


Workshop on the Implementation of a National Quality Assurance Framework for Official Statistics in countries of the Africa Region
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Session 5.1: Additional checklist for the use of new and administrative data sources and for other producers of official statistics

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1. Labelling as “official statistics”

- ❖ Labelling: the attachment of a label to statistics or to a producer of statistics (labelling) requires a procedure to guarantee that the message is appropriate and true. A label such as “official statistics” would need to be accompanied by an explanation regarding its interpretation.
- ❖ Many NSOs label certain outputs as “official statistics” following an evaluation mechanism conducted by an independent entity within the NSO or NSS. Some of these processes are described as a type of certification. However, in many countries, all statistics produced and disseminated by a member of the NSS is considered “official statistics”.



2. Certification by an external body

- ❖ Certification is an activity that assesses whether a **product**, **service**, **process**, **system** or **organization** complies with requirements defined by an internationally recognized standard or other formal criteria.
- ❖ It is conducted by an external independent certification body which can be located at the national or international level. The result of a successful certification is that the certification body, such as ISO, awards a certificate to the organization. The ISO standards are general and can apply to any organization.
- ❖ Certification to ISO standards is an advanced method and tool of **process quality management**. It requires documentation, quality reports, quality indicators, self-assessments and audits. There are significant benefits, but also costs, associated with certification.

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2. Certification by an external body

- ❖ ISO standards supplement but are not alternatives to frameworks such as the UN NQAF, which are specifically developed for statistical agencies.
- ❖ There are examples of national statistical offices that have been ISO 9001 certified: For example, the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan, Statistics Lithuania, Statistics Netherlands and the Statistical Office of Slovakia, Committee of Statistics Kazakhstan.



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4. Certification by the NSO ?

- ❖ Should NSOs certify:
 - ❖ **quality of statistical agencies** and
 - ❖ **quality of statistical outputs** of other members of the NSS or even of statistics produced outside the NSS.
- ❖ The NSO may develop special procedures for the assessment / certification of statistical agencies or outputs.
- ❖ The UK Office of Statistics Regulations and Statistics South Africa have established strict schemes for assessing compliance with their quality standard that amount to certification
 - These schemes require independence and significant resources!!



- ❑ **UN Working Group on Data Stewardship:** Main objective: is to enhance knowledge and provide recommendations with respect to data stewardship that include approaches to data governance, equity and inclusion, sharing and collaboration and the overall conceptual framework for data stewardship.
- ❑ **UNECE Task Force on Data stewardship.** The aim of the Task Force is to clarify the terms related to data stewardship and public data governance, and the tasks of NSOs that this may include in different settings. This could serve as a basis for developing guidance, in a later stage, on the role of NSOs in the new data ecosystem.



- ❑ A “curator” is a keeper, overseer or manager, such as for a gallery or other cultural institution. A **curator of official statistics** could be understood as an overseer of official statistics that makes official statistics available and ensures a certain level of quality.
- ❑ A **government data steward** could be understood as tasked (i) with setting standards and guidelines for the collection, management and use of government data and (ii) with ensuring that government agencies adopt common capabilities (in dealing with their data), hereby fostering the establishment of an comprehensive and integrated government data system.

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Data stewardship and data quality

Some observations from the perspective of quality assurance

- ❑ **FPOS and NQAF are directed at the production of official statistics** according to the needs of users. For official statistics, data is only an input for the production of official statistics.
- ❑ **However, data can be used for many different purposes.** Hence, multiple quality principles for official statistics do not apply to data and even prevent its use for other purposes.
- ❑ Public and private investment in data will grow with many governments pursuing data strategies. **NSOs may need to clarify their role and response to this new data ecosystem.**

