateness of the overall use of online prices in the index, regardless of where the purchase is made. Online prices tend to be more volatile than prices in physical stores; therefore, it is important to ensure that online prices are properly represented in the index. If online and offline prices are combined, and online purchases account for, for example, 15 percent of total expenditure in a given product category, the price data should be selected so that online outlets are adequately represented and exert an influence on the index that is broadly consistent with their expenditure share. Online prices are

included in the Estonian index for different product groups, like flights, ride-sharing services, hotel accommodations etc.

28. It is common for statistical offices to collect online prices from websites, either manually or through web-scraping techniques. Experience in many offices shows that web scraping often requires substantial ongoing maintenance. The mission therefore recommended that, before expanding the use of web scraping, the office should assess whether Application Programming Interface (API) solutions are available as an alternative source of price data. API-based solutions are generally more stable over time, as data are extracted directly from underlying databases rather than from website layouts, which may change frequently.

29. Before identifying practical solutions for dealing with online purchases, it is also important to consider the topic from a more conceptual perspective. The Estonian CPI is following a resident concept, meaning that the expenditure of the Estonian residents should be measured irrespectively whether the expenditure is made within the country or not. According to a resident concept the cross-border online purchases should be included by definition.

30. Statistics Estonia is recommended to take a step-by-step process to include these goods and services in the CPI. The first step is to analyze the market for online purchases including the shares of domestic and international online purchases compared with offline purchases. The CPI team is encouraged to include digital services such as music, film, and gaming streaming from major international providers in the CPI. These monthly subscription fees are typically available online. For the estimation of weights and if not provided via the HBS, the expenditure could be estimated by multiplying estimate of the total number of subscriptions in Estonia by the estimated subscription price. This expenditure can then be added to the HFMCE.

31. According to the COICOP 2018 classification standard, the prices of delivery services should be separated from the item price, and any expenditure related to delivery services should be registered separately under COICOP 074 Transport services. The standard divides delivery services into two categories; *07.4.1.2 Courier and parcel delivery services* where often smaller parcel delivery services for item purchased online are typically classified, and *07.4.9.2 Delivery of goods* which is not necessarily items purchased online, and may include larger items, food delivery and more. If online purchases are deemed significant in the Estonian market, either for domestic or cross-border purchases, the statistical office should start developing separate delivery services indices.

Recommended Actions:

- Implement cross-border online purchases by using a step-by-step process
- Analyze and estimate the size of both domestic and cross-border online consumption
- Implement digital streaming services (downloads of films, music, gaming) and AI-based digital services in the CPI
- Develop price indices for delivery services

D. DATA QUALITY INDICATORS

32. Statistics Estonia wants to place more emphasis on strengthening quality assurance practices in the Estonian CPI. Ensuring the ability to monitor changes in the data, detect potential errors at an early stage, and define appropriate data-quality indicators for the CPI both from an operational and a more strategic perspective are therefore becoming an increasingly important area of focus for the statistical office.

33. Ensuring data quality throughout the entire CPI production process is essential. Software solutions play an important role in supporting data quality in index production. While the CPI team has experience with open-source software and the entire production of scanner data indices is fully produced in R software, the broader CPI production system is largely Excel-based and relies on multiple interconnected spreadsheets, which increases risk of errors. Developing a new production system, a controlled data pipeline from raw data to published indices with automated validation and quality checks at each stage, based on open-source software (like R, Python, SQL) provides an integrated, transparent, and reproducible framework for index compilation. Establishing systematic data-quality indicators is more challenging in a heavily Excel-based environment than in an integrated production system that ensures consistency across the entire process. CPI staff would also benefit from a dedicated analytical tool or a dashboard displaying price indices at different levels of the aggregation hierarchy, which would be useful both for analytical purposes and for identifying irregular index behavior. Developing a new production system would be resource-intensive and would require additional IT and methodological capacity. As Statistics Estonia does not have a dedicated IT department, so such a decision would require planning and decision-making at a more strategic management level. Nevertheless, from a data-quality perspective, the development of a more integrated production system would be an important step forward.

34. Checks for ensuring data quality can vary depending on data sources. Because the Division 01 and 02 price indices rely heavily on scanner data from a few retail chains, it is crucial to perform initial checks as soon as the data are received, see also section 18. While volatility may signal potential errors in an index, repeated identical prices over long periods can be equally problematic and should also be examined.

35. Different data-quality indicators at both operational and strategic levels were discussed. Defined quality indicators should be limited in number, should be stable over time, and should be linked to risk, credibility and sustainability. Indicators that can be applied at both levels include the outlet response rate and share of imputed prices on monthly basis. An increased share of imputed prices over time should be treated as a red flag. Tracking errors in the CPI over time is also an important indicator, at operational level it is essential to record when, why, and how each error was resolved. This information will be very useful going forward, helping to ensure consistent treatment and improving data quality.

36. Good sampling routines are an important part of data-quality assurance. The price index of package holidays was used as an example of an area with high volatility. Although the market itself is volatile, the volatility of the sample could likely be reduced by increasing the sample size. CPI sampling is often based on purposive techniques, but it is recommended to complement this with more statistical methods, for instance, by using the coefficient of variance to estimate an appropriate sample size based on confidence intervals and a desired level of precision.

37. A key aspect is to distinguish expected volatility from abnormal behavior, and to do this systematically and routinely, not ad hoc. One kind of monitoring tool could be to use seasonal adjustment tools like X12-13 ARIMA SEATS to form an expected price development path and compare it to actual observed price development which can be used to reveal unexpected price movement. This can be both a useful quality-assurance tool, but also a tool for analysis in the CPI production.

38. A practical example of securing data quality in index compilation, particularly given that the methodology is also new internationally, is to build experimental series of the GEKS-Törnqvist

index based on different splicing methods. Comparing these test series with official indices could help build confidence in the results and improve understanding of the series.

39. Finally, internal documentation and metadata information is very important aspect of securing good CPI data quality. The mission underlined the importance of having operative internal documentation, especially within a team with limited experience.

Recommended Actions:

- Start discussing and planning the buildup of a new production system
- Make awareness of key data indicators
- Incorporate statistical methods for sample selection in the design phase of the indices
- Test seasonal adjustment measures to predict expected price changes to be used in analysis and a way of checking indices before dissemination

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