



# CODE<sub>of</sub> PRACTICE for OFFICIAL STATISTICS

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# STATISTICS MAURITIUS

## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics represents a set of principles and indicators of good practice intended to improve the quality, relevance and credibility of Official Statistics, and ensure that the statistics are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards and that they are well explained.

The Code of Practice was approved by the Statistics Board, as per Statistics Act 2000 (Amended), at its 19<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 17 May 2013. The Act stipulates, inter-alia, that the Director of Statistics shall

*“with the approval of the Board, publish a Code of Practice for Official Statistics which shall be based on the values of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the African Charter on Statistics, and any other internationally accepted principles relating to statistics;” and*

*“shall, at the request of the Board, assess and determine whether the Code of Practice for Official Statistics has been complied with in relation to any official statistics;”*

The Code of Practice shall be applied and respected by all producers of Official Statistics which must guarantee the standards of statistics produced and disseminated.



## PREAMBULE

- i. Official Statistics are fundamental to good government, to the delivery of public services and to 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.
- ii. Observance of a common Code of Practice by all producers of Official Statistics is central to maintaining a unified statistical service that meets the needs of government and society, and is both trustworthy and trusted.
- iii. The Statistics Act 2000 (Amended) requires Statistics Mauritius to publish a Code of Practice for Official Statistics and determine whether all Official Statistics are compliant with the Code.
- iv. “Official Statistics”, as defined in the Statistics Act are statistics produced by Statistics Mauritius, Bank of Mauritius, the Ministry responsible for the subject of health, and such other organization as approved by the Statistics Board.
- v. The Code is consistent with the *United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* and the *African Charter on Statistics*.
- vi. It is also consistent with the core values of integrity, selflessness, impartiality, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and justice as defined in the *Code of Ethics of the Civil Service*. In relation to statistical work, these are interpreted as follows:
  - **Integrity:** putting the public interest above organizational, political or personal interests
  - **Selflessness:** avoiding seeking personal gain or financial or other material benefits for one’s family or friends through one’s official position as a supplier of Official Statistics
  - **Impartiality:** acting solely according to the merits of the statistical evidence and in the interest of the public
  - **Objectivity:** using scientific methods to collect statistics and basing statistical advice on rigorous analysis of the evidence
  - **Accountability:** being responsible and accountable for all decisions and actions pertaining to statistical matters
  - **Openness:** being transparent about the use of statistical techniques and tools
  - **Honesty:** being truthful and open about the statistics and their interpretation
  - **Justice:** adhering to the principles of natural justice

vii. The Code contains 15 principles and, in relation to each, a list of associated indicators of best practices.

viii. The principles take into account factors influencing the production of high quality, relevant and timely statistical information. These can be viewed as three main components of the process.

- **Institutional and Organizational Environment**

- Principle 1: Professional Independence
- Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection
- Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources
- Principle 4: Quality Commitment
- Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality
- Principle 6: Impartiality and Objectivity

- **Statistical Processes**

- Principle 7: Sound Methodology
- Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures
- Principle 9: Non-Excessive Burden on Respondents
- Principle 10: Cost Effectiveness

- **Statistical Outputs**

- Principle 11: Relevance
- Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability
- Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality
- Principle 14: Coherence and Comparability
- Principle 15: Accessibility and Clarity

ix. The principles are intended to ensure that the range of official statistics meets the needs of users; that the statistics are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and that the statistics are well explained.

## PRINCIPLE 1: PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE

*The professional independence of statistical agencies from policy, regulatory and administrative departments and bodies as well as from private sector operators ensures the credibility of Official Statistics.*

- **Indicator 1:** The independence of the statistical authority from political and other external interference in producing and disseminating Official Statistics is specified in law.
- **Indicator 2:** The head of the statistical authority shall not be subject to the direction or control of any authority, except in matters of discipline.
- **Indicator 3:** The head of the statistical authority and other statistical agencies have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.
- **Indicator 4:** The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.
- **Indicator 5:** Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.
- **Indicator 6:** The statistical authority, when appropriate, may comment on statistical issues, including erroneous interpretations and misuses of Official Statistics.

