

November 2014

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# CODE OF PRACTICE: PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO STATISTICS PRODUCERS

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

“In a coordinated manner we produce and disseminate relevant, quality and timely statistics that are fit-for-purpose in accordance with international standards and best practice”

## **VISION STATEMENT**

“Be a high performance institution in statistics delivery”

## **CORE VALUES**

Performance

Integrity

Service focus

Transparency

Accuracy

Partnership

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	5
PREFACE	6
I INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE	7
II THE POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK	8
III APPLICABILITY	8
IV COMPLIANCE WITH LAW AND NEED FOR INTEGRITY	8
V ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE	9
VI THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND ITS STRUCTURE	9
VII RELATIONSHIP TO “OFFICIAL” STATISTICS	9
PRINCIPLE 1: INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT	9
PRINCIPLE 2. OBJECTIVITY AND IMPARTIALITY	10
PRINCIPLE 3: RELEVANCE	10
PRINCIPLE 4: COHERENCE AND COMPARABILITY	11
PRINCIPLE 5: ACCURACY, RELIABILITY AND SOUND METHODOLOGY	11
PRINCIPLE 6: TIMELINESS	12
PRINCIPLE 7: CLARITY	12
PRINCIPLE 8: ACCESSIBILITY	13
ANNEX 2: LIST OF REFERENCES	14
ANNEX 3: RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE STATISTICS ACT, 2011	15



# ABBREVIATIONS

**DQAF**

Data Quality Assessment Framework

**NSA**

Namibia Statistics Agency

**NSDI**

National Spatial Data Infrastructure

**NSS**

National Statistical System

## Preface

The Statistics Act of 2011 mandates the NSA to develop a code of practice to ensure compliance with the Act in the production of official statistics by statistics producers. In order to establish and maintain public confidence in official and other statistics, the Statistician-General must issue by notice in the Gazette a Code of Practice setting out professional and ethical standards applicable to statistics producers.

The Code of Practice may impose requirements with respect to any of the followings:

- (a) Ethical and professional standards that must be adhered to in the collection, production, analysis and dissemination of statistics;
- (b) Measures to ensure the optimum quality and the comparability of official and other statistics;
- (c) Measures to minimize unnecessary overlapping or duplication in the collection, production, analysis and dissemination of statistics.
- (d) The Statistician-General may advise any statistics producer regarding the application of the Code of Practice referred to in the document.

The Code applies to institutional practices of producers of statistics in the NSS at both national and sub-national levels and covers statistical operations, methodology and development. It further describes general professional and ethical behaviour appropriate to the various stages of the statistical process and is appropriate whether the source data are from censuses, surveys or administrative records. The code also encompasses responsibilities towards society at large, providers of data, and users. Producers can only implement the Code if their staff adopt and adhere to these practices. Consequently, this is a Code of Practice applicable to all staff working for statistics producers in statistical operations, methodology and development as well. The Code offers a framework within which institutions and staff should be able to work with confidence, making appropriate organizational, professional and ethical judgments.

The Code assumes and requires that staff comply with applicable laws and their job descriptions as modified from time to time, behave with integrity, strong moral principles and honesty, and exhibit loyalty to their organization and effective and collaborative relationships with colleagues, all of which support public trust in the producing institutions and their staff.

The Code was discussed and endorsed by users and producers in July and August 2013. Statistics producers will be invited to report to the Statistician-General annually on implementation of the Code. The Statistician-General will hold an annual consultation with producers on the Code and its continuing relevance, its implementation and any difficulties in implementation which might call for assistance.



John Steytler  
Statistician General

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

The Code of Practice sets out professional and ethical standards applicable to statistics producers in Namibia. The Code supports the aim that the institutions and their statistics should have the confidence and trust of users, and the statistics should have high quality, meet user's needs, and have been compiled, produced and disseminated in accordance with national and international standards and good practices. The Code is set out in Annex 1,

It provides (i) a ready reference for producers of statistics in the National Statistical System (NSS) on good practices supporting professional and ethical standards of behaviour and (ii) an easily accessible and understandable document for users and the general public to understand how the producers of statistics in the NSS carry out their functions.

