

ISI
WORLD STATISTICS
CONGRESS
2025
THE HAGUE

Session IPS 767
Methods for Communicating and Enhancing Public
Confidence in Official Statistics-Some Examples

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Thursday, October 9, 14:00-15:40

Introduction

- The United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
- Literature review
- Mapping key concepts and their relationships
- Identification of good practices
- Reflections
- Work in progress



United Nations

Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*

For more information: unstats.un.org

The General Assembly,

Recalling recent resolutions¹ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council highlighting the fundamental importance of official statistics for the national and global development agenda,

Bearing in mind the critical role of high-quality official statistical information in analysis and informed policy decision-making in support of sustainable development, peace and security, as well as for mutual knowledge and trade among the States and peoples of an increasingly connected world, demanding openness and transparency,

Bearing in mind also that the essential trust of the public in the integrity of official statistical systems and confidence in statistics depend to a large extent on respect for the fundamental values and principles that are the basis of any society seeking to understand itself and respect the rights of its members, and in this context that professional independence and accountability of statistical agencies are crucial,

Stressing that, in order to be effective, the fundamental values and principles that govern statistical work have to be guaranteed by legal and institutional frameworks and be respected at all political levels and by all stakeholders in national statistical systems,

Endorses the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics set out below, as adopted by the Statistical Commission in 1994² and reaffirmed in 2013, and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2013/21 of 24 July 2013:

* General Assembly Resolution 68/261 adopted on 29 January 2014. The "titles" of the Principles are not part of the original text.

¹ These include General Assembly resolution 64/267 on World Statistics Day and Economic and Social Council resolutions 2006/15 on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, 2006/6 on strengthening statistical capacity and 2013/21 on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

² For the original preamble used on the occasion of the initial adoption of the Fundamental Principles in 1994, see chapter V of the report of the Statistical Commission on its special session (*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 9 (E/1994/29)*). More information on the Fundamental Principles and their history is available from the website of the Statistics Division.

Principle 1: Relevance, Impartiality, and Equal Access

Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.

Principle 2: Professional Standards, Scientific Principles, and Professional Ethics

To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

Principle 3: Accountability and Transparency

To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

Principle 4: Prevention of Misuse

The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.

Principle 5: Sources of Official Statistics

Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.

Principle 6: Confidentiality

Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

Principle 7: Legislation

The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.

Principle 8: National Coordination

Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

Principle 9: Use of International Standards

The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

Principle 10: International Cooperation

Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.



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Research question

Do NSIs describe approaches to how they fulfill the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics?

Follow-up questions:

- Are the principles and related concepts mentioned or explained on the NSI's website?
- Is there a clear and structured approach in place?
- How widely is the approach implemented across the organization?
- Is there any follow-up or evaluation of the approach?
- And finally, is the information easy to find and accessible to the public?

Goal => Identify good practices

Websites included

- ABS
- CSO (Ireland)
- DESTATIS (Germany)
- Eesti Statistika (Estonia)
- INE (Portugal)
- INSEE (France)
- ISTAT (Italy)
- SSB (Norway)
- Statistics Canada
- Statistics Denmark
- Statistics Korea

- Statistics Sweden
- SURS (Slovenia)
- UK Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- UK Office for Statistics Regulation
- UK Statistical Authority

International Organizations Included:

