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Code of Practice for official statistics



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Contents

Page

Foreword	iv
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 Abbreviated terms	2
5 Basic criteria for official statistics	2
6 Principles	3
6.1 Institutional environment	3
6.1.1 General	3
6.1.2 Professional independence	3
6.1.3 Mandate for data collection	4
6.1.4 Adequacy of resources	4
6.1.5 Quality assurance	4
6.1.6 Statistical confidentiality	5
6.1.7 Impartiality and objectivity	6
6.2 Statistical processes	6
6.2.1 General	6
6.2.2 Sound methodology	6
6.2.3 Burden on the respondents	7
6.2.4 Cost effectiveness	7
6.3 Statistical output	7
6.3.1 General	7
6.3.2 Relevance	7
6.3.3 Accuracy and reliability	8
6.3.4 Timeliness and punctuality	8
6.3.5 Coherence and comparability	8
6.3.6 Accessibility and availability	8
7 Protocols	9
7.1 User engagement	9
7.2 Release practices	10
7.3 Use of administrative sources for statistical purposes	10
Bibliography	12

Foreword

Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) is a parastatal under the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry established under Cap 327, of the Laws of Uganda. UNBS is mandated to co-ordinate the elaboration of standards and is

- (a) a member of International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO),
- (b) a contact point for the WHO/FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission on Food Standards, and
- (c) the National Enquiry Point on TBT/SPS Agreements of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The work of preparing Uganda Standards is carried out through Technical Committees. A Technical Committee is established to deliberate on standards in a given field or area and consists of representatives of consumers, traders, academicians, manufacturers, government and other stakeholders.

Draft Uganda Standards adopted by the Technical Committee are widely circulated to stakeholders and the general public for comments. The committee reviews the comments before recommending the draft standards for approval and declaration as Uganda Standards by the National Standards Council.

Committee membership

The following organisations were represented on the Technical Committee on Applied Statistical Methods, UNBS/TC 17, during the development of this standard:

- Bank of Uganda
- Ministry of Education & Sports
- Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development
- Ministry of Health
- School of Statistics & Applied Economics, Makerere University
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics
- Uganda National Bureau of Standards
- Uganda National Council for Science & Technology
- Uganda Revenue Authority

Introduction

Official statistics are fundamental to good governance, delivery of public services and decision-making in all sectors of society. They provide Parliament and the public with a window on society and the economy, and on the work and performance of government. Observance of a common Code of Practice by all the public bodies that produce official statistics is central to maintaining a unified statistical service that meets the needs of government and society and is both trustworthy and trusted official statistics are defined in the national statistical legislation.

This Code of Practice has been developed to improve trust and confidence in the quality of statistics produced and disseminated in the National Statistical System (NSS). This Code, which is consistent with the United Nations *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*, is designed to support the assessment of compliance by Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

Implementation of this Code of Practice is spearheaded by UBOS in collaboration with other MDAs in line with the prevailing national statistical legislation. The Head of National Statistics Office in collaboration with the coordination and assessment team offers supplementary guidance to assist agencies that produce official statistics. The Head of National Statistics Office is a statutory office holder with responsibilities underlined in the national statistical legislation.

Code of Practice for official statistics

1 Scope

This Code of Practice covers the principles and protocols for the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)

Compendium of Statistical Concepts and definitions

National Statistical Meta Data Dictionary

Statistical Quality Assessment Framework for Uganda

System of National Accounts (SNA)

US 943, *Guidelines for production of quality statistics*

US ISO 3534-1, *Statistics — Vocabulary and symbols*

US ISO 3534-2, *Statistics — Vocabulary and symbols Part 2: Applied statistics*

US ISO 3534-3, *Statistics — Vocabulary and symbols Part 3: Design of experiments*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this standard, the terms and definitions given in US ISO 3534-1, US ISO 3534-2 and US ISO 3534-3, *Compendium of Statistical Concepts* and *National Statistical Meta Data Dictionary* and the following apply.

