

Introduction to data governance for monitoring the SDGs

UNITAR – UNSD e-learning course

Course Syllabus

Course duration: 15 August – 31 December 2019



Table of contents

Background.....	1
Target audience.....	1
Course structure and learning objectives	1
Learning methodology	1
Module 1. Understanding UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.....	2
Module 2. Effective data governance systems for monitoring SDGs	2
Module 3. Managing data-related partnerships, capabilities, resources and processes in the context of SDGs	3
Certification and feedback	4
Technical requirements	4

Background

This e-learning course is developed by the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) drawing primarily on the outcomes of the consultations designed to inform the forthcoming edition of the Handbook of Statistical Organization. The course has benefitted from the expert contributions and review by Mr. Gabriel Gamez, Inter-Regional Advisor from UN Statistics Division. It is hoped that a more advanced course will be developed in the future, more specifically, for the management of National Statistical Offices based on the finalized latest edition of the Handbook¹.

Target audience

This is an introductory level course aimed at the broad audience, including decision-makers and data producers from within and outside the National Statistical Offices. The current edition is being delivered as a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).

Course structure and learning objectives

The overall objective of the introductory course is to raise awareness among the decision-makers about the value of official statistics by increasing knowledge about the fundamentals of official statistics, institutional set-up, coordination and communication around data ecosystems. It will consist of 3 modules:

1. Understanding UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
2. Effective data governance systems for monitoring SDGs;
3. Managing data-related partnerships, capabilities, resources and processes in the context of SDGs.

Following the completion of the course, participants will be able to

1. Identify official statistics from other data produced and describe UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and their implementation through legislative frameworks;
2. Describe various quality dimensions of official statistics from a user perspective as well as organizational set-ups and coordination within and outside of National Statistical Systems;
3. Distinguish data types and sources and apply internationally practiced models related to data production and statistical organization.

Learning methodology

This is a non-facilitated online course organized in 3 modules. Each module includes:

- an interactive lesson,
- a manual in a pdf format,
- a glossary and abbreviations,

¹ This will be an extended version with a more technical focus. This advanced course will aim to attain the same primary objective as the Handbook "guide chief statisticians and senior managers of statistical organizations in developing and maintaining statistical capacity that is fit for purpose".

- built-in formative assessments,
- a summative assessment (multiple-choice test) at the end of the Module.

This course edition will be hosted on UNITAR's Virtual learning Environment.

Module 1. Understanding UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

This Module aims to lay the foundation for the rest of the course by introducing the concept of “official statistics” and providing its definition. It also explains the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that highlight the real value of official statistics for decision-makers and society at large. The Module concludes with possible legislative tools and frameworks that can help ensure their implementation. The Module largely draws on the work carried out by the United Nations Statistics Division with a number of international experts on the preparation of the forthcoming edition of the Handbook of Statistical Organization.

Learning objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between “official statistics” and other statistics and data produced by various actors;
2. Describe the meaning of each of the 10 UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
3. Identify sound legislative frameworks that can help implement these principles;

Structure

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 2. Official statistics

Chapter 3. Principles and standards of official statistics

Module 2. Effective data governance systems for monitoring SDGs

This module provides an overview of governance and institutional approaches that can be used to ensure that official statistics are produced and disseminated in accordance with UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. The module does so by discussing the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of various organisational set-ups of National Statistical Systems, and the use of strategic planning instruments. It also looks at the role of an Advisory Statistical Council representing a user perspective when it comes to ensuring an effective monitoring of national development policies and SDGs.

Learning objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Describe the various quality dimensions of Official Statistics in terms of institutional framework, production processes and final quality of the output from a user perspective;
2. Discuss different organizational set-ups of National Statistical Systems, their respective advantages and disadvantages;
3. Discuss possible instruments to improve strategic planning and coordination within and beyond National Statistical System, incl. with non-traditional data producers and providers;
4. Explain the role of an Advisory Statistical Council and how it can promote the production of statistics and indicators for the monitoring of national development policies, incl. new needs.

Structure

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 2. What makes official statistics trustworthy?

Chapter 3. National Statistical System: system and delineation of responsibilities

Chapter 4. Coordination within and beyond National Statistical System

Chapter 5. Involving users in the national statistical system

Module 3. Managing data-related partnerships, capabilities, resources and processes in the context of SDGs

This module is a hands-on module that aims to enable course participants to apply the knowledge acquired in modules 1 and 2 on UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and approaches to strategically governing National Statistical Systems to concrete situations. The module introduces two internationally recognised models for managing data-related partnerships, capabilities, resources as well as the processes of data production and dissemination. These models known as GSBPM - or Generic Statistical Business Production Model - and GAMS0 - or Generic Activity Model of Statistical Organization – were initially developed by UN Economic Commission for Europe and were then discussed as useful tools for managing statistical organizations during UN Statistical Commission and are promoted as such across different world regions. Course participants will learn how to use these models to analyse specific measurement problems.

Learning objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to

1. Distinguish data collected for statistical purposes from other data sources in terms of quality, coverage and relevance;
2. Formulate nationally relevant measurement problems and business cases in connection with the national monitoring and implementation of the SDGs;
3. Apply Generic Statistical Business Production Model and Generic Activity Model of Statistical Organization to solve a specific measurement issue.

Structure

Chapter 1. Data communities and data sources

Chapter 2. Introduction to GAMS0 - Generic Activity Model of Statistical Organization

Chapter 3. Introduction to GSBPM - Generic Statistical Business Production Model

Chapter 4. Measurement problems and StaTact in the context of the SDGs

Certification and feedback

Each of the three modules is followed by an objective multiple-choice assessment or a quiz. Three attempts are allowed per quiz. The attempt with the highest score is retained as the grade for the module. Each attempt proposes 10 questions drawn at random from the respective question bank. For each question, the correct responses add up to 1 point. Each incorrect response is penalized individually by -0.1 point. Participants would need to obtain a minimum of 7 points out 10 points for the module quiz to complete the assessment requirements.

Participants interested in obtaining a certificate of completion for the course would need to meet the above requirement for all of the 3 modules. Those participants who complete the requirements for at least 2 out of 3 modules are entitled to a certificate of participation.

Participants will be requested to provide feedback on the course by filling in a feedback form which can be accessed in the 'Course Evaluation' section on the course home page.

Technical requirements

Browser:

- The course works best with Firefox 3.6 or higher (download for free at <http://www.mozilla-europe.org/en/firefox>)
- The course is also compatible with Google Chrome (download for free at <https://www.google.com/intl/en/chrome/browser/>)
- It is not recommended to use Internet Explorer for technical reasons
- Note JavaScript & Cookies must be enabled

Software:

- Adobe Acrobat Reader (download for free at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>).
- Adobe Flash Player (download for free at <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer>)
- Microsoft Office (Windows or Apple version) or Open Office (download for free at <http://www.openoffice.org>)

Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; MacOS 9 or MacOS X

Hardware: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space

Modem: 56 K