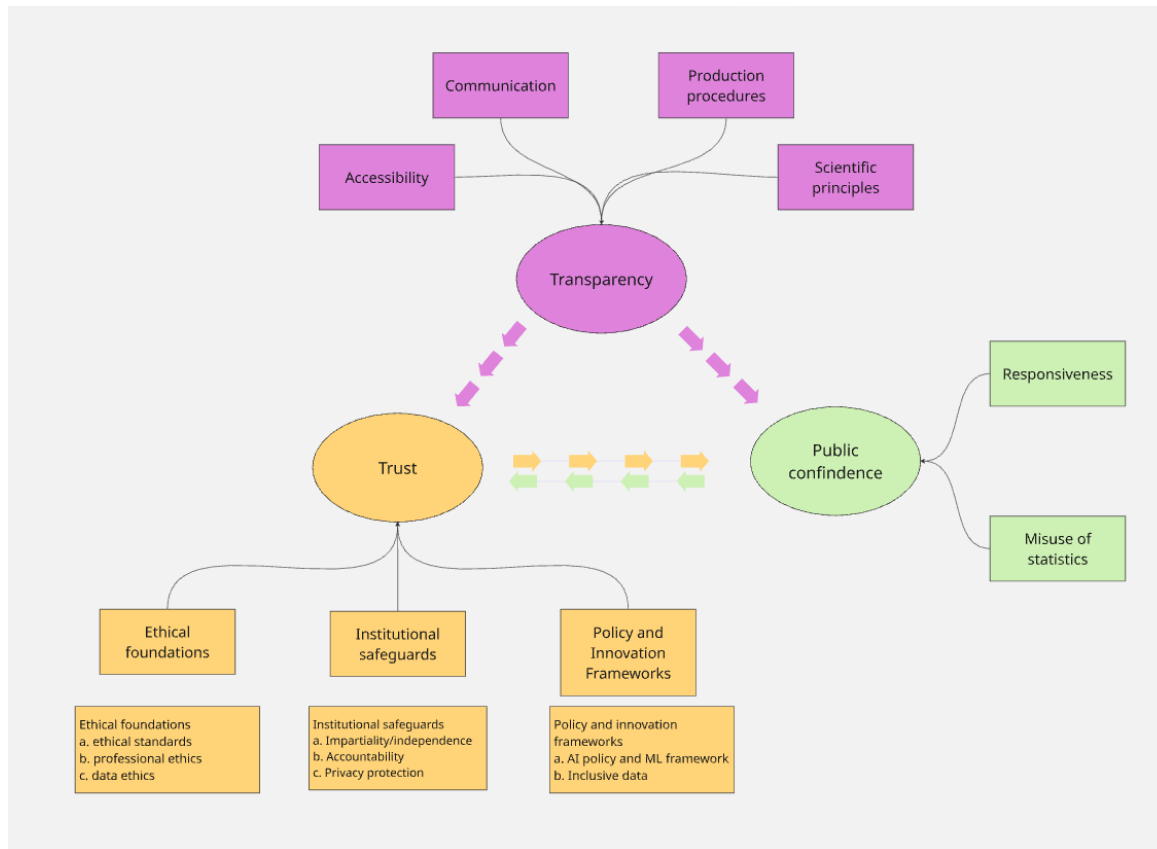
- European Central Bank (ECB)
- Eurostat
- UNECE

