

ASEAN COMMUNITY STATISTICAL SYSTEM (ACSS) CODE OF PRACTICE

Adopted by the ACSS Committee at its 2nd Session in Siem Reap, Cambodia,

27 September 2012

Preamble

We, the Heads of Statistical Offices of Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN),

Guided by the Vision of '*The ASEAN Community Statistical System will by 2015 be a forward looking and reliable provider of relevant, timely and comparable statistics in support of the ASEAN Community*' and the Mission of '*The ASEAN Community Statistical System will provide relevant, timely and comparable ASEAN statistics in support of evidence based policy and decision making and enhance the statistical capacity of the Member States and ASEAN Secretariat*',

Recognising the partnership between and among the national statistical authorities of the ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat in the development, production, dissemination and communication of ASEAN statistics,

Do hereby commit to adhere to the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Code of Practice.

Background

The ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics 2010-2015 adopted in October 2010 calls for a common code of practice as an important means of ensuring trust, accountability and highest professional standards in the development, production, dissemination and communication of ASEAN statistics.

The ACSS Code of Practice shall set out the guidelines and standards in conducting the development, production, dissemination, and communication of statistical products and services. It contains the fundamental norms that will help ensure trust in the statistical products and services of the national statistical authorities of the ASEAN Member States (AMS) and of the ASEANstats and maximum service to the users of statistics. It also improves the levels of user satisfaction, transparency and accessibility.

The ACSS Code of Practice shall guide the national statistical authorities of the AMS and ASEANstats in the development, production, dissemination and communication of ASEAN statistics as follows:

- Provides a set of guidelines on good practices;
- Helps to develop a better understanding of the training, supervision and support required;
- Improves confidence of the users of statistics through the information contained on the conduct and practices; and
- Raises awareness among data users on the scope and limitations.

The ACSS Code of Practice is consistent with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994. The Principles also reflect the values stipulated in the ACSS Strategic Plan adopted in July 2011. These Principles are subsumed in three major dimensions on: Institutional Environment, Statistical Processes, and Statistical Output. A set of indicators of good practice for each of the Principles provides a reference for reviewing the implementation status of the key principles of the ACSS Code of Practice. All aspects of the development, production, dissemination and communication of ASEAN statistics are covered by the ACSS Code of Practice.

Key Principles of the Code of Practice for the ASEAN Community Statistical System

The 8 principles are:

A. Institutional Environment

1. Mandate for Data Collection
2. Professionalism & Integrity
3. Confidentiality
4. Accountability
5. Statistical Cooperation & Coordination

B. Statistical Process

6. Cost Effectiveness
7. Reduced Respondent Burden

C. Statistical Output

8. Commitment to Quality (Relevance, Reliability, Timeliness, Comparability & Accessibility)

The ACSS Code of Practice can be subject for review when new developments in the statistical community take place. The ACSS can update the Code of Practice to address new developments in the operating environment while upholding a consistent set of ideals.

A. INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Key Principle 1: Mandate for Data Collection - *National statistical authorities of the AMSs have clear legal mandates to collect information, which are shared with the ASEANstats for the compilation of ASEAN statistics.*

Indicators

- 1.1 The mandate of the national statistical authorities of the AMSs to collect information for the production and dissemination of national official statistics is stipulated in national laws and/or national legal frameworks;
- 1.2 National statistics produced by national statistical authorities of the AMSs is provided to the ASEANstats for the compilation of ASEAN statistics, under the coordination of the National Statistical Offices; and
- 1.3 The ASEANstats produces, disseminates, and communicates ASEAN statistics required by the ASEAN Community, with the guidance of the ACSS Committee.

Key Principle 2: Professionalism and Integrity - *National statistical authorities of the AMSs and ASEANstats decide according to strictly professional consideration on methods and procedures in various stages of statistical activities from data collection to data dissemination.*

Indicators

- 2.1 Decisions are based on professional considerations of responsibility, competence and expert knowledge;
- 2.2 The national statistical authorities apply the relevant international standards, guidelines and good practices in the overall methodological framework;
- 2.3 The national statistical authorities ensure that the local staff avails of relevant training courses and conference that will allow them to improve their knowledge and skills; and
- 2.4 The ASEAN working groups and task forces are responsible for setting policies, frameworks, and guidelines on the production of timely and comparable statistics, supported by the ASEANstats.

