Circular

Subject: General Guidelines on Quality Assurance for Official Statistics and notification thereof

This Ministry notified General Guidelines on Quality Assurance for Official Statistics on 6th April, 2018 which can be accessed at http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/main_menu/gazette-notification/notice-notification-6apr18.pdf. These Guidelines are for use and voluntary compliance by all the offices dealing with statistical matters including administrative statistics.

2. All the concerned offices at the Centre and in the States/UTs are requested to access the guidelines for compliance to improve the quality of their official statistical products. It is also requested that the Guidelines be brought to the notice of all line Departments and Local Governments for promoting compliance. The manner of compliance as provided in the Guidelines may be placed in the public domain and this Division may be intimated from time to time the action taken thereof.

[Signature]
(Dinesh V. G.)
Director
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1. All Secretaries of Central Ministries/Departments, Govt. of India
2. All Special/Principal Secretaries/Commissioner (Planning) in States/UTs (as per list)
3. All Director Generals, MoSPI
4. All Divisional Heads of MoSPI
5. All Directors, State/UTs DESs
6. Heads of all Statistics Divisions of Central Ministries/Departments, Govt. of India
संक्षिप्त विवरण

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संक्षिप्त विवरण

1. जेनेटिक नेशनल क्लियर एरोडेंस नेमिंग (एनड्यूएम) के लिए नगर तथा नगर तहसील संबंधी विशालनिदेश संस्थान राजस्थान क्लियर अयोग (यूएसएससी) द्वारा 2010 में आयोजित किए गए 41 वाले नए संरचनात्मक नेमिंग एक संयुक्त एक्सिलिन्सिट निष्कर्षित किए गए थे। वैज्ञानिक परिस्थितियों के उपरांत एनड्यूएम के लिए नया तंत्र अनुपालन विशालनिदेश एक पूर्वानुमान विनियम के रूप में यूएसएससी की प्रस्तुति किए गए थे। इन
MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 6th April, 2018

No. M-12014/1/2018-CAP. The Official agencies at the Centre and in the States and Union territories have been collecting, compiling and disseminating various statistical products from time to time. This Ministry, being the nodal Ministry on statistical matters, has been considering, for quite some time, the issue of quality assurance in respect of official statistics, being produced and disseminated by various official agencies. For this purpose, the Generic National Quality Assurance Framework endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission in its 43rd Session has been considered beneficial to the Indian Statistical System. The Framework would be useful to producers of official statistics in designing a statistical collection or product that is fit for purpose. It would also be helpful to users in making informed decisions since the framework assesses whether the statistics produced are fit for use, or are of an acceptable level of quality for their purposes. In view of these reasons, it has been decided to promote implementation of the Framework on a voluntary basis in a phased manner, enlisting the support of Central Ministries/Departments and the States/UTs. Accordingly, broad guidelines are given in the Schedule appended to this Notification, for use and voluntary compliance by the Official agencies.

SCHEDULE

General Guidelines on Quality Assurance for Official Statistics

Background

1. The development of the Template for a Generic National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) and the Guidelines to accompany the Template was undertaken by an Expert Group on NQAF in response to a request by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its forty-first session in 2010. After global consultation, updated Guidelines for the Template for NQAF were submitted to the UNSC as a background document. These guidelines include the NQAF template, lists of tools and references, detailed mapping showing the correspondence to several existing quality frameworks, and links to the online NQAF glossary. At its forty-third session held in 2012, the UNSC fully endorsed the template.

2. The template for NQAF, the NQAF checklist, Guidelines for the Template and Glossary are available online at the link given below:


   The template consists of 19 core NQAF lines and the corresponding 250 elements to be assured as well as supporting mechanisms. The “elements to be assured” are listed in the Checklist under relevant NQAF lines.

Steps to be followed

4. All Official statistical agencies in India are requested to review the existing quality framework in respect of each of their statistical products through the lens of the NQAF and apply the template of NQAF to bring out the level of quality assurance of the product. For this purpose, the agencies should map each of the 250 elements to the quality frameworks/quality assurance practices presently in vogue in respect of each of their statistical products, with a view to identify the degree to which the framework existing in each product complies with the elements.

