
Statistics Code of Practice for the European Neighbourhood South countries (Based on the ESCoP)

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Institutional environment

Institutional and organisational factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of a National Statistical Institute or other producers of official statistics developing, producing and disseminating official statistics. The relevant issues are professional independence, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity.

Principle 1: Professional Independence. Professional independence of the National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of official statistics.

Indicators

Indicator 1.1: The independence of the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat from political and other external interference in developing, producing and disseminating statistics is specified in law and assured for other producers of official statistics.

Indicator 1.2: The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other producers of official statistics have sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. They are of the highest professional calibre.

Indicator 1.3: The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other producers of official statistics have responsibility for ensuring that statistics are planned, developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner.

Indicator 1.4: The heads of the National Statistical Institutes and of Eurostat and, where appropriate, the heads of other producers of official statistics have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.

Indicator 1.5: The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.

Indicator 1.6: Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.

Indicator 1.7: The National Statistical Institute and Eurostat and, where appropriate, other producers of official statistics, comment publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of statistics as far as considered suitable.

Indicator 1.8: The appointment of the heads of the National Statistical Institutes and Eurostat and, where appropriate, of other producers of official statistics, is based on professional competence only. The reasons on the basis of which the incumbency can be terminated are specified in the legal framework. These cannot include reasons compromising professional or scientific independence.

Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection. The National Statistical Institutes and other producers of official statistics have a clear legal mandate to collect information for official statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for official statistical purposes at the request of the National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics.

Indicators

Indicator 2.1: The mandate of the National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics to collect information for the development, production and dissemination of Official Statistics is specified in law.

Indicator 2.2: The National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics are allowed by law to use administrative data for statistical purposes.

Indicator 2.3: On the basis of a legal act, the National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics may compel response to statistical surveys.

Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources. The resources available to the National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics are sufficient to meet official statistics requirements.

Indicators

Indicator 3.1: Staff, financial, and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current statistical needs.

Indicator 3.2: The scope, detail and cost of statistics are commensurate with needs.

Indicator 3.3: Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new statistics against their cost.

Indicator 3.4: Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.

Principle 4: Commitment to Quality. The National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics are committed to quality. They systematically and regularly identify strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and product quality.

Indicators

Indicator 4.1: Quality policy is defined and made available to the public. An organizational structure and tools are in place to deal with quality management.

Indicator 4.2: Procedures are in place to plan and monitor the quality of the statistical production and dissemination processes.

Indicator 4.3: Product quality is regularly monitored, assessed with regard to possible trade-offs, and reported according to the quality criteria for official statistics.

Indicator 4.4: There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using also external experts where appropriate.

Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality. The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes are absolutely guaranteed.

Indicators

Indicator 5.1: Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.

Indicator 5.2: Staff signs legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.

Indicator 5.3: Penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality.

Indicator 5.4: Guidelines, instructions and training are provided to staff on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. The confidentiality policy is made known to the public.

Indicator 5.5: Physical, technological and organisational provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases.

Indicator 5.6: Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.

Principle 6: Impartiality and Objectivity. The National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics develop, produce and disseminate official statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.

Indicators

Indicator 6.1: Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.

Indicator 6.2: Choices of sources and statistical methods as well as decisions about the dissemination of statistics are informed by statistical considerations.

Indicator 6.3: Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.

Indicator 6.4: Information on the methods and procedures used is publicly available.

Indicator 6.5: Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.

Indicator 6.6: Advance notice is given on major revisions or changes in methodologies.

Indicator 6.7: All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.

Indicator 6.8: Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan.

Statistical Processes

European and other international standards, guidelines and good practices are fully observed in the processes used by the National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics to organise, collect, process and disseminate official statistics. The credibility of the statistics is enhanced by a reputation for good management and efficiency. The relevant aspects are sound methodology, appropriate statistical procedures, non-excessive burden on respondents and cost effectiveness.

Principle 7: Sound Methodology. Sound methodology underpins quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.

Indicators

Indicator 7.1: The overall methodological framework used for official statistics follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices.

Indicator 7.2: Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics.

Indicator 7.3: The business register, the frame for population surveys and other registers managed by the National Statistical Institute are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to ensure high quality.

Indicator 7.4: Detailed concordance exists between national classifications systems and the corresponding international systems.

Indicator 7.5: Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited.

Indicator 7.6: National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics implement a policy of continuous vocational training for their staff.

Indicator 7.7: Co-operation with the scientific community is organised to improve methodology, the effectiveness of the methods implemented and to promote better tools when feasible.

Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures. Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, underpin quality statistics.

Indicators

Indicator 8.1: In the case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection.