The Code supports the Mission and Vision of the NSA namely which state as follows: "In a coordinated manner we produce and disseminate relevant, quality and timely statistics that are fit-for-purpose in accordance with international standards and best practice" and "To be the high performance institution in statistics delivery". The Code stems from, in part, the Shared Values set out in the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) Strategic Plan 2012/13-2016/17 which are: Performance, Integrity, Service Focus, Transparency Accuracy and Partnership. The Shared Values are expressed as follows:

### **Performance**

The NSA is geared towards promoting production of high quality statistical products

and services that meet the standards of relevance, consistency, accuracy, completeness and accessibility, and delivered on time.

### **Integrity**

The staff of the NSA will conduct their work according to the highest ethical and technical standards, making decisions according to strictly professional considerations, maintaining confidentiality of individual and corporate information and maintaining the public trust.

### **Service focus**

All data collection and management activities of the NSA will be focused on meeting user expectations and needs; we respect and serve our customers to satisfy their needs by offering responsive and quality statistics.

### **Transparency**

The NSA will strive to create and maintain public trust and confidence in official statistics by proactively promoting transparency in data production and dissemination.

### **Accuracy**

The NSA will produce statistics in a reliable way with minimal inaccuracy.

### **Partnership**

The NSA is committed to approaching the task of delivering all needed statistics internally as a team and in a constructive and cooperative way with other members of the NSS.

It is understood that all the producers of statistics in the NSS undertake their work with values compatible with the NSA Mission, Vision and Shared Values as well.

## 2. Policy and Legal Framework

The Code stems from individual policy statements in the Statistics Policy of Namibia, the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Policy for Namibia, and the Data Collection, Processing and Dissemination Policy and Practice including on: Corporate philosophy, Co-operation and co-ordination, Achieving objectives in a cost-effective and efficient manner, Good and transparent management, Contributing to an informed society, Meeting user needs, Consulting with users, Public confidence and trust in official statistics, Standards, Metadata, High quality data, Confidentiality of information, Respect for providers of raw data, (respondents); Access to data, Pricing, Intellectual capability and performance culture in the NSS, and other aspects.

The Code also draws on good practices endorsed by international statistical agencies and presently in place in many national statistical systems around the world as reflected in the List of References in Annex 2.

The Code is compatible with the Statistics Act 2011 and contributes to the implementation of many areas of the Act as listed in Annex 3.

The Code is drafted specifically in furtherance of the Statistics Act, 2011, Part VI COORDINATION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM, Section 34 which provides as follows:

“Code of Practice

34. (1) In order to establish and maintain public confidence in official and other statistics, the Statistician-General must issue by notice in the Gazette a Code of Practice setting out professional and ethical standards applicable to statistics producers.

(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the Code of Practice may impose requirements with respect to any of the following -

(a) Ethical and professional standards

that must be adhered to in the collection, production, analysis and dissemination of statistics;

(b) measures to ensure the optimum quality and the comparability of official and other statistics;

(c) measures to minimize unnecessary overlapping or duplication in the collection, production, analysis and dissemination of statistics.

(3) The Statistician-General may advise any statistics producer regarding the application of the Code of Practice referred to in subsection (1).”

## 3. Applicability

The Code applies to institutional practices of producers of statistics in the NSS at both national and sub-national level and covers statistical operations, methodology and development; it describes general professional and ethical behaviour appropriate to the various stages of the statistical process and is appropriate whether the source data are from censuses, surveys or administrative records; it encompasses responsibilities towards society at large, providers of data, and users.

Producers can only implement the Code if their staff adopt and adhere to these practices. Consequently, this is a Code of Practice applicable to all staff working for the statistics producers in statistical operations, methodology and development as well. The Code offers a framework within which institutions and staff should be able to work with confidence, making appropriate organizational, professional and ethical judgments.

## 4. Compliance with law and need for integrity

The Code assumes and requires that staff comply with applicable laws and their job descriptions as modified from time to

time, behave with integrity, strong moral principles and honesty,, and exhibit loyalty to their organization and effective and collaborative relationships with colleagues, all of which support public trust in the producing institutions and their staff. These aspects are reflected in the Employee Code of Conduct. Together the Code of Practice and the Employee Code of Conduct establish the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct underlying the activities of the NSS.