5. In the mapping exercise, choices may be indicated against each element in the NQAF by marking in terms of tick mark under the listed categories of Yes, No, Partially true and Not applicable, which best describes current quality assurance practices and framework of each product. Explanations for the applicable choice may be written in the comments column of the template, as follows:

   Choice category Instructions on filling the Comments column

1: Yes (true)

   The mechanism through which an element is assured in the existing framework, or any example/evidence that the statement correctly applies to the existing framework, may be provided.

2: No (false)

   This will hold if a statement is relevant to the product but, for some reasons, not
Annex I

Template for a generic national quality assurance framework (NQAF), as developed by the Expert Group on National Quality Assurance Frameworks

1. Quality context
   1a. Circumstances and key issues driving the need for quality management
   1b. Benefits and challenges
   1c. Relationship to other statistical agency policies, strategies and frameworks and evolution over time

2. Quality concepts and frameworks
   2a. Concepts and terminology
   2b. Mapping to existing frameworks

3. Quality assurance guidelines
   3a. Managing the statistical system
      [NQAF 1] Coordinating the national statistical system
      [NQAF 2] Managing relationships with data users and data providers
      [NQAF 3] Managing statistical standards
   3b. Managing the institutional environment
      [NQAF 4] Assuring professional independence
      [NQAF 5] Assuring impartiality and objectivity
      [NQAF 6] Assuring transparency
      [NQAF 7] Assuring statistical confidentiality and security
      [NQAF 8] Assuring the quality commitment
      [NQAF 9] Assuring adequacy of resources
   3c. Managing statistical processes
      [NQAF 10] Assuring methodological soundness
      [NQAF 11] Assuring cost-effectiveness
      [NQAF 12] Assuring soundness of implementation
      [NQAF 13] Managing the respondent burden
   3d. Managing statistical outputs
      [NQAF 14] Assuring relevance
      [NQAF 15] Assuring accuracy and reliability
MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 25th April, 2018

No. M-12014/10/2018-CAPCSO.—Official agencies at the Centre and in the States and Union territories have been compiling and disseminating various short term indicators in the form of indices with pre-specified periodicity. Most of these socio-economic indices are used for reviewing performance of the economy and the society, for policy making. They are also of great utility for decision makers in the private sector.

2. This Ministry, being the nodal Ministry on statistical matters, has been considering, for quite some time, the issues of quality, timeliness and credibility of various socio-economic indices, being produced and disseminated by various official agencies. In order to streamline and further strengthen the system to provide better service to the policy makers, researchers, businesses and the public at large, it has now been decided, on the basis of recommendations of the National Statistical Commission, to provide broad guidelines as given in the Schedule appended to this Notification, for use by the Official agencies.

SCHEDULE

General Guidelines on Socio-Economic Indices

Introduction

1. Short term indicators, usually released as indices that measure short term movements in key areas of the economy and the society, comprise a range of statistical series that are generally compiled and disseminated periodically (on a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly basis). They facilitate the analysis of recent performance of the relevant sector and provide a basis for the preparation of forecasts of future performance.

2. In India, it is desirable to have indices at State/ UT / District level and for important urban centres. Indices are expected to provide comparison not only over time but also across different geographical locations/ important occupational classes at a given point of time. Thus, it is important to have spatial indices also.
indices are made available at as disaggregated levels as possible, e.g. for (i) Agro economic Region/ District level and/or for major cities, and (ii) for occupational classes.

14. At times, database for preparing item basket for a base year may not be available at such detail that facilitates unique identification of each item in the field for regular data collection. In such cases, relevant details of item specifications which represent the items may be collected for the base year first, and thereafter regular data in respect of the item specifications may be collected periodically for compilation of indices.

**Data collection and flow of data**

15. At the time of data collection, every informant maybe appropriately informed-

(a) the purpose for which data is being collected from him/her and the manner in which the data collected would be disseminated;

(b) whether furnishing data by the informant is voluntary or a statutory requirement, and in case of statutory requirement, the consequences of not furnishing data or furnishing false data;

(c) of the manner, the sources to be tapped and the persons to be contacted for the purpose of accessing data collected from him/her.

