




DISSEMINATION POLICY

2008



INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTATÍSTICA
STATISTICS PORTUGAL



Dissemination Policy

OFFICIAL STATISTICS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION | 4

A - PRINCIPLES FOR THE DISSEMINATION POLICY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS | 8

B - RELEASE OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS | 12

C - ACCESSIBILITY TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS | 18

D - MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE DISSEMINATION POLICY | 22

INTRODUCTION

Statistical data are a key asset in today's society, being therefore pivotal to the conduct of research and analyses and providing an important contribution to the most relevant decision-making processes, both by those at public and private spheres.

INTRODUCTION

Statistical data are of interest to researchers, public and private decision-makers, politicians and economic agents, paving the way for all individuals to gain more awareness of their citizenship.

“**Official statistics**” are defined as statistical data produced, as a rule, within the scope of the statistical programme of the National Statistical System (NSS) and of international organisations of which Portugal is a member, in compliance with national and international technical standards and fulfilling the NSS principles.

Official statistics are a public good, which should efficiently meet user needs and put a non-excessive burden on respondents, namely through a more intensive use of administrative data.

As a common good for society, **official statistics** should be sufficiently comprehensive, accessible to all citizens and presented in such a way that the main results are understood with no need for specialised statistical knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

The whole process for producing official statistics is deemed to fulfil user needs for statistical data, based on their prior gauging and assessment. In this vein, the definition of information to be made available is the most critical and important component of statistical process as a whole.

Data dissemination, which is a key stage of statistical activity, is instrumental in implementing and highlighting strict compliance with the Mission of statistical authorities.

Instituto Nacional de Estatística (the National Statistical Institute, hereinafter referred to as Statistics Portugal) is the central entity in charge of producing and disseminating official statistics, whose Mission is to produce and disseminate in an effective, efficient and independent manner, high-quality statistical data that play a relevant role in society as a whole (Statistical Act, Law No. 22/2008).



The **dissemination policy** for Statistics Portugal should cover all official statistics produced directly or indirectly under its responsibility and have as main reference the core applicable NSS principles: technical independence, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and accessibility.

The dissemination policy¹ should set out general guidelines to be pursued in the dissemination of statistical data, stemming from the implementation of the provisions of the Statistical Act, Law No. 22/2008, namely Articles 5 and 8, and integrate the principles fixed in the European Statistics Code of Practice.

¹ Issues relating to revision policy, statistical confidentiality and delegation of statistical responsibilities that, although not falling within the scope of the dissemination policy, may have common aspects, or occasionally be associated with it, are not addressed in this document. These matters are covered by specific policies.

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A

PRINCIPLES FOR THE DISSEMINATION POLICY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

PRINCIPLES FOR THE DISSEMINATION POLICY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The dissemination policy of official statistics should set out the rules laid down in the National Statistical System's Law (Statistical Act) and in the Statutory Laws of Statistics Portugal. It should furthermore be based on the principles and good practices for official statistics adopted by the EU and the UN.

- 1 Official statistics must be relevant for users, comprehensive and as detailed as possible in statistical terms, while complying with requirements regarding legislation, confidentiality and quality, and produced in a cost-effective way.
- 2 Official statistics must be accurate, reliable, consistent and comparable in space and time.
- 3 Official statistics must be up-to-date and disseminated in a timely and punctual manner.
- 4 The content and timing of statistical releases must be decided with full autonomy and technical and professional independence.
- 5 Official statistics must be released according to a pre-announced schedule.

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A

PRINCIPLES FOR THE DISSEMINATION POLICY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

These principles apply to all official statistics, regardless of being produced under any national or Community legislation or as a result of any commitment to a specific user. They also apply to those statistics directly produced by Statistics Portugal or by entities entrusted with delegated responsibilities for statistical production.

- 6 Official statistics must be presented in a clear and understandable form to all users.
- 7 Statistical data must be made available on an impartial and objective basis to all users.
- 8 Statistical data released by Statistics Portugal must comply with the principle of statistical confidentiality, under the terms of Article 6 of the Statistical Act.
- 9 All users must be treated equally, and any privileged pre-release access to official statistics should be duly publicised.
- 10 Access to official statistical data of a general nature must be provided free of charge.



B

RELEASE OF
OFFICIAL
STATISTICS

RELEASE OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Statistics Portugal makes official statistics available under the terms of the national and international, legal and ethical framework governing the production of statistics.

- 1 All information of general interest resulting from statistical operations contained in the “Production Programme for Official Statistics” is generally published.
- 2 The main indicators resulting from statistical activities to be disseminated are, in principle, included in the respective Methodological Document.
- 3 Statistical data are made available impartially and simultaneously to all users.
- 4 Statistical data are released autonomously and independently from any external interference.
- 5 The dissemination of official statistics is accompanied by the supporting metadata², as well as other information, namely on quality, in accordance with national and international criteria in order to facilitate proper interpretation by users.