Indicator 8.2: Survey designs, sample selections and estimation methods are well based and regularly reviewed and revised as required.

Indicator 8.3: Data collection, data entry, and coding are routinely monitored and revised as required.

Indicator 8.4: Appropriate editing and imputation methods are used and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required.

Indicator 8.5: Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.

Indicator 8.6: Agreements are made with owners of administrative data which set out their shared commitment to the use of these data for statistical purposes.

Indicator 8.7: National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics co-operate with owners of administrative data in assuring data quality.

Principle 9: Non-excessive Burden on Respondents. The reporting burden is proportionate to the needs of the users and is not excessive for respondents. The National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics monitor the response burden and set targets for its reduction over time.

Indicators

Indicator 9.1: The range and detail of official statistics demands is limited to what is absolutely necessary.

Indicator 9.2: The reporting burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations.

Indicator 9.3: The information sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used where possible to facilitate its return.

Indicator 9.4: Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information.

Indicator 9.5: Data sharing between the National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics is generalised in order to avoid multiplication of surveys.

Indicator 9.6: The National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics promote measures that enable the linking of data sources among them or with administrative data sources according to confidentiality rules in order to reduce reporting burden.

Principle 10: Cost Effectiveness. Resources are used effectively.

Indicators

Indicator 10.1: Internal and independent external measures monitor the National Statistical Institute's and other producers of official statistics use of resources.

Indicator 10.2: The productivity potential of information and communications technology is being optimised for data collection, processing and dissemination.

Indicator 10.3: Proactive efforts are made to improve the statistical potential of administrative data and to limit recourse to direct surveys.

Indicator 10.4: National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics promote and implement standardized solutions that increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Indicator 10.5: Sharing disseminated data, tools and expertise takes place among Eurostat, the National Statistical Institutes and other producers of official statistics in the ENP-South countries.

Statistical Output

Available statistics meet users' needs. Statistics comply with the international quality standards and address the needs of governments, research institutions, business concerns and the public generally, as well as European and international institutions. The important issues concern the extent to which the statistics are relevant, accurate and reliable, timely, coherent, comparable across regions and countries, and readily accessible by users.

Principle 11: Relevance. Official statistics meet the needs of users.

Indicators

Indicator 11.1: Processes are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and consider their emerging needs and priorities.

Indicator 11.2: Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme.

Indicator 11.3: User satisfaction is monitored on a regular basis and is systematically followed up.

Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability. Official statistics accurately and reliably portray reality.

Indicators

Indicator 12.1: Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are regularly assessed and validated.

Indicator 12.2: Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented according to the European and International standards.

Indicator 12.3: Revisions are regularly analysed in order to improve statistical processes.

Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality. Official statistics are released in a timely and punctual manner.

Indicators

Indicator 13.1: Timeliness meets European and other international release standards.

Indicator 13.2: A standard daily time for the release of statistics is made public.

Indicator 13.3: The periodicity of statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible.

Indicator 13.4: Divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set.

Indicator 13.5: Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate accuracy can be released when considered useful.

Principle 14: Coherence and Comparability. Official statistics are consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it is possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.

Indicators

Indicator 14.1: Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (i.e. arithmetic and accounting identities observed).

Indicator 14.2: Statistics are comparable over a reasonable period of time.

Indicator 14.3: Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources.

Indicator 14.4: Statistics from the different sources and of different periodicity are compared and reconciled.

Indicator 14.5: Cross-national comparability of the data is ensured within the ENP-South countries through periodical exchanges of data between the ENP-South countries and other statistical systems. Methodological studies are carried out in close co-operation between the ENP-South countries and Eurostat.

Principle 15: Accessibility and Clarity. Official statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form, released in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.

Indicators

Indicator 15.1: Statistics and the corresponding metadata are presented, and archived, in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.

Indicator 15.2: Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy.

Indicator 15.3: Tailor-made statistics are provided when feasible and the public is informed.

Indicator 15.4: Access to microdata is allowed for research purposes and is subject to specific rules or protocols, including confidentiality rules.

Indicator 15.5: Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems.

Indicator 15.6: Users are kept informed about the methodology of statistical processes including the use of administrative data.

Indicator 15.7: Users are kept informed about the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the quality criteria for official statistics.

Principle 16: Coordination and Cooperation. Coordination and cooperation in statistics contribute to the improvement of the quality of official statistics in the national statistical systems of the ENP-South countries.

Indicators

Indicator 16.1: National mechanisms exist for coordinating the development, production and dissemination of official statistics and ensuring their quality.

Indicator 16.2: When official statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for administrative purposes are a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes.

Indicator 16.3: The National Statistical Institute and other producers of official statistics are involved in the design of administrative data in order to make administrative data more suitable for statistical purposes.