



DELINEATION OF A NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM (NSS)

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Content of the Presentation

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Who composes the NSS?

- The National Statistical Institute (NSI) and all bodies at national and regional level that are subordinated to the NSI
- Other governmental units or state bodies that regularly produce and disseminate official statistics under their responsibility as one of their tasks, but not as their core task (ONP = other national producers, equals ONA = other national authorities in the global assessments)

Composition of NSS (ctd.)

- Statistical offices at regional level that are not subordinated to the NSI (e.g. in federally organised countries)
- Advisory and decision-making bodies without production functions that are specific to the NSS (such as Statistical Council)

Why does the system boundary matter?

Because only within the NSS all principles of the CoP are applicable, notably:

- ❖ Professional independence (from anybody outside the NSS)
- ❖ Impartiality
- ❖ Confidentiality of individual data
- ❖ Exclusive use for statistical purposes

Why boundary matters (ctd.)

- Once crossing the boundary to the NSS, all data about individual natural or legal persons can only be used for statistical purposes (official statistics and statistical services)
- Neither can individual data, whatever their origin, be forwarded to anybody outside the NSS for non-statistical purposes

Why boundary matters (ctd.)

- Statistical legislation and the CoP are fully applicable to data within the NSS (whether imported from outside or directly generated within the NSS through statistical surveys)
- Importing individual data to the NSS should be easy, as well as exchange of data within the NSS, whereas forwarding individual data in the other direction is authorised only under strict conditions

What is official statistics (OS)?

- In many countries, OS used to be any statistical information published by a government unit or other state body, as well as all types of systematic data collection and processing by such authorities necessary to produce the published statistical information

This wide OS definition is outdated

Official statistics (ctd.)

- Today, the definition of OS at national level has two components:
 - ❖ Results of OS: *authoritative* quantitative information at the aggregate level about *relevant social, economic, demographic and environmental phenomena* for a *relevant universe in the country X and its regions*, which are developed, produced and regularly disseminated *in full compliance with the principles of official statistics* and the other provisions of the legislation about OS

Official statistics (ctd.)

- ❖ Activities of OS: activities related to developing, producing and disseminating results of OS, or to the management and development of the NSS, which are carried out or mandated by a body of the NSS
- ❖ For results and activities of OS, the complete responsibility is with the designated producer of the NSS
- ❖ Some countries use other terms (national statistics), or two terms to distinguish a narrow (OS as understood here) and a wider (traditional) concept

What is not OS?

- If carried out by the NSI or an ONP
 - Statistical services: aggregation or other compilation of data collected through OS activities, following definitions and methods not determined by statisticians, but by a specific user (outside the NSS) or for a specific use (like allocation of resources or measure of performance)

Responsibility of the NSS is only partial

- Ad hoc studies or analyses for a specific problem at a specific moment, experimental and research activities
- Statistics for management purposes

Full responsibility of the producer, but not all OS principles are applicable

What is not OS (ctd.)?

- All statistics produced by state bodies that are not part of the NSS (sometimes erroneously labelled *administrative statistics*)

For users, results of OS should be perceivable as clearly separate from other statistical products, implying a quality label that all principles of OS are fully respected

For concepts in such other statistical products that are different from those of OS, a terminology has to be used that is clearly distinct from terms used with results of OS

Who qualifies as ONP?

- Governmental units or other state bodies that demonstrate ability and willingness to follow all principles of the CoP
- Has to be periodically assessed by the NSI
- Main criteria:
 - In producing their statistics, do they use legal/administrative concepts only, or do they make an attempt to best approximate statistical standards and definitions?

Who qualifies as ONP (ctd.)

- Do they have a strict organisational separation between processing individual data for administrative or evidence purposes directed at the individual unit, and for statistical processing?
- Do they accept that the statistical unit is professionally independent from the hierarchy concerning methods and issues of dissemination?

Who qualifies as ONP (ctd.)

- Do they accept that statistical products have to be impartial and be issued separately from political statements?
- Do they accept simultaneous release to all users?

Only the statistical unit of an ONP is part of the NSS, not the rest of the body to which it belongs

It has to be clear at any moment who is inside the NSS boundary, and who is outside

Statistical and non-statistical legislation

- Legislation about OS is in the first case addressed to actors that are part of the NSS
- The NSI is the custodian of the OS principles and of the statistical legislation
- With respect to statistical legislation, government units that are not ONPs are mainly concerned by the *obligation* to allow a designated producer in the NSS (normally the NSI) access to their administrative data for statistical purposes

Statistical and non-statistical legislation (ctd.)

- Legislation about OS, including statistical programmes, can never be the legal basis for primary data collection for administrative purposes, only for the secondary use of such data for statistics
- The NSI as the only national organisation whose core task is statistics should not be made responsible for non-statistical tasks (e.g. managing administrative registers)

Items for discussion

- Traditionally, many holders of administrative data in CIS countries are automatically considered ONPs and covered e.g. by statistical programmes. What have the NSIs done (and plan to do) in order to identify the true ONPs, or in more general terms, to move from a wide concept of OS to a narrower one?
- What kind of resistance have you experienced from those that do not qualify as ONP? How did you overcome this resistance?

Items for discussion (ctd.)

- In cases where the NSI transforms administrative data obtained from another government unit into results of official statistics, do you receive individual data that are well documented (metadata)?
- Are you able to improve the quality of results by using statistical methods or combination with other sources in such cases?

Items for discussion (ctd.)

- How do you check whether ONPs act in line with the CoP?
- Do you offer advice to ONPs on what compliance with the CoP means for their field of production?
- As NSI, are you responsible for non-statistical tasks that create a conflict with one of the core principles of the CoP? What is your experience/your plan concerning a transfer of responsibility for such tasks?