

Building strong bridges between users and producers of official statistics

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UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

Principle 1

*“Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public ... To this end, official statistics that meet **the test of practical utility** are to be compiled and made available **on an impartial basis** by official statistical agencies..”*

European Statistics Code of Practice 2005

PRINCIPLE 11: RELEVANCE

European statistics must meet the needs of users.

- Processes are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and advise on their emerging needs and priorities.
- Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme.
- User satisfaction surveys are undertaken periodically.

The European Statistical Advisory Committee

The ESAC - History

- Need for profound reform of role, mandate and composition of CEIES
- November 2006 Commission proposal
- 11 March 2008, Adoption of Decision No 234/2008/EC on the ESAC
- **Inaugural meeting on June 2009**

The ESAC – Mandate

- New Committee shall assist the EP / Council / Commission in ensuring that user requirements and the costs borne by information providers and producers are taken into account in coordinating the strategic objectives and priorities of the Community's statistical information policy

The ESAC – Tasks

OPINION

on Community statistical programme, in particular on its

- relevance to requirements of European integration
- relevance to Community activities
- balance as regards priorities and resources and possibility to re-prioritise statistical work
- adequacy of resources for its implementation and appropriateness to users' needs
- costs and possibilities of reducing response burden

own-initiative opinions/reports on user requirements and costs borne by data providers

The ESAC – Tasks (continued)

ADVICE

- Point out necessary new statistical activities
- Advise the Commission how to improve the relevance of Community statistics to users

Relations with Community institutions/other bodies

At request of the EP/Council/Commission, ESAC shall deliver an opinion relating to user requirements and costs incurred by data suppliers in

- development of the Community's statistical information policy
- priorities of the Community statistical programme
- evaluation of existing statistics
- data quality and
- dissemination policy

The ESAC – TOOLS

- Plenary meetings
- Establishment of temporary working parties
- Commission of studies
- Organisation of seminars

For more information:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/esac/introduction>

The ESAC – Composition

24 members, appointed for 5 years, renewable once:

12 appointed by Commission

- users
- respondents
- other stakeholders

Director-General of ESTAT

11 directly appointed by

- European Parliament
- Council
- Eur. Economic and Social Committee
- Committee of the Regions
- European Central Bank
 - ESSC (2 members)
 - BusinessEurope
 - ETUC
 - UEAPME
- Eur. Data Protection Supervisor

challenges

- Different mandates of group
- (over?) emphasis on response burden
- Range of users
- How to connect with users
- Coverage of countries
- Resources, resources, resources
- Deciding where we add value

Negative priorities

- Reducing the number and complexity of EU requirements
- Recognising the resource constraints
- But not all countries have same agenda
- Build in sunset clauses
- Stop requiring some data

Adding value

- Principle of subsidiarity (consultation on national statistics better undertaken nationally – but ...)
- Sharing good practice across countries
- Understanding needs for European data
- Influencing European practice

The ESAC → state of play

- Set-up of 3 Temporary Working Parties on
 - “GDP and beyond and Stiglitz-Sen report”,
 - “Access to confidential data for scientific purposes”
 - “Quality”

Additional achievements

- Commented on annual reports and strategies
- Published the commentaries
- Attend the DGiNS, directors meetings
- Speak at relevant conferences

- Process rather than impact

How should we link with national user groups?

- Carrying out a mapping exercise
- Web site obviously important
- But should we have a newsletter?
- How can we share information across national societies and user groups?

Foster engagement with expert users

- Even more important as there is an increasing pressure on statistical resources
 - Prioritisation must involve discussion with users
 - Expert users can provide methodological expertise
 - Satisfied users help to fight for resources for statistics
 - Partners (user groups, professional societies etc) help to build trust in the statistical system

Reduction of response burden

- Compliance costs important especially in small countries and in surveys of elites, businesses, institutions
- Fresh data collection takes time and resources
- Secondary data analysis can take place in resource–constrained (including a time-constrained) environment
- Therefore we have been especially active in promoting access to data

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- European Statistical Governance Advisory Board

Important aspects of building trust

- Autonomy of statistics office
- Statistical legislation
- Existence of an independent statistical board
- Development of codes of conduct
- Breaches of the code identified, investigated and publicised
- Appointment of head of statistics should be removed from the political process
- Statistical processes should be externally audited
- Audit body should report to Parliament