

Quality of Official Statistics in EU and OECD

Lars Thygesen
13 April 2016



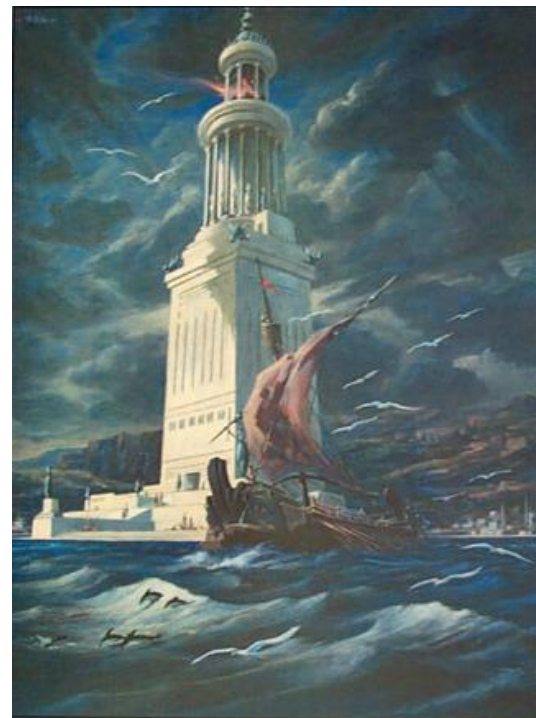
What is official statistics?



- Provided by public bodies / state
- Describe the demographic, social and economic situation:
 - quantitative or qualitative information on all major areas of citizens' lives, such as economic and social development,^[1] living conditions,^[2] [health](#),^[3] [education](#),^[4] and the environment.^[5]
- Common reference frame for discussions
- National Statistical System (NSS)

Why are we here?

- Because all good decisions rely on facts
- Provide the basic facts on society – a common reference point
- Basis for **democracy** and **economy**
- A lighthouse in the Sea of Information



Official statistics organisations provide basis for informed decisions by:

- Government
- Research
- Enterprises
- Citizens
- International organisations

What is **quality** in official statistics?

- Good or bad quality?
- **Trust** is the key
- [UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics \(1993; 2014\)](#)
- [European Statistics Code of Practice \(2005; 2011\)](#)
- [EU Quality Assurance Framework \(2013\)](#)
- [OECD Quality Framework \(2012\)](#)

Countries' obligations to the OECD

- Provide statistical data and metadata
- Comply with OECD standards
- Ideally from one national data provider
- In reality many

OECD will ask:

- Can a user meaningfully divide one figure (e.g. total sick insurance expenditure) by another (e.g. population)?
- And compare between countries?
- Can users find the same figures in National web sites?

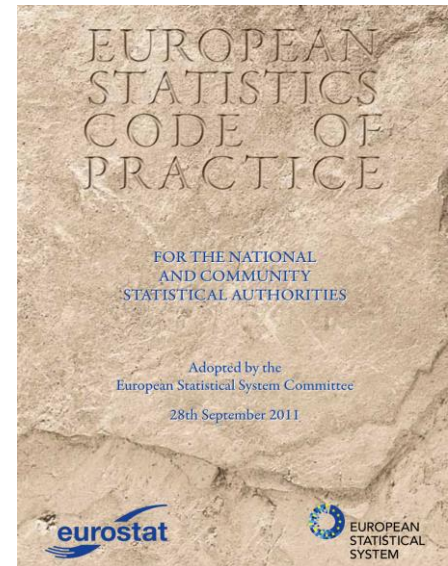
OECD Quality Dimensions



- Relevance
- Accuracy
- **Credibility**
 - Confidence & Trust
- Timeliness (& punctuality)
- Accessibility
- **Interpretability**
- **Coherence**
 - **Coherence across datasets/ domains**
 - Coherence over time
 - **Coherence across countries**
- Cost-efficiency

Quality assurance in the European Statistical System

- Crisis in the European Statistical System 2005
 - Fraudulent statistics in one member state
 - Risk of complete loss of trust
- Political demand for quality assurance
- 2005: European Statistics Code of Practice (rev. 2011)



