General Guidelines of Official Statistical Activity 2018-2022

CSE
Conselho Superior de Estatística
Statistical Council
Portugal

index

FRAMEWORK

The General Guidelines of Official Statistical Activity for 2018-2022 stand as the strategic reference document for the development of the National Statistical System (NSS) in general and, in particular, for the elaboration of the annual program of activities of the Council and of the statistical authorities.

It also stands as a quality tool in the supply of data to the society, essential for a better understanding of the main challenges facing the NSS and the main guidelines for addressing them.

The General Guidelines of Official Statistical Activity for 2018-2022 are elaborated within the framework of Law no. 22/2008, of May 13 (NSS Law), which considers as statistical authorities the following entities: Statistics Portugal, Banco de Portugal, Regional Statistical Office of the Azores, Regional Directorate of Statistics of Madeira and entities with powers delegated by Statistics Portugal.

The Council, in the preparation of its general guidelines, took into consideration a set of reference documents which frame national and European activity as regards the production and dissemination of official statistics, namely:

- The European Statistics Code of Practice.
- The Public Commitment on European Statistics of the European System of Central Banks.
- The European Statistical Program for 2020 and the challenges the European Statistical System (ESS) will face after 2021.
- The Strategic Guidelines of Banco de Portugal within the scope of its statistical obligations.

It also took into account i) the various actions and recommendations under its responsibility, namely the actions identified as priorities in the NSS Situation Assessment Report for the period 2012-2015; ii) the recommendations resulting from the reflection that has taken place in recent years as regards the preparation of the revision of the NSS Law, in particular strategic orientations related to the strengthening of the NSS principles, namely the principle of Statistical Authority; and (iii) a review of the results achieved in the context of the implementation of the actions foreseen in the General Guidelines of Official Statistical Activity in force for the period 2013-2017, which was decisive for identifying the gaps, shortcomings and limitations that need to be sorted in the coming years.

Other evaluations were taken into consideration particularly within the framework of the Council on ways to settle (i) new statistical needs in emerging areas relevant to society and (ii) in strengthening the capacity of the statistical authorities to respond to the continuous challenges posed by new emerging horizons, considering the scarcity of the available resources and the continuous technological and methodological innovations that have direct impact on the production of statistics.

Thus, taking into consideration the need for statistical data and the adoption of appropriate forms of communication to cope with the ongoing changes in modern Societies, a vast set of factors was considered in the preparation of this document, highlighting the following:

- Access to new sources of information and data integration (i.e. big data, Legal Entity Identifier (LEI)), safeguarding the fundamental rights enshrined in the Portuguese Constitution.
- Adapting human resources to the new technological challenges and scientific breakthroughs directly connected to the methodology of statistical production.
- Ensuring adequate financial resources not only for the production needs of current and emerging official statistics, but also for the allocation of statistical authorities with up-to-date technological resources to deal with the ongoing digital transformation revolution.
- Consolidating the importance of high quality official statistics to the Society compared with other sources of available information.
- Strengthening public awareness of the role of statistics in the Society, highlighting the value and notoriety of official statistics as a public asset and by raising awareness of the civic and legal responsibility of all citizens, enterprises and other entities, to collaborate with the statistical authorities in the production of official statistics.
- Adapting the dissemination and communication of official statistics to new technologies and information needs.
- Strengthening the cooperation with public and private entities, in particular for the sharing of information, promoting efficiency gains in the production of official statistics.

The document envisages a Vision for the NSS in 2022 and formulates three strategic objectives, focusing on the following main objectives:

Objective 1. The statistical production process and the adequate provision of human, financial and technological resources to the statistical authorities aiming at producing quality statistics.

Objective 2. Communication and dissemination of statistics and the fulfillment of the statistical needs of the society.

Objective 3. Coordination and cooperation between entities and sharing knowledge through effective partnerships.

Detailed lines of action (LA) are drawn for each objective in order to promote their implementation and guide the Council and the statistical authorities to elaborate a suitable program always bearing in mind the needs of a continuously changing Society and its pursuit for up to date quality statistics in order to properly support decision-making.

VISION FOR 2022

In 2022, official statistics comply with the highest standards of quality and are recognized as a reliable public asset, with the National Statistical System providing independent, credible, innovative and effective answers to the needs of the Society in terms of Information and Knowledge.

A. OBJECTIVES

Objective 1

Increase the relevance of official statistics in order to better understand reality and to support decision-making, ensuring the modernization of production systems, resources and infrastructures, by adopting the latest methodological, scientific and technological innovations always bearing in mind the safeguard of fundamental constitutional rights, and contributing to the transformation of information into knowledge.

Objective 2

Respond, in due time and with quality, to the needs of statistical data and to promote its use and adequate interpretation by citizens, through the use of modern communication methods, better dissemination initiatives, improving ways to access and understand official statistics, promoting statistical literacy and the visibility, timeliness and trust in official statistics.