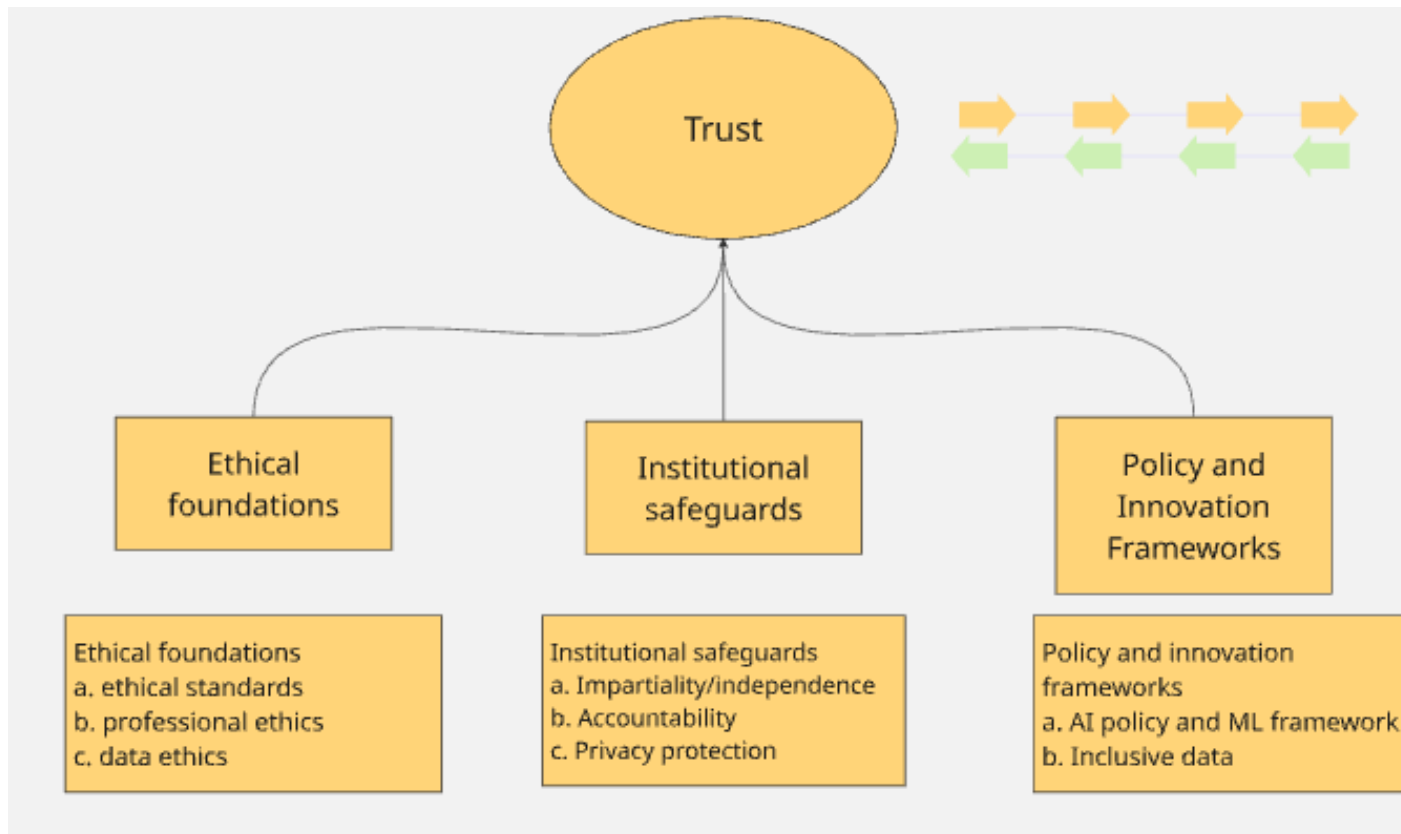
Trust and public confidence

- No universally agreed definitions of trust and public confidence, one possible distinction:
- Trust: Belief that statistical institutions act competently, impartially, transparently, and according to ethical and scientific standards.
- Public Confidence: The extent to which people believe the data are accurate, reliable, and useful—and are willing to rely on them for decision-making.