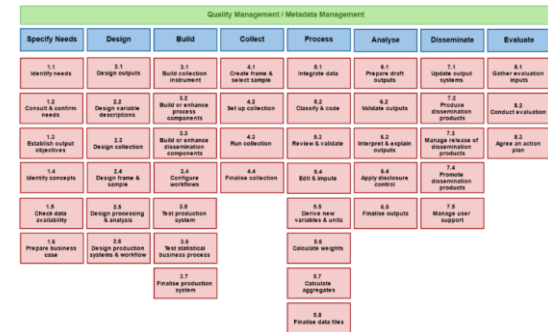
European Statistics Code of Practice

- 15 principles
- 82 indicators monitoring the European Statistical System

1. Institutional Environment

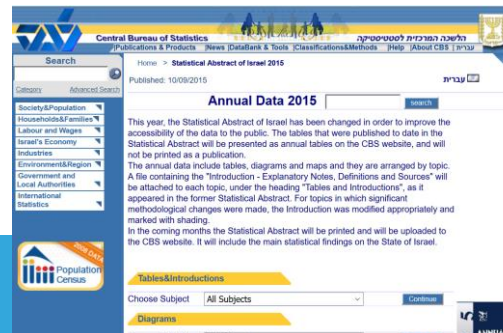


2. Statistical Processes



3. Statistical Outputs

Quality Dimensions



The quality concept

Quality of processes:

Statistical concepts

Sources

Contact with respondents/data owners

Sampling

Measurement process

Data collection

Editing

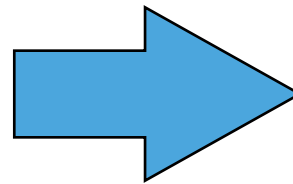
Estimation

Aggregation

Publishing and dissemination

Entering in StatBank

Documentation



Quality of contents:

Relevant

Accurate & reliable

Timely & punctual

Coherent & comparable

Accessible & clear

Cost effective

Quality = Fitness for use

Organisation of coordination of NSS

- Bilateral meetings with most important producers
 - Who reports to international organisations?
 - Which ones are most important?
- NSS Coordination Committee
 - Chair and secretary: NSI
 - 2 or 4 meetings per year
 - Agree on standards and requirements
- Peer Review
 - E.g. by EU or OECD

Coordination of statistics in Denmark

- Statistics Denmark is producing statistics on all subjects except in
 - Health
 - Environment
 - Energy
 - Finance
 - Fishery
 - plus other minor areas
- Guidelines prepared and discussed



Coordination in different domains

Financial Statistics:

Central Bank

- Framework agreement
 - Main committee and sub committees
 - High contact between employees
- Cooperation concerning
 - Concepts, methods etc.
 - Exchange of micro data for statistics
 - Business register
 - Dissemination



Fishery

Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

- Framework agreement
 - Main committee and sub committees
 - High contact between employees
- Cooperation concerning
 - concepts, methods etc.
 - Exchange of micro data for statistics
 - Dissemination



Conclusion on cooperation based on Danish experience

It's not easy!

For coordination to be effective:

- Top managements of the institutions have to be committed
- Cooperation has to be based of written agreements
 - why
 - what
 - how
- A meeting structure has to be established

European Statistical newly revised - Main topics

1. Professional independence
2. Administrative data
3. Coordinating role of the NSI
4. 'Commitments on Confidence in Statistics'

Coordinating role of the NSIs in EU

The Head of NSI

- shall publish an annual report on production of European statistics in Member States
- shall prepare national guidelines that ensure that the national production is in accordance with the Code of Practice

Member States / Governments

- will ensure that production of European statistics is in accordance with these guidelines

Possible tools

1. Total centralisation
2. Common standards
 - Certain central statistical concepts
 - Standards for metadata
3. Common guidelines (mandatory?)
4. Sharing of (micro) data, without or with ID
5. Common dissemination
 - Users shouldn't need to care
 - E.g. <http://www.statbank.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1440>
6. Common metadata portal
7. Common training and methodological assistance
8. Audits
9. Certification by the NSI
 - Label "Official Statistics"
 - Example tilastokeskus.fi/meta/svt/index_en.html
 - Must comply with standards and quality requirements



Questions

- Who are the most important producers?
- Do they all know what each other does?
 - Reporting to international organisations
- Are they well coordinated?
- Do they comply with the CoP? Standards?
- What can be accomplished in 2016?



The End