3.1

production, management and dissemination of official statistics

entire statistical process from the identification of needs, to the decision to collect or compile data, through to providing advice to the user

3.2

Head of National statistics office

head of national statistics office

3.3 official statistics
statistics produced by an agency in the NSS, which the Head of the National Statistical Office designates or certifies in line with the national statistical legislation

3.4 relevant Head of statistics functions
managers of MDAs under which the statistical function is nurtured

3.5 statistical report
any statistical output, including any associated commentary and metadata

4 Abbreviated terms

COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose
CPC	Central Product Classification
DUS	Draft Uganda Standard
GFS	Government Finance Statistics
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
HS	Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System
ICD	International classification of disease
ICF	International classification of Functioning Disability and Health
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ISCO	International standard classification of Occupation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NSS	National Statistical System
SNA	System of National Accounts
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of Standards
UK	United Kingdom
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

5 Basic criteria for official statistics

5.1 Official statistics are produced by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA) in the National Statistical System (NSS).

5.2 The MDA is responsible for the content of the statistics, and for the correctness of the data, thus guaranteeing continuity in the production of the statistics.

5.3 The statistics from the publishing MDA is subject to a comprehensive quality assessment process based on the Statistical Quality Assessment Framework for Uganda, as a pre-requisite for certification of official statistics by the Head of the National Statistics Office.

5.4 Official statistics contain an up-to-date quality description approved by the Head of the National Statistics Office.

6 Principles

6.1 Institutional environment

6.1.1 General

Institutional and organisational factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of MDAs producing, managing and disseminating official statistics. The relevant issues are

- professional independence,
- mandate for data collection,
- adequacy of resources,
- quality assurance,
- statistical confidentiality,
- impartiality and
- objectivity.

6.1.2 Professional independence

The professional independence of MDAs from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of official statistics in Uganda. The practices below shall be adhered to:

- a) the independence of the MDA from political and other external interference in producing and disseminating official statistics as specified in the law;
- b) the Head of National Statistics Office has the responsibility for ensuring that official statistics are produced and disseminated in an independent manner;
- c) the Head of National Statistics Office has sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior-level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. He/she should be of the highest professional calibre;
- d) the Head of National Statistics Office has the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of official statistical releases;
- e) the statistical work programmes shall be published, and periodic reports to describe progress made. Statistical releases shall be clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements;

- f) the Head of National Statistics Office, where appropriate, shall comment publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of official statistics;
- g) MDAs shall follow all statutory obligations and internationally endorsed guidelines governing production, management and dissemination of official statistics; and
- h) MDAs shall inform the Head of National Statistics Office about complaints that relate to professional integrity, quality or standards, whether or not they can be resolved directly.

6.1.3 Mandate for data collection

MDAs shall have a clear legal mandate to collect information for official statistical purposes. Administrative units, enterprises, households, and individuals may be compelled by law to allow access to or provide data for statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities. The following practices shall be adhered to.

- a) the mandate to collect information for the production and dissemination of official statistics as specified in the law;
- b) MDAs are allowed by statistical legislation to use administrative records for statistical purposes; and
- c) on the basis of a legal act, MDAs may compel response to statistical surveys.

6.1.4 Adequacy of resources

The resources made available for statistical activities shall be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and shall be used efficiently and effectively. To ensure adequacy of resources, the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) ensure that the MDA has the staff, financial and computing resources to produce, manage and disseminate official statistics to the standards of this Code;
- b) include specific resources for user consultation in budgets;
- c) ensure that records are maintained showing the relationship between the statistical planning process, the work programme, the allocation of resources, and the outcomes;
- d) monitor expenditure against work programmes and demonstrate effective stewardship of resources allocated to statistical work;
- e) seek to balance quality (for example, accuracy and timeliness) against costs (including both costs to government and data suppliers), taking into account the expected uses of the statistics;
- f) ensure that appropriately skilled people are employed in the statistical production process. Use an appropriate competence framework to set the requirements of statistical posts and the development needs of staff, and support staff in developing their statistical, management and subject area knowledge; and
- g) where administrative sources are used for statistical purposes, follow the practices set out in 6.3.