## 5. Adoption and implementation of the Code

The Code was discussed with users and producers in forums in July and August 2013 and gained their endorsement. Statistics producers will be invited to report to the Statistician-General annually on implementation of/the Code and the Statistician-General will hold an annual consultation with producers on the Code and its continuing relevance, its implementation and any difficulties in implementation which might call for assistance.

## 6. The Code of Practice and its Structure

Consistent with the focus of the NSS on producing high quality statistics the Code adopts the Key Elements that are included in the Namibia Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) and which support the production of good quality statistics. The Code is set out in Annex 1; it is arranged according to the Quality Dimensions and Key Elements of the DQAF as follows:

- 1 Institutional environment
- 2 Objectivity
- 3 Relevance
- 4 Coherence and comparability
- 5 Accuracy and reliability

- 6 Timeliness
- 7 Clarity
- 8 Accessibility

## 7. Relationship to “official” statistics

As the DQAF and its Key Elements incorporate the characteristics that are required for statistics to be designated as “official” statistics, the Code, when implemented by producers, also will support the production of statistics that may gain the “official” statistics designation.

### Principle 1: Institutional environment

Institutional environment refers to the institutional and organizational conditions that have an impact on the collection, production and dissemination of statistics and their quality. It includes:

- 1.1 **Legal environment:** an authoritative mandate exists for government statistical agencies to collect data.
- 1.2 **Coordination of the National Statistical System:** arrangements are in place and are carried out among the various government agencies with statistical or statistics-related activities concerning data sharing, sharing of technical information and good practices, coordinating survey programmes, using common standards and approaches, participation in international statistical developments and other activities.
- 1.3 **Professional independence in statistical operations:** the Statistician-General and heads of statistics units in statistics producing institutions are independent from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, and potential conflict of interest.

- 1.4 **Respect for providers of raw data:** the legal mandate for data collection agencies to collect data is in place, and arrangements are in place between statistics collecting agencies and the providers of raw data that respect the time and resources of data providers and maximize the provision of good raw data by the providers.
- 1.5 **Privacy and confidentiality:** there is a legal requirement for collectors of statistical data to guarantee the privacy of data providers (individuals, households, government bodies, undertakings, including enterprises or any other organizations and other respondents) and the confidentiality of their individual information; arrangements are put in place to achieve this, and those arrangements are communicated to providers to maximize the quality of raw data provided.
- 1.6 **Resource availability:** staff, physical infrastructure, information and communications technology, administrative and logistical capability, statistical infrastructure and finance are adequate to maintain the statistical programmes on a sustainable basis.
- 1.7 **Efficient use of resources:** arrangements are in place to ensure that maximum value is obtained from the available resources.
- 1.8 **Overall quality commitment and management:** processes and resources are in place to focus on quality on a continuing basis to achieve stated quality objectives.

involved maintain professional and ethical standards.

- 2.1 **Institutional integrity:** the practices of the collection and publishing organizations and their employees are impartial and objective, comply with good statistical practice and ensure that the public interest prevails over organizational, political or personal interests and help maintain user confidence in those organizations and the statistics they produce.
- 2.2 **Impartial dissemination:** decisions on dissemination are made in an impartial, objective, manner and comply with good statistical practice. Make statistics equally available to all
- 2.3 **Transparency in compilation, production and analysis:** information is made available to the public about (i) the statistical processes and methodology and any changes in them and (ii) revisions and errors; factual statistical releases and ministerial/government statements related to them are labelled as such..
- 2.4 **Professional and ethical standards:** producers and their staff follow this Code of Practice, staff follows the Employee Code of Conduct, and staff sign and adhere to the Oath of Office and Secrecy, Schedule 2 Section 45 of the Statistics Act, 2011 and any other applicable requirement.

## Principle 2: Objectivity and Impartiality

**Objectivity and impartiality** refers to whether statistics producing institutions carry out their statistical operations with integrity, are impartial and transparent in their operations including dissemination, and whether the staff

## Principle 3: Relevance

Relevance reflects the degree to which the statistics meet the real needs of users; it deals with whether the statistics shed light on the issue(s) of concern to the users.