Relationships Between Key Concepts

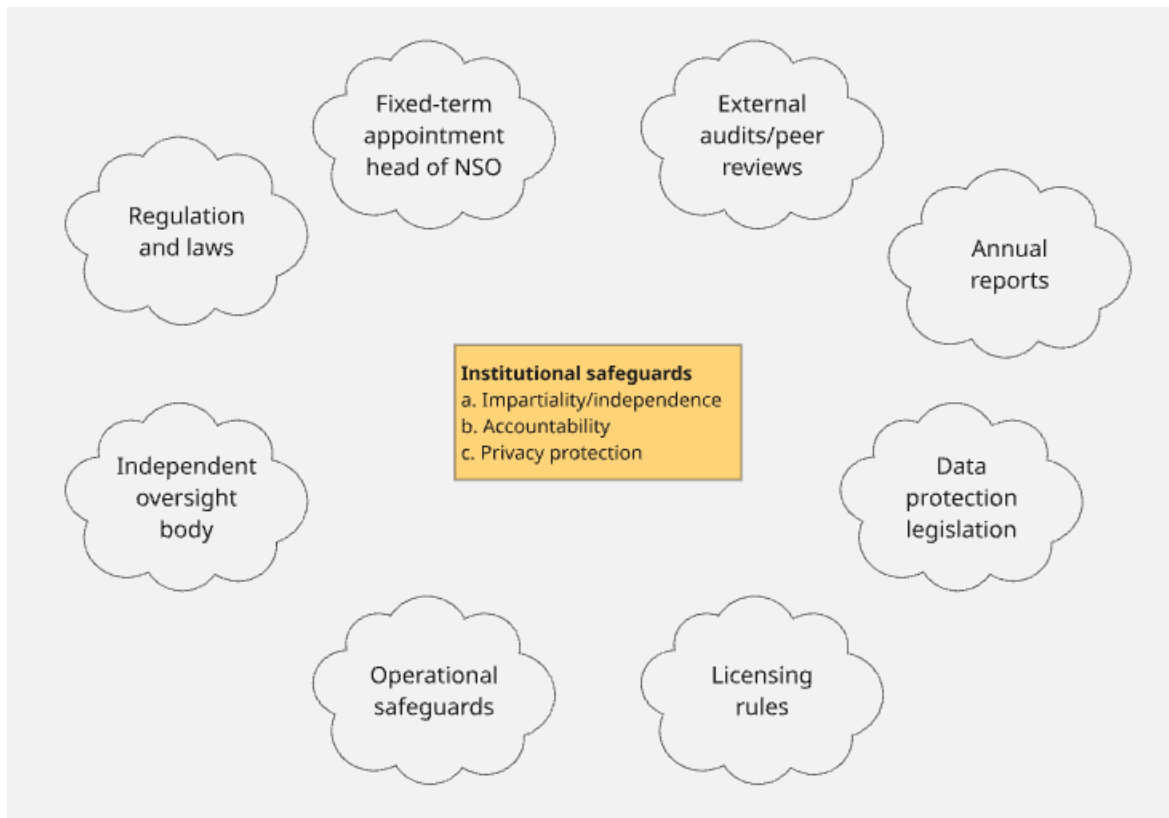
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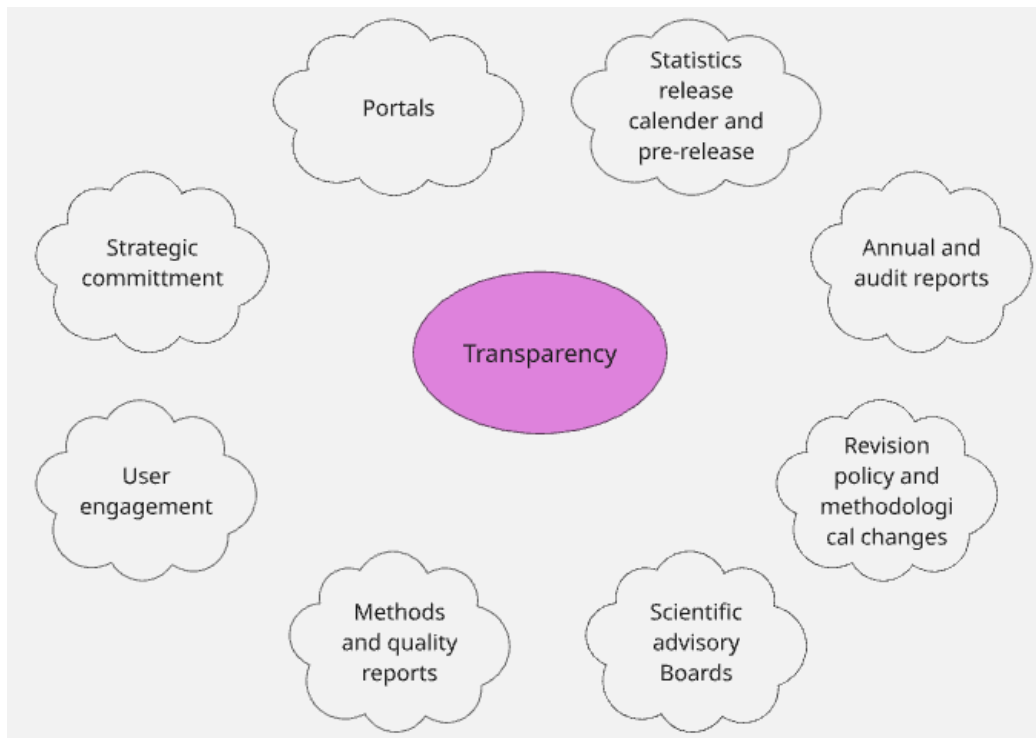
Approaches

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Approaches

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Transparency and governance - Office for National Statistics

Transparency and governance

We are working towards releasing more information about our organisation, to improve the transparency and accountability of government. We publish details of our structure and spending, and you can make a Freedom of Information request for other information.

Statistics for the public good

UK Statistics Authority five year strategy 2020 to 2025 and the ONS Strategic Business Plan.