6.1.5 Quality assurance

Data producers shall commit themselves to provide quality data/information. To ensure the quality assurance of the data produced, the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) regularly assessment of product quality is according to the NSS quality dimensions. The dimensions of quality are
 - relevance,

- accuracy,
 - timeliness,
 - accessibility,
 - interpretability,
 - reliability
 - comparability and coherence,
 - methodological soundness and
 - integrity;
- b) availability of processes to assess the quality of the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics;
 - c) availability of processes to deal with quality considerations, including trade-offs within quality, and to guide planning for existing and emerging surveys;
 - d) adoption of quality assurance procedures, including the consideration of each statistical product against users' requirements, and of their coherence with other statistical products.
 - e) documentation and publication of quality standards and guidelines and well trained staff .
 - f) regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using external experts where appropriate; and
 - g) achievement of continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews or releasing statistical work in progress such as experimental statistics.

6.1.6 Statistical confidentiality

Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only. To achieve statistical confidentiality, the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) ensure that official statistics do not reveal the identity of an individual or organisation, or any private information relating to them, taking into account other relevant sources of information;
- b) keep confidential information secure. Only permit its use by trained staffs who have signed a declaration covering their obligations under this Code;
- c) inform respondents for statistical surveys and censuses on how confidentiality will be protected;
- d) ensure that arrangements for confidentiality protection are sufficient to protect the privacy of individual information, but not so restrictive as to limit unduly the practical utility of official statistics. Publish details of such arrangements;
- e) seek prior authorisation from the Head of National Statistics Office for any exceptions, required by law or thought to be in public interest, to the principle of confidentiality protection. Publish details of such authorisations; and
- f) prepare written confidentiality protection agreements where confidential statistical records are exchanged for statistical purposes with a third party. Keep an operational record to detail the manner and purpose of the processing.

6.1.7 Impartiality and objectivity

Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, shall be managed impartially and objectively and to achieve this objective, the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) publish statistical reports in an orderly manner, in accordance with the standards for reports;
- b) present statistics impartially and objectively;
- c) make official statistics equally available to all, subject to statutory provisions for pre-release access;
- d) announce changes to methods or classifications well in advance of the release of the changed statistics;
- e) publish details of any exemption from the practices of the Code, as agreed by UBOS;
- f) publish a Revisions' Policy for statistics that are subject to scheduled revisions. Provide a statement explaining the nature and extent of revisions at the same time that they are released;
- g) correct errors discovered in statistical reports, and alert stakeholders, promptly;
- h) release all regular statistical reports on the internet without a charge to the user; and
- i) for any supplementary statistical services for which a charge is made, adopt clear pricing policies that comply with legislation and relevant policy.

6.2 Statistical processes

6.2.1 General

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

6.2.2 Sound methodology

Sound methodology is a pre-requisite of quality statistics and this requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise. Statistical methods shall be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality shall be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices. The following practices shall be adhered to in ensuring sound methodology:

- a) promote comparability within Uganda and internationally by, for example, adopting common standards, concepts, sampling frames, questions, definitions, statistical units and classifications (including common geographic referencing and coding standards). In addition, make the reasons for any deviations from standard models publicly available;
- b) where time series are revised or changes are made to methods or coverage, produce consistent historical data where possible;
- c) follow national and other international standards, guidelines and best practices in the overall methodological framework of the statistical authority;
- d) put in place procedures to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the NSS;
- e) regularly update sampling frames for surveys, if necessary, to ensure quality; and

- f) co-operate with subject matter experts to regularly improve methodology.