² It refers to the description of time series and statistical data features, as well as the methods, procedures, concepts, variables, classifications and nomenclatures used.

RELEASE OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS


- 6 Official statistical data released complies with the quality standards as defined for each statistical operation and included in the respective Methodological Document.
- 7 The content and timing of official statistical releases are, in principle, an integral part of the “Production Programme for Official Statistics”, which is made public and available in the official statistics website.
- 8 Statistical output is not disseminated, in part or wholly, if the quality levels set forth in the Methodological Document are not fulfilled. The decision against the dissemination of such results is made public as well the reasons for.
- 9 Access to statistical data may be restricted when quality levels are deemed insufficient. Should access to statistical data be restricted, users will be notified through releases thereon. On an exceptional basis, statistical data may be released only to specific user groups.
- 10 The dissemination schedule is established on the basis of purely technical criteria, by striking a balance between quality and timeliness.

- 11 Official statistical data are made available according to a pre-announced schedule.
- 12 The data dissemination schedule is set independently from the dissemination media used (website, dissemination database, press releases, publications, etc.).
- 13 The statistical data dissemination schedule is previously announced on the official statistics website and easily accessible.
- 14 Changes to the dissemination schedule, when deemed absolutely necessary, are publicly announced in advance, as soon as materially possible, being duly accounted for. The original schedule remains public.
- 15 Without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 3, there may be cases where prior access to official statistical data is granted, subject to an embargo. These cases are made public on the website of Statistics Portugal. Decisions on this matter are taken by the Board.

RELEASE OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS



- 16** Complex statistical reports may also be pre-released to accredited professionals, subject to an embargo, in order to allow for in-depth analyse at the time of dissemination. The decision on an embargo release is taken by the Board.
- 17** The release of statistical outputs is presented in a technically objective and impartial manner.
- 18** Errors when detected are recognised and documented, and the respective corrections/revisions are duly, rapidly and clearly disseminated to users.

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- 19 Statistical output may be made available as anonymised microdata for scientific purposes, to researchers at universities or other higher education institutions and renowned scientific research organisations, institutions or departments, under the terms of Article 6 of the Statistical Act (Law No. 22/2008 of 13 May). Specific protocols will be signed for this purpose.
 - 20 Further dissemination of statistical data produced by Statistics Portugal is free of charge, provided that information be accessed free of charge, the source identified and no restrictions imposed on its access.
 - 21 Occasionally authored studies are released. The authors are fully responsible for the opinions expressed which do not necessarily coincide with those of Statistics Portugal nor will be binding on it. An explicit mention on this will be made.



**ACCESSIBILITY
TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

ACCESSIBILITY TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS


Wide and easy access to official statistical data is a standing priority of Statistics Portugal, as well as the commitment to quality improvement of the service provided. In this vein, access to statistical data is made available using modern information and communication technology in order to meet user needs and permitting easy access to information.

- 1 .Official statistics are a public good and must meet user needs.
- 2 Access to statistical data is provided simultaneously to all users.
- 3 Access to official statistics is free of charge, except when additional data treatment is required.
- 4 Access to data is obtained via modern information and communication technologies, facilitating its using by experts and the society in general, without prejudice to ensuring universal access.
- 5 Means of access to and dissemination of statistical data take into account, as far as possible, the convenience of users and their needs.

- 6 The official statistics website (www.ine.pt) is the main channel for the dissemination of statistical data. It releases at first-hand all official statistics that, when produced under delegated responsibilities for statistical production, are simultaneously released on the websites of the entities with delegated responsibilities.
- 7 The official statistics website is dynamic and continuously updated in terms of contents, functionalities and timeliness of data.
- 8 The official statistics website is available in Portuguese and English.

C

ACCESSIBILITY TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS



9 The official statistics website strives to meet national and international requirements and guidelines related to accessibility by citizens with special needs.

10 Access to data is obtained via different means namely: (online) Dissemination Database, Press Releases and Publications. Also, Statistics Portugal maintains at its premises points of access to statistical data, thus making it possible to provide specialised support to users.

11 Statistics Portugal also maintains an Information Network in Higher Education Libraries, under a cooperation protocol.

12 A customer help line and a specific information service to the media are also made available by Statistics Portugal.



MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT
OF THE DISSEMINATION POLICY

D

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE DISSEMINATION POLICY

The quality and accessibility of disseminated data are subject to a systematic assessment, with a view to ensure continued improvement of dissemination activity.

- 1 The different types of users are regularly surveyed on their satisfaction regarding products and services made available to them by Statistics Portugal.
- 2 User comments, suggestions and complaints are viewed as real opportunities to further improve the dissemination activity of Statistics Portugal.
- 3 User comments, suggestions and complaints are duly treated in accordance with the procedures established in the Statistics Portugal's Quality Charter.
- 4 User comments, suggestions and complaints, where relevant, lead to the adoption of measures to further improve the activity of Statistics Portugal, particularly in the dissemination function.

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