Key Principle 3: Confidentiality- *The confidentiality of the information provided by households, enterprises, administrative units and other respondents for statistical purposes is safeguarded by national statistical authorities of the AMSs and ASEANstats.*

Indicators

- 3.1 The mandate of the national statistical authorities of the AMSs to safeguard the confidentiality of information provided for statistical purposes is stipulated in national law and/or national legal frameworks;
- 3.2 Policies, guidelines, terms and conditions/ protocol exist to safeguard statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes at both national and ASEAN levels; and
- 3.3 Physical and technological infrastructures are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases and archives.

Key Principle 4: Accountability *ASEAN statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form with sources and methodology, and disseminated in a suitable and convenient manner with clear mention of their limitations.*

Indicators

- 4.1 ASEAN statistics are presented in a form that facilitates proper and easy interpretation and meaningful comparisons;

- 4.2 Data sources, methodologies, and limitations are provided;
- 4.3 Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and appropriately communicated;
- 4.4 The national statistical authorities of the AMSs are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics; and
- 4.5 Data sets/ variables provided by the AMSs to ASEANstats are defined in the relevant working groups and task forces, and documented in their respective data transmission protocols or meeting records.

Key Principle 5: Statistical Cooperation and Coordination - *Cooperation and coordination in statistics contribute to improvement in AMSs' national statistical systems and ASEANstats.*

Indicators

- 5.1. National coordination mechanisms exist for coordinating the development, production and dissemination of national statistics and ensuring their quality;
- 5.2. National coordination mechanisms exist for the country focal point, to coordinate the development, harmonisation and provision of statistics required for compilation of ASEAN statistics;
- 5.3. Close cooperation and coordination between and among the national statistical authorities of the AMSs and ASEANstats are in place to produce comparable ASEAN statistics;
- 5.4. Mechanisms are in place for various ASEAN sectoral bodies and other key stakeholders to advise the ACSS in setting overall statistical priorities;
- 5.5. The ACSS is equipped with a proper mechanism for data exchange between the AMSs and the ASEANstats to enable the development, production, dissemination and communication of ASEAN statistics satisfactorily meeting the increasing demand;
- 5.6. Cooperation with the international statistical community is organised to improve methodology, effectiveness of the methods and tools implemented, where feasible; and
- 5.7. Coordination exists among donor assistance to AMSs and ASEANstats to optimise the use of resources.

B. STATISTICAL PROCESSES

Key Principle 6: Cost Effectiveness and Adequacy of Resources - *Resources are available adequately and used effectively.*

Indicators

- 6.1 Procedures exist to optimise resources utilised in the production and dissemination of ASEAN statistics;
- 6.2 Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new ASEAN statistics against their cost, and to assess if any ASEAN statistics can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources;
- 6.3 Productivity potential of information and communications technology is being optimised for data collection, production and dissemination; and
- 6.4 Staff, financial, and technological resources are available both in magnitude and in quality to meet the current needs for ASEAN statistics.

Key Principle 7: Reduced Respondent Burden - *The reporting burden should be proportionate to the needs of the users and should not be excessive for respondents.*

Indicators

- 7.1 The range and detail of demands on ASEAN statistics is limited to what is required to meet the needs of the users;
- 7.2 Administrative sources are used when possible to avoid duplicating requests for information;
- 7.3 The national statistical authorities of the AMSs promote sharing of data, where possible, to avoid multiplication of surveys; and
- 7.4 Existing data sources are examined to assess if additional tabulation or statistical techniques can be applied to approximate the data required before undertaking new surveys.

C. STATISTICAL OUTPUT

Key Principle 8: Commitment to Quality - *The national statistical authorities of the AMSs and the ASEANstats are committed to quality and to regularly review and improve the quality of statistical processes and products. The quality dimensions for ASEAN statistics are Relevance, Reliability, Timeliness, Comparability, and Accessibility.*

Indicators

- 8.1 Relevance - ACSS is guided by the statistical requirements reflected in the ASEAN Community Blueprints and user-producer consultations;
- 8.2 Reliability - Monitoring mechanisms are in place to regularly review and improve the quality of the statistical processes and products;
- 8.3 Timeliness - A release calendar is established for ASEAN statistics at both national and ASEAN levels, and the periodicity of statistics released takes into account user requirements as much as possible;
- 8.4 Comparability - ASEAN statistics are comparable, and detailed concordance as set by international standards exists between national classification systems and the corresponding ASEAN classification systems; and
- 8.5 Accessibility - ASEAN statistics are produced and made readily available through dissemination mechanisms utilising modern information and communication technology, and where appropriate, traditional hard copy.