6.2.3 Burden on the respondents

The respondent burden should be proportionate to the needs of the users. The statistical authority monitors the response burden and sets targets for its reduction over time. The following practices shall be adhered to in determining the burden on the respondent:

- a) the range and detail of official statistics demands shall be limited to what is absolutely necessary;
- b) the reporting burden shall spread as widely as possible over survey populations through appropriate sampling techniques;
- c) the information sought from businesses shall, as far as possible, be readily available from their accounts and electronic means shall be used where possible to facilitate its return;
- d) best estimates and approximations shall be accepted when exact details are not readily available;
- e) administrative sources shall be used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information;
- f) data sharing within and between MDAs shall be encouraged in order to minimise duplication of efforts; and
- g) related data collection activities within and between MDAs shall be harmonised and where possible joint surveys shall be conducted.

6.2.4 Cost effectiveness

In determining the cost-effectiveness of statistical processes, the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) internal and independent external measures to monitor the MDAs' use of resources shall be in place;
- b) manual operations (for example, data capture, coding and validation) shall be automated to the extent possible;
- c) productivity potential of information and communications technology shall be optimised for data collection, processing and dissemination; and
- d) proactive efforts shall be made to improve the statistical potential of administrative records and avoid costly direct surveys.

6.3 Statistical output

6.3.1 General

The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public. 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.

6.3.2 Relevance

In determining the relevance of statistics, the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) engage effectively with users of statistics to maximize public value, in accordance with 6.1;
- b) identify and document the needs of users of official statistics and the types of decisions they inform;

- c) document users' experiences of statistical services provided, data quality, and the format and timing of statistical reports; and
- d) conduct user satisfaction surveys periodically.

6.3.3 Accuracy and reliability

In determining the accuracy and reliability of statistics, the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) assess and validate source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs;
- b) measure and systematically document sampling and non-sampling errors; and
- c) study and analyse revisions routinely and use the revisions internally to inform statistical processes.

6.3.4 Timeliness and punctuality

In determining timeliness and punctuality of statistics, the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) timeliness shall meet the national and international dissemination standards;
- b) a standard daily time shall be set for the release of high frequency official statistics;
- c) periodicity of official statistics shall consider user requirements as much as possible;
- d) any divergence from the dissemination time schedule shall be publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set; and
- e) preliminary results of acceptable aggregate quality may be disseminated when considered useful.

6.3.5 Coherence and comparability

Official statistics should be consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it should be possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources. In this regard, the following practices should be adhered to:

- a) statistics shall be internally coherent and consistent (for example, arithmetic and accounting identities observed);
- b) statistics shall be reconcilable over a reasonable period of time;
- c) statistics shall be compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources;
- d) statistics from the different surveys and sources shall be comparable and reconcilable; and
- e) ensure cross-national statistical comparability through periodical exchanges between the NSS.

6.3.6 Accessibility and availability

Official statistics, accompanied by complete commentary, shall be readily accessible to all users and the following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) provide information on the quality and reliability of statistics in relation to the range of potential uses, and on methods, procedures, and classifications;
- b) prepare and disseminate commentary and analysis that aid interpretation, and provide factual information about the policy or operational context of official statistics;

- c) present statistics in formats that facilitate analysis, interpretation, meaningful comparisons and reuse;
- d) use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy for dissemination services;
- e) allow access to micro-data for research purposes. This access is subject to strict protocols;
- f) document metadata according to shared and agreed formats;
- g) inform users on the methodology of statistical processes and the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the NSS quality criteria;
- h) implement controls to ensure that individuals do not abuse the trust placed in them for personal gain;
- i) promote a culture within which statistical experts in government can comment publicly on statistical issues, including the misuse of official statistics;
- j) develop and publicise a client service charter; and
- k) make data and statistics available in as much detail as is reliable and practical, within the confines of the relevant confidentiality agreements.