- 3.1 **Promoting the use of statistics:** Efforts are made to (i) expand the capability of users to benefit from statistics, (ii) promote more and better use of statistics, and (iii) articulate user needs. Relationships with the media are

maintained to expand the availability and understanding of statistics and their value.

- 3.2 **Consulting with users:** producers know who their users are and have effective machinery in place to consult with them on their needs and satisfaction with statistical products and services.
- 3.3 **Responding to user needs:** the data produced meet user needs in terms of scope, coverage, reference period, geographic detail, classifications and types of data e.g. unadjusted data, seasonally adjusted data, ratios, index numbers etc.
- 3.4 **Distribution by gender, disability, region, and similar socio-economic features<sup>1</sup> :** breakdowns of the statistics are provided that are of specific interest in the Namibian context.
- 3.5 **Monitoring user needs:** producers keep track of user needs and the extent to which they are satisfied by the available products and services.

## Principle 4: Coherence and comparability

**Coherence and comparability** refer to the internal consistency of a statistical collection, product or release, as well as its comparability with other sources of information, within a broad analytical framework, and over time, to support analysis; these characteristics are obtained through the use of national and international standards.

- 4.1 **Setting statistical standards:** standards and policies are set by the NSA for all producers of statistics in the country to comply with.
- 4.2 **Producing statistics in accordance with appropriate national and international standards and classifications:** concepts, definitions, classifications follow accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices

( national and international).

- 4.3 **Comprehensiveness/scope;** the scope of data sources and the statistical methodology and processing and dissemination decisions, based on accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices (national and international), result in statistics that cover the whole of the target populations.
- 4.4 **Basis for recording:** international recommendations and best practices are applied
- 4.5 **Consistency:** the internal consistency of a statistical collection, product or release, its consistency over time and its comparability with data in related fields or obtained through other data sources, is maintained to support analysis.

## Principle 5: Accuracy, reliability and sound methodology

Accuracy and reliability refer to the degree to which the data correctly describe the phenomenon they were designed to measure. This is an important component of quality as it relates to how well the data portray reality; it relates to the closeness between the estimated and true (unknown) values. Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised standards and best practices.

- 5.1 **Standards are followed:** procedures are in place to promote and ensure that the designated statistical standards are followed.
- 5.2 **Appropriate source data:** the source data used is appropriate to measure the phenomenon of interest in terms of the scope, definition, classification and other characteristics of the source data; administrative records are used to the maximum extent possible subject to their appropriateness and securing the

confidentiality of personal information.

- 5.3 **Compiling, producing and analysing statistics in a scientific manner:** Decisions about compiling, producing, and analysing statistics are impartial and objective and comply with good statistical practice; sound statistical techniques are used, and sample survey results are routinely assessed.
- 5.4 **Regular reviews and evaluations:** regular reviews and evaluations of intermediate results and final outputs are undertaken to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes.
- 5.5 **Revision studies and practices:** studies and analyses of revisions are carried out to improve the statistical processes.

## Principle 6: Timeliness

**Timeliness** has three elements firstly the periodicity of data as to whether the reference period is a month, quarter or some other periodicity or one-off or occasional; secondly it refers to the delay between the reference period (to which the data pertain) and the date at which the data become available; and thirdly the delay between the advertised date and the date at which the data become available (i.e., the actual release date).

- 6.1 **Periodicity:** periodicity follows dissemination standards of the IMF General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) (or the SDDS when subscribed to) or in the absence of a GDDS or SDDS standard, a standard as set by the NSA in consultation with the producer and users.
- 6.2 **Timeliness:** timeliness follows dissemination standards of the GDDS (or the SDDS when subscribed to), or in the absence of a GDDS or SDDS standard, a standard as set by the NSA in consultation with the producer and users.
- 6.3 **Punctuality:** each phase of the collection through dissemination process is achieved according to plan using established

project planning techniques to ensure punctual delivery of outputs: -Data collection, -Data processing, -Data analysis and review, -Data release.