Leadership team

Our leaders and their roles and responsibilities.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

You can ask us for all of the information we have on any subject you choose.

Declarations

Our energy consumption, business expenses and hospitality registers.

ONS Government Major Projects Portfolio data

Detailed information about projects on the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

Pre-release access

Details of exceptional pre-release access granted to ONS statistics.

Data protection

Privacy information for data subjects.

Data strategy

How we use and manage data, while providing the best standard of statistical information for the public.

ONS Evaluation

The ONS's vision for evaluation, embedding best practice and supporting evaluations across government through the Analysis Function and Integrated Data Service.

COVID-19 Infection Surveillance Digital (CISD) Advisory Board

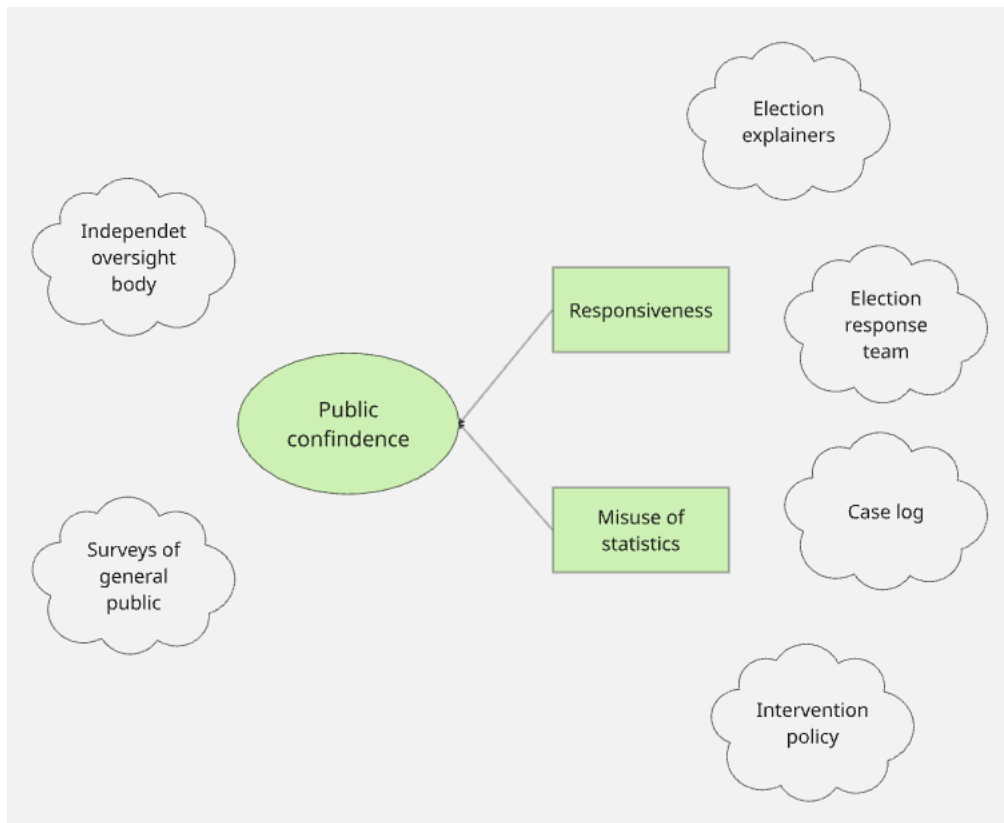
The CISD Advisory Board makes scientific and analytical recommendations to the ONS.

The Office for National Statistics' Revisions Policy and Correction of Errors Policy

Guidance on our central Revisions and Correction of Errors policies, including definitions and why they are used.

Approaches

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[Casework – Office for
Statistics Regulation](#)

Reflections

- Most NSIs published laws and regulations (e.g. GDPR, EU Regulation 223)
- Nice "transparency" portals: ONS UK, CSO Ireland, Statistics Canada
- Not explicitly mentioned: professional ethics and scientific principles
- Procedures to handle misuse of statistics are rare (exception: UK case log)
- EU peer reviews (Code of practice) –deployed in EU
- Measure of public confidence or trust: the UK's Public Confidence in Official Statistics Survey

More examples? Please let us know!

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Thank you!