*Outcome: Increased public trust and confidence in Official Statistics.*

## PRINCIPLE 2: MANDATE FOR DATA COLLECTION

*Statistical authorities must have a clear mandate to collect information for statistical purposes. Public sector agencies, enterprises and households, and the public at large are compelled by law to provide data for statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.*

- **Indicator 1:** The mandate of the statistical authority to collect information for the production and dissemination of Official Statistics is specified in law.
- **Indicator 2:** The statistical authority is allowed by law to have access to and use administrative records for statistical purposes.
- **Indicator 3:** The statistical authority may, by law, compel response to statistical surveys/censuses.

**Outcome:** Authority of statistical agencies recognised and better statistical reporting.



## PRINCIPLE 3: ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

*The resources made available to statistical authorities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and to enable producers to meet statistics needs at national, regional and international levels.*

- **Indicator 1:** Human resources, and financial and computing resources to produce, manage and disseminate Official Statistics to the standards of this Code, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet statistics needs.

*[Appropriately skilled people are employed in the statistical production process, using an appropriate competence framework to set the requirements of statistical posts and the development needs of staff.]*

*[Support is provided to staff in developing their statistical, management and subject area knowledge.]*

- **Indicator 2:** The scope, detail and cost of statistics produced and publicized are commensurate with needs.
- **Indicator 3:** Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new statistics against their cost.

**Outcome:** Users' statistics needs in terms of quality, relevance and timeliness met.



## PRINCIPLE 4: QUALITY COMMITMENT

*All producers of Official Statistics commit themselves to work and co-operate according to this Code of Practice.*

- **Indicator 1:** Product quality is regularly monitored according to a National Quality Assessment Framework.
- **Indicator 2:** Procedures are in place to monitor the quality of the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics from censuses, surveys and administrative sources.
- **Indicator 3:** Procedures are in place to deal with quality considerations, including tradeoffs within quality, and to guide planning for existing and emerging surveys.
- **Indicator 4:** Quality assurance guidelines are documented and staff are well trained in quality management. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.
- **Indicator 5:** There are regular and thorough reviews of the key statistical outputs using external experts where appropriate.
- **Indicator 6:** Users are informed about the quality of statistical outputs, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors, and other aspects of quality.

*Outcome: Professionalism of statistical agencies recognized and credibility enhanced.*

## PRINCIPLE 5: STATISTICAL CONFIDENTIALITY

*The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, public agencies, and other respondents), the confidentiality of information they provide and its use for statistical purposes must be guaranteed.*

- **Indicator 1:** Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.
- **Indicator 2:** Staff of statistical authorities signs legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.
- **Indicator 3:** Penalties are prescribed for any breaches of statistical confidentiality.
- **Indicator 4:** Instructions and guidelines are provided on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.
- **Indicator 5:** Physical provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases. These are made known to the public.
- **Indicator 6:** Strict protocols are in place for external users accessing statistical micro data for research purposes.
- **Indicator 7:** 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.

*Outcome: Increased public confidence and better reporting to statistical censuses and surveys.*

## PRINCIPLE 6: IMPARTIALITY AND OBJECTIVITY

*Statistical authorities must produce and disseminate statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.*

- **Indicator 1:** Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations. Choices of sources and statistical techniques are informed by statistical considerations.
- **Indicator 2:** Statistical releases are objective and nonpartisan.
- **Indicator 3:** Statistical release dates are according to a pre-announced release calendar. All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time; any privileged pre-release access is publicized.
- **Indicator 4:** A protocol on release procedures is publicized.
- **Indicator 5:** Changes to methods or classifications are announced well in advance of the release of the changed statistics.
- **Indicator 6:** Errors found in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicized.
- **Indicator 7:** A revision policy for those outputs that are subject to scheduled revisions is published. Statements explaining the nature and extent of revisions are provided at the same time that they are released.