Objective 3

Strengthen and consolidate interinstitutional coordination and cooperation mechanisms at national and international levels.

B. LINES OF ACTION

Objective 1

LA 1.1. Ensure the continued application of the European Statistics Code of Practice and the Public Commitment on European Statistics of the European System of Central Banks and monitor their compliance.

LA 1.2. Improve the gathering and use of administrative data and data from other available sources, namely in digital form, by deepening cooperation with public and private entities that have relevant and credible information usable in the production of official statistics, in order to minimize the statistical burden on citizens and other entities when responding to statistical authorities.

LA 1.3. Ensure the intervention of the statistical authorities from the beginning of the conception, development, modification and termination of administrative records in order to guarantee their use for statistical purposes.

LA 1.4. Adopt a model of population and housing censuses that makes full use of administrative data and allows the response to the respective questionnaires through the internet, making census data available in intervals of less than 10 years.

LA 1.5. Foster the development and modernization of systems for the production of official statistics, namely through the integration of information, statistical and geospatial systems and infrastructures, and the use of innovative information and communication technologies that enhance resource optimization.

LA 1.6. Adopt scientifically robust methodologies within the scope of the modernization of official statistics and participate in the development and implementation of national and international methodological references.

LA 1.7. Extend the production of official statistics from the economic, financial, social and environmental areas to new realities such as the digital economy, e-commerce and others of particular relevance, particularly within the framework of the sustainable development objectives of the 2030 Agenda, globalization and competitiveness, tourism, labour, social inequalities and migratory movements.

LA 1.8. Extend the geographical breakdown of relevant indicators, with due safeguard of the quality standards that should underlie official statistics, thus providing the Society with a growing knowledge of regional and local realities.

LA 1.9. Provide statistical authorities with appropriate technological and methodological infrastructures needed to cope with the new challenges faced when producing official statistics.

LA 1.10. Provide statistical authorities with human resource management tools that will allow them to benefit from professionals with advanced technical-scientific academic skills required by new models of statistical production and by the use of new sources of information.

Objective 2

LA 2.1. Ensure the quality of official statistics as regards relevance, accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, coherence and comparability, accessibility and clarity and continue to further extend the availability of long statistical series, improve data and metadata accessibility and clearly explain the data revision policy.

LA 2.2. Adopt proper dissemination and communication strategies having in consideration the various types of users, using the most advanced Information and Communication Technologies, namely in improving statistical portals, and incorporating mechanisms that facilitate the identification of new statistical needs.

LA 2.3. Further promote collaboration with researchers by increasing the availability of anonymized microdata for research purposes and of files for public use in full compliance with the principle of statistical secrecy.

LA 2.4. Increase the visibility of official statistics to the Society as a relevant public asset and promote awareness and information sharing using the appropriate communication channels.

LA 2.5. Promote statistical literacy as regards the understanding and importance of the use of statistics, namely as a more active intervention in the education system, and further promote public awareness of the civic duty to participate in the production of official statistics by collaborating with the statistical authorities in the prompt and thorough response to official surveys.

Objective 3

LA 3.1. Implement initiatives to strengthen institutional cooperation within the NSS, promoting an efficient and effective response to new demands and challenges posed by the Society, namely through the sharing of good practices and technical, scientific and technological knowledge.

LA 3.2. Promote research and studies in collaboration with the scientific community.

LA 3.3. Further update and incentivate the creation of single files in the NSS, indispensable tools for the harmonization, the rationalization of resources and the quality of official statistics.

LA 3.4. Intensify the use of audits and other mechanisms to assess the quality of official statistics in order to enhance their credibility.

LA 3.5. Strengthen the role of the Council, within the scope of its competences, namely by conceiving and implementing mechanisms to monitor compliance with the principles of the NSS Law by the statistical authorities, in full respect to their autonomy and independence.

LA 3.6. Strengthen cooperation within institutions belonging to the NSS and with public and private entities, in particular for the sharing of information, therefore promoting efficiency gains.

LA 3.7. Ensure the involvement of the Council in monitoring the process of methodological changes introduced by the statistical authorities in statistical operations, namely those with a high economic and social impact, when causing a break in the statistical time series or variable discontinuation.

LA 3.8. Make Government aware of the importance of complying with the provision of prior consultation with the Council, in accordance to the NSS Law, contributing to the elimination of redundancies in statistical production and a further implementation of the use of administrative data for the production of official statistics, thus reducing the statistical burden.

LA 3.9. Actively participate in international statistical meetings promoted by, among others, the European Union, OECD, the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) thus contributing to the strengthening of the country's international reputation in statistical terms.

LA 3.10. Contribute to the development and strengthening of the statistical systems of third countries by consolidating bilateral and multilateral relations in particular with Portuguese-speaking countries, within the priorities of the national cooperation policy.