## Principle 7: Clarity

**Clarity** refers to the ease with which a user can understand the data due to its form of presentation such as in tables, graphs etc. and the availability of information to help provide insight into the data such as metadata and written statistical analysis. Metadata includes documentation on scope, concepts, definitions, and classifications, basis of recording, data sources, statistical techniques/methodology, and measures of the accuracy of the information.

- 7.1 **Data presentation:** statistical presentations combine tables, graphs, maps and analysis that enhance clarity, interpretability and consistency.
- 7.2 **Metadata presentation:** metadata is prepared and maintained up-to-date according to standardized metadata systems in line with international recommendations such as the Data Documentation Initiative, and openly made available to users; differences/deviations from internationally accepted standards, guidelines, or good practices are annotated.
- 7.3 **Preliminary results and revisions:** preliminary results of acceptable aggregate accuracy are published when considered useful, are clearly identified and their quality explained; well established and transparent procedures are followed for revisions; revised data are published on a regular and transparent schedule, and clearly identified and explained to help users.
- 7.4 **Research and development:** research and development of statistical methods and techniques to enhance the value of statistics to users are conducted and results published.

- 7.5 **Assistance to users:** the producer provides prompt and knowledgeable user support services on the substance of the statistics.

## Principle 8: Accessibility

**Accessibility** refers to the ease with which data and metadata can be obtained from the producer or other outlet.

- 8.1 **Data and metadata accessibility:** data and metadata are made available to the public through the widest possible dissemination; the availability and location of statistics are publicized; a wide range of media appropriate for users is used to disseminate the data including the internet; and archiving of data and metadata is done to ensure its future availability.
- 8.2 **Pricing policy:** statistics producers apply pricing policy that is not a barrier to access to statistics.
- 8.3 **Assistance to users:** producers provide user support services on the technical aspects of accessing the statistics.

## Annex 1: List of references

Statistics Act, 2011 (No.9 of 2011)  
Namibia Statistics Agency Strategic Plan 2012/2013-2016/2017  
Namibia Statistics Agency Business Plan 2012/2013-2016/2017  
Code of Ethics, Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel;  
Ethical code of the Czech Statistical Office;  
Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics, Statistics New Zealand (2007);  
Code of Ethical Statistical Practice, Statistical Society of Canada;  
Declaration on Professional Ethics, International Statistical Institute (1985);  
Ethics and Statistics, Statistics Norway;  
Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice, American Statistical Association;  
Principles and Practices for a Federal Statistical Agency, Committee on National Statistics, United States (2013);  
Code of Practice for Official Statistics issued by the UK Statistics Authority, January, 2009;  
Statistical System Key Principles issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012);  
European Statistics Code of Practice-For the National and Community Statistical Authorities, Adopted by the European Statistical System Committee, 28 September 2011;  
Guidelines for the template for a generic National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF), United Nations (2012);  
United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission, (1994);  
African Charter on Statistics, African Union Commission, February, 2009  
United Nation Statistics Division Country Practices Database (search for National Statistical Policy documents <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/SearchResults.aspx> 15 November 2012

## **Annex 2: Relevant sections of the Statistics Act, 2011**

In particular the Code contributes to the implementation of the following sections of the Act:

Purpose of the National Statistical System and principles of statistics (Section 4)

Objectives and administration of National Statistics System (Section 5)

Functions and powers of Agency (Section 7)

Code of Practice (Section 34)

Statistical coordination (Section 35)

Standards (Section 36)

Forms for collection of information (Section 38)

Request to provide information voluntarily (Section 39)

Notice to provide information (Section 40)

Right of access for statistical purpose (Section 42)

Administrative penalties (Section 43)

Prohibition of disclosure of information (Section 44)

Oath of secrecy (Section 45 and Schedule 2)

Dissemination and right of access (Section 46)

Establishment and objectives of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (Section 47)

Sampling (Section 50)

Meetings of statisticians and users of statistics (Section 51)

Preservation of Secrecy (Section 53)

Offences in connection with the Agency (Section 55)

General offences (Section 56)

Religious beliefs or political convictions information (Section 57) and

Regulations (Section 58)