*Outcome: Integrity and credibility of Official Statistics enhanced.*

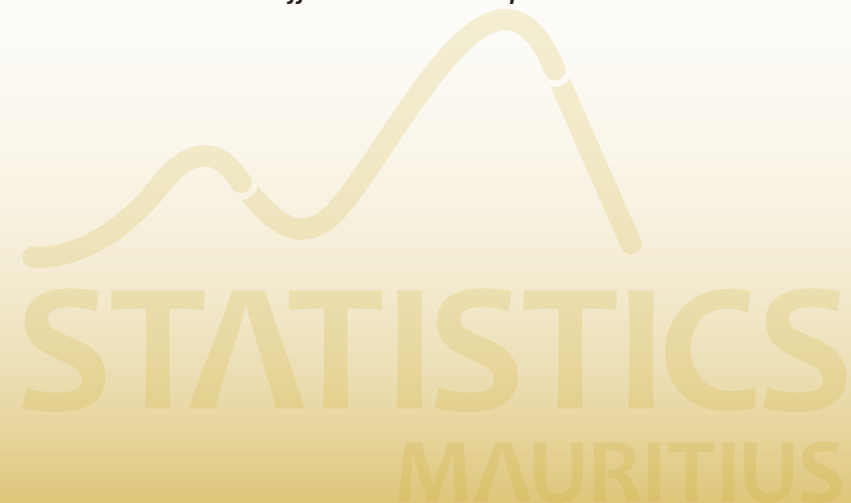


## PRINCIPLE 7: SOUND METHODOLOGY

*Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognized best practices, and be fully documented.*

- **Indicator 1:** The methodological framework of the statistical authority follows latest international standards, guidelines and good practices.
- **Indicator 2:** Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority.
- **Indicator 3:** The business register and the frame for population surveys are regularly evaluated and adjusted in order to ensure high quality.
- **Indicator 4:** Detailed concordance exists between national and international classifications.
- **Indicator 5:** Staff attend relevant training courses and conferences, and interact with colleagues at international level in order to learn from best practices and to improve their expertise.
- **Indicator 6:** Benchmarking with international best practices is regularly conducted, and co-operation with the international community to improve methodology is organized.

*Outcome: Trust in Official Statistics and public value secured.*



## PRINCIPLE 8: APPROPRIATE STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

*Appropriate statistical procedures implemented from data collection to data validation must underpin quality statistics.*

- **Indicator 1:** Appropriate tools in place to assess the quality of the potential data sources and to guide their selection for use. Where statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for the administrative purpose must be a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes.
- **Indicator 2:** In case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection.
- **Indicator 3:** Survey designs, sample selections, and sample weights are well based and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required. These are documented in a standard format.
- **Indicator 4:** Field operations, data entry, and coding instructions manuals are made available; the operations are routinely monitored and manuals revised as required.
- **Indicator 5:** Appropriate editing and imputation computer systems are used and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required, and documented.
- **Indicator 6:** Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.

*Outcome: Trust and confidence in Official Statistics enhanced.*

## PRINCIPLE 9: NON-EXCESSIVE BURDEN ON RESPONDENTS

*The statistical authority monitors the response burden and sets targets for its reduction over time. The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.*

- **Indicator 1:** The range and detail of demands in statistics is limited to what is absolutely necessary.
- **Indicator 2:** The reporting burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations through appropriate sampling techniques.
- **Indicator 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 4:** Procedures in place within statistical authorities and the national statistical system to streamline and harmonize business and household surveys to avoid duplication.
- **Indicator 5:** Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information.
- **Indicator 6:** Data sharing within statistical authorities is adopted in order to avoid multiplication of surveys.
- **Indicator 7:** Procedures are in place to analyze the costs of proposed new data requirements to data suppliers against the potential benefits.

*Outcome: Harmonized and cost-effective data collection system in place, and cooperation of data providers enhanced.*



## PRINCIPLE 10: COST EFFECTIVENESS

**Resources must be effectively used.**

- **Indicator 1:** Internal and independent external measures monitor the statistical authority's use of resources.
- **Indicator 2:** Routine clerical operations (e.g. data capture, coding, and validation) are automated to the extent possible.
- **Indicator 3:** The productivity potential of information and communications technology is optimized for data collection, processing and dissemination.
- **Indicator 4:** Proactive efforts are made to improve the statistical potentials of administrative data to avoid duplicating and costly data collection.

*[Where possible, use of common information technology and information management systems that facilitate the flow of information between producers of statistics.]*

- **Indicator 5:** Relationship between the statistical planning processes, work programmes, allocation of resources, and outcomes assessed.

*[Records are maintained showing the relationship between the statistical planning process, the work programme, the allocation of resources, and the outcomes.]*

- **Indicator 6:** Procedures exist to monitor expenditure against work programmes and demonstrate effective stewardship of resources allocated to statistical work, to assess the continuing need for all statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.