7 Protocols

7.1 User engagement

Effective user engagement is fundamental in ensuring trust in the statistics generated and securing maximum public value. This protocol draws together the relevant practices highlighted in the Code and expands on the requirements in relation to consultation with key stakeholders. The following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) define and document the process of user engagement;
- b) make users aware of how they can find the information they need;
- c) take account of users' views on the presentation of statistics, and associated commentary, datasets and metadata;
- d) provide users with information about the quality of statistics, including any statistical biases;
- e) involve users in the evaluation of experimental statistics;
- f) seek feedback from users on their experiences of the statistical service they receive, data quality, and the format and timing of outputs. Review the feedback systematically;
- g) respond to data requests from various users in a timely manner; and
- h) consult users before making changes that affect statistics (for example, to coverage, definitions, or methods) or publications. Consultations should be:
 - i. informed, by relevant central guidance on how consultations should be conducted; and by the views of user groups on the best means of obtaining views;
 - ii. efficient, by balancing the importance of the issue and the likely impact of users' views against the time and resources available, so as to obtain good value for money from the consultation process; by liaising and co-ordinating with other producers to avoid duplication of effort and to minimise burdens; and by exploiting different methods of consultation;

- iii. clear, by describing the consultation, and expressing the issues, as simply and concisely as possible; and by publishing the timetable for each consultation; and
- iv. responsive, by publishing the records of decisions and actions following a consultation, together with explanations for them; and by publishing individual responses, unless anonymity is requested.

7.2 Release practices

Statistical reports shall be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation. The following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) publish an annual timetable for statistical releases in advance;
- b) release of statistical reports shall comply with the advance release calendar schedule;
- c) release official statistics on a particular date and publish simultaneously online;
- d) ensure that all statistics included in the Annual Statistics Abstract are assessed for quality and cleared for release;
- e) plan press releases for regular and frequent statistical products twelve months in advance;
- f) inform stakeholders of any changes in the release dates and explain the reasons for the change. The relevant statistical Head of Department/Directorate/Division has the final decision and should not be influenced by any external or internal factors;
- g) share contacts of focal persons responsible for the respective statistical reports with the users to enable easier access and retrieval of information.
- h) ensure that no indication of the content of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the Head of the National Statistics Office immediately of any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances.
- i) ensure that no action is taken within the producer body, or public statement made, that might undermine confidence in the independence of the statistics when released.
- j) ensure that government statements issued alongside official statistics, and referring to, or based upon, them:
 - i. contain a prominent link to the statistical release and clearly refer to the source of the statistics;
 - ii. are labelled clearly as policy statements (or ministerial statements) and are readily distinguished from a statistical release; and
 - iii. meet basic professional standards (for example, statistics should be cited accurately, and charts should be drawn in an accurate and impartial way).

7.3 Use of administrative sources for statistical purposes

Administrative sources shall be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards. The following practices shall be adhered to:

- a) observe all statutory obligations and relevant guidelines for production of quality statistics in relation to confidentiality of data;

- b) use administrative data with clear definitions and concepts for statistical purposes;
- c) maximise opportunities for the use of administrative data, cross-analysis of sources, exchange and re-use of data, to avoid duplicating requests for information. Where possible, use common information technology and information management systems that facilitate the flow of information between producers of statistics;
- d) prepare, in consultation with the leadership of the Statistics Office, a Statement of Administrative Sources which identifies the following:
 - i. administrative systems currently used in the production of official statistics;
 - ii. procedures to be followed within the organisation to ensure that full account takes care of the implications for official statistics when changes to administrative systems are contemplated
 - iii. information on other administrative sources that are not currently used in the production of official statistics but have potential to be used;
 - iv. arrangements for providing statistical staff, whether inside the producer body or elsewhere, with access to administrative data for statistical purposes;
 - v. arrangements for auditing the quality of administrative data used for statistical purposes; and
 - vi. arrangements for ensuring the security of statistical processes that draw on administrative data.

Bibliography

- [1] Africa Statistics Charter
- [2] Central Product Classification (CPC)
- [3] Chart of Accounts
- [4] Code of Practice for the Production of Official Statistics UK. (2009)
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- [6] Government Finance Statistics (GFS) manual
- [7] Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS)
- [8] International classification of disease (ICD)
- [9] International classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF)
- [10] International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO)
- [11] International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC)
- [12] Standards and Guidelines for Reports
- [13] Standard International Trade Classification (SITC)
- [14] UN guidelines for conducting censuses.
- [15] UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

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