16. Where administrative statistics are not available for compiling indices, it is desirable to collect data by using the facility of GPS tools under the provisions of the Collection of Statistics Act, 2008, so as to ensure that data collected is genuine and is owned by the concerned informants. Compliance with the provisions of the Act will ensure quality data collection, supervision, processing and confidentiality of the data.

17. It may be ensured that the work of data collection for compilation of indices is evenly spread throughout the period of data collection.

18. Data used for compilation of indices is usually considered sensitive in policy formulation. Hence, relevant data collection may be treated as a non-professional or a part-time job. It is necessary to ensure that data that is collected periodically relates to the pre-determined item specifications only. Hence, regular data collection machinery may be established, as far as feasible.

19. The period by which data for a particular round of data collection would be available with informants may be duly considered while prescribing the date of submission of data by them. For example, in case of businesses, the concerned managements will require some time to collect data from its internal units before consolidating it and submitting it to official agencies. Hence, the time required for collecting data from internal units and its consolidation may be considered for prescribing the time by which data may reach official agencies.

20. In order to get real time data with minimum time lag, it is advisable to ensure data flow from the field through a dedicated web platform designed for the purpose using server/cloud or any other platform.

21. Data collection maybe subject to strict supervision and scrutiny, both on field and off the field. A provision may be made in the system to verify, on a random basis, the data furnished by any informant (say, a shopkeeper) from his neighbour (engaged in the same or similar activity) for its veracity.

22. Appropriate validation checks may be incorporated in the computerized system for scrutiny and validation of data received and for providing necessary alerts for taking follow-up on non-reporting cases and cases requiring review due to lack of quality.

23. Clear and effective communication channels between the concerned official agency and its field agencies maybe established, to tackle expeditiously non-reporting cases and inconsistencies found in the data. If necessary, a helpdesk can also be established for resolving queries from the field.

24. Methodology for addressing non-response, non-availability of data from specified informants, and for substitutions may be pre-specified. Procedure for treatment of non-reporting cases maybe prescribed to all official agencies furnishing data for applying the procedure before furnishing data for compilation of indices.

25. There could be situations where data for the same or similar purpose is getting collected by different official agencies at the Centre and in the States/ UTs for compilation of their own indices. In such cases, arrangements for sharing of data without compromising on confidentiality may be worked out for sharing of data and avoiding duplication. Such arrangements will reduce costs for the agencies and burden on informants.
39. The authority competent to approve release of indices, and the details of persons/authorities for whom pre-release access is given, may be spelt out in the metadata.

40. Metadata, including unit level data, may be made available to the widest possible audience through official websites, appropriate electronic portals and other dissemination channels on an equitable basis. It is desirable to provide indices, unit level data and metadata in soft copies free of cost to users and the public at large, through designated institutions, such as Universities, Research Institutions and Government Offices, to promote research.

User interactions & User Surveys

41. An administrative mechanism for receiving complaints and queries from users, customers and informants may be evolved and made public. The action taken on the complaints and queries also needs to be made public through periodic reports.

42. Conferences/Workshops may be organised to sensitise users and media on the methodological aspects and utility of the indices.

43. User surveys may be organised periodically to understand the type of use that the indices are put to and elicit suggestions for improvement. Findings of the surveys and action taken thereof may be placed in the public domain from time to time.

Data Warehousing/archiving

44. Each official agency involved in compiling and releasing indices may spell out the measures taken to store indices, unit level data, metadata and the manner in which confidentiality of data would be maintained.

45. All the official agencies at the Centre and in the States/UTs may furnish soft copies of periodic releases of final indices, metadata and unit level data from time to time to the Data Storage and Dissemination Division of CSO for facilitating maintenance of an inventory. The CSO may monitor this activity regularly and bring out broad item-wise data (in terms of ranges and median) periodically (say, at least annually).

ARUN KUMAR YADAV, Jr. Secy.