**Outcome: More cost effective statistics that respond to user needs.**

## PRINCIPLE 11: RELEVANCE

**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.**

- **Indicator 1:** Processes are in place to monitor the relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting users' needs.
- **Indicator 2:** Processes are in place to consult users on their emerging needs and priorities.
- **Indicator 3:** Priority needs are met and reflected in the work programme of the statistical authority.
- **Indicator 4:** User satisfaction surveys are undertaken periodically and results publicized. Feedbacks from users are reviewed systematically.

**Outcome: Better design and evaluation of public and private policies and programmes, and better development progress.**

## PRINCIPLE 12: ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY

*Official Statistics must accurately and reliably reflect reality.*

- **Indicator 1:** Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are evaluated against existing information, and validated.
- **Indicator 2:** Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented.
- **Indicator 3:** Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes.

*Outcome: Confidence and trust in Official Statistics strengthened.*



## PRINCIPLE 13: TIMELINESS AND PUNCTUALITY

*Official Statistics must be disseminated in a timely and punctual manner.*

- **Indicator 1:** Timeliness meets the highest international dissemination standards.
- **Indicator 2:** A standard daily time is set for the release of the statistics.
- **Indicator 3:** Periodicity of Official Statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible.
- **Indicator 4:** Any divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicized in advance, explained and a new release date set.
- **Indicator 5:** Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate quality (balancing timeliness and quality) can be disseminated when considered useful.

*Outcome: More effective and timely policies, and better development progress.*



## PRINCIPLE 14: COHERENCE AND COMPARABILITY

*Official Statistics should be consistent internally and over time, and comparable internationally. It should be possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.*

- **Indicator 1:** Statistics are internally coherent and consistent.
- **Indicator 2:** Statistics are coherent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time (back cast series available whenever there are changes in concepts, methods and classifications).
- **Indicator 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 4:** Statistics from the different surveys and sources are compared and reconciled.
- **Indicator 5:** International comparability of the data is ensured through adoption of international concepts, definitions, classifications, terminologies and scientific principles.

*Outcome: Better understanding of social, economic and environmental phenomena.*

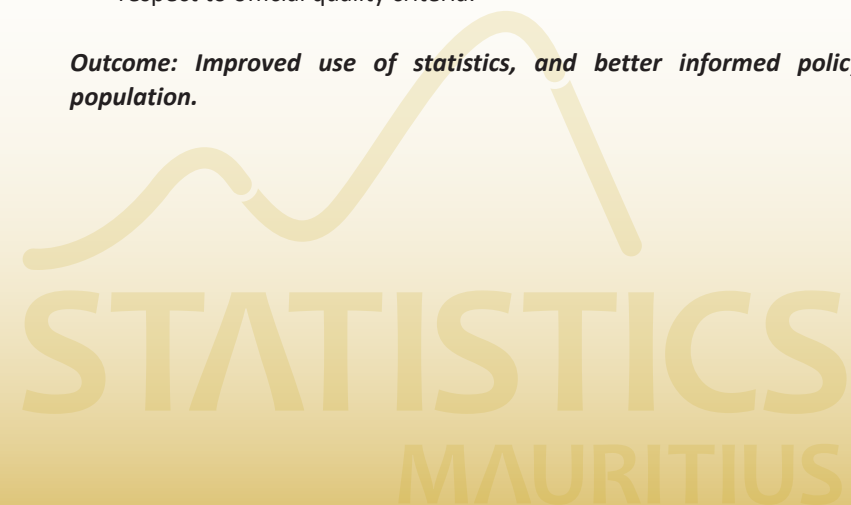


## PRINCIPLE 15: ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY

*Official Statistics should be presented in a clear and understandable form, disseminated in a practical and suitable manner, and be available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.*

- **Indicator 1:** Statistics are presented in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons. This includes the adoption of standard formats for the presentation of statistics in graphs, tables and maps that enhance clarity, interpretability and consistency.
- **Indicator 2:** Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy; and are free of charge.
- **Indicator 3:** For any statistical services for which a charge is made, clear pricing policies that comply with legislation and relevant policy are adopted and publicized.
- **Indicator 4:** Access to micro-data is allowed for research purposes. This access is subject to strict protocols that are publicized.
- **Indicator 5:** Metadata are documented according to standardized metadata systems and are publicized.
- **Indicator 6:** Users are kept informed of the methodology and procedures used (concepts, classifications and methods) and the quality of statistical outputs with respect to official quality criteria.

*Outcome: Improved use of statistics, and better informed policy makers and population.*





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