



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
EUROSTAT

Deputy Director-General  
Unit 0-2: Statistical governance, quality and evaluation



## Comparison of the UN principles governing international statistical activities and the European Code of Practice.

Some items from the UN principles governing international statistical activities are not covered by the CoP. They are all, in one way or another, already implemented. Some are, given the existence of the ESS, irrelevant or redundant (like advising countries on implementing issues or developing and using professional codes of conduct) or going slightly beyond what is requested by the CoP (like ensuring free public accessibility of key statistics).

They are listed below:

- *Ensuring free public accessibility of key statistics*
- *Developing and using professional codes of conduct*
- *Giving credit, in the dissemination of international statistics, to the original source and using agreed quotation standards when re-using statistics originally collected by others*
- *Making decisions about statistical work programmes publicly available*
- *Ensuring that national statistical offices and other national organisations for official statistics are duly involved and advocating that the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics are applied when data are collected in countries*
- *Advising countries on implementation issues concerning international standards*
- *Designating one or more statistical units to implement statistical programmes, including one unit that coordinates the statistical work of the organisation and represents the organisation in international statistical meetings.*
- *Working systematically towards agreement on which series to consider as authoritative for each important set of statistics*

Others refer to activities not directly related to the production of statistics like:

- *Coordinating technical cooperation activities with countries between donors and between different organisations in the national statistical system to avoid duplication of effort and to encourage complementarities and synergy*
- *Basing cooperation projects on user requirements, promoting full participation of the main stakeholders, taking account of local circumstances and stage of statistical development*
- *Empowering recipient national statistical systems and governments to take the lead*
- *Setting cooperation projects within a balanced overall strategic framework for national development of official statistics*
- *Enhancing the use of statistics by developing educational material for important user groups*

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<p><b>Institutional Environment</b></p> <p>Institutional and organisational factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of a statistical authority producing and disseminating European Statistics. The relevant issues are professional independence, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity.</p>	
<p><b>Principle 1: Professional Independence -</b>  <i>The professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies, as well as from private sector operators, ensures the credibility of European Statistics.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
<p>The independence of the statistical authority from political and other external interference in producing and disseminating official statistics is specified in law.</p>	
<p>The head of the statistical authority has sufficiently high hierarchical standing to ensure senior level access to policy authorities and administrative public bodies. He/She should be of the highest professional calibre.</p>	
<p>The head of the statistical authority and, where appropriate, the heads of its statistical bodies have responsibility for ensuring that European Statistics are produced and disseminated in an independent manner.</p>	
<p>The head of the statistical authority and, where appropriate, the heads of its statistical bodies have the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical</p>	<p><b>2) To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the</b></p>

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<p>methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases.</p>	<p><b>highest professional standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using strictly professional considerations for decisions on methodology, terminology and data presentation</li> </ul>
<p>The statistical work programmes are published and periodic reports describe progress made.</p>	<p><b>3) The public has a right to be informed about the mandates for the statistical work of the organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making documents for and reports of statistical meetings publicly available</li> </ul>
<p>Statistical releases are clearly distinguished and issued separately from political/policy statements.</p>	<p><b>2) To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making a clear distinction, in statistical publications, between statistical and analytical comments on the one hand and policy-prescriptive and advocacy comments on the other</li> </ul>
<p>– The statistical authority, when appropriate, comments publicly on statistical issues, including criticisms and misuses of official statistics.</p>	<p><b>7) Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responding to perceived erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle 2: Mandate for Data Collection</b>  <i>- Statistical authorities must have a clear legal mandate to collect information for European statistical purposes. Administrations, enterprises and households, and the public at large may be compelled by law to allow access to or deliver data for European statistical purposes at the request of statistical authorities.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
<p>The mandate to collect information for the production and dissemination of official statistics is specified in law.</p>	

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The statistical authority is allowed by national legislation to use administrative records for statistical purposes.	
On the basis of a legal act, the statistical authority may compel response to statistical surveys.	
<p><b>Principle 3: Adequacy of Resources -</b>  <i>The resources available to statistical authorities must be sufficient to meet European Statistics requirements.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
Staff, financial, and computing resources, adequate both in magnitude and in quality, are available to meet current European Statistics needs.	
The scope, detail and cost of European Statistics are commensurate with needs	
Procedures exist to assess and justify demands for new European Statistics against their cost.	
<p>– Procedures exist to assess the continuing need for all European Statistics, to see if any can be discontinued or curtailed to free up resources.</p>	<p><b>1) High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems</b></p> <p>- Having regular consultations with key users both inside and outside the relevant organisation to ascertain that their needs are met</p> <p><b>5) Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimise the reporting burden for data providers</b></p> <p>- Periodic review of statistical programmes to minimise the burden on data providers</p>
<p><b>Principle 4: Quality Commitment -</b> <i>All ESS members commit themselves to work and co-operate according to the principles fixed in the Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	

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Product quality is regularly monitored according to the ESS quality components.	<p><b>4) Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users</b></p> <p>- Aiming continuously to introduce methodological improvements and systems to manage and improve the quality and transparency of statistics</p>
Processes are in place to monitor the quality of the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics.	
Processes are in place to deal with quality considerations, including tradeoffs within quality, and to guide planning for existing and emerging surveys.	
Quality guidelines are documented and staff are well trained. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and made known to the public.	
– There is a regular and thorough review of the key statistical outputs using external experts where appropriate.	
<p><b>Principle 5: Statistical Confidentiality -</b>  <i>The privacy of data providers (households, enterprises, administrations and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information they provide and its use only for statistical purposes must be absolutely guaranteed.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
Statistical confidentiality is guaranteed in law.	
Statistical authority staff sign legal confidentiality commitments on appointment.	
Substantial penalties are prescribed for any wilful breaches of statistical confidentiality.	
Instructions and guidelines are provided on the protection of statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination processes. These guidelines are spelled out in writing and	

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made known to the public.	
Physical and technological provisions are in place to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases.	<p><b>6) Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Putting measures in place to prevent the direct or indirect disclosure of data on persons, households, businesses and other individual respondents</li> </ul>
– Strict protocols apply to external users accessing statistical microdata for research purposes.	<p><b>6) Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing a framework describing methods and procedures to provide sets of anonymous micro-data for further analysis by bona fide researchers, maintaining the requirements of confidentiality</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Principle 6: Impartiality and Objectivity</b>  - <i>Statistical authorities must produce and disseminate European Statistics respecting scientific independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
<p>Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations.  Choices of sources and statistical techniques are informed by statistical considerations.</p>	<p><b>1) High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compiling and disseminating international statistics based on impartiality</li> </ul> <p><b>2) To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using strictly professional considerations for decisions on methodology, terminology and data presentation</li> </ul> <p><b>8) Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring that decisions on such standards are free from conflicts of interest, and are perceived to be so</li> </ul>
<p>Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.</p>	
<p>Information on the methods and procedures used by the statistical authority are publicly available.</p>	
<p>Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.</p>	
<p>All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time and any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements should be revised so as to ensure impartiality.</p>	<p><b>1) High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing equal access to statistics for all users</li> </ul>
<p>– Statistical releases and statements made in Press Conferences are objective and</p>	

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non-partisan.	
<p><b>Statistical Processes</b></p> <p>European and other international standards, guidelines and good practices must be fully observed in the processes used by the statistical authorities to organise, collect, process and disseminate official statistics. The credibility of the statistics is enhanced by a reputation for good management and efficiency. The relevant aspects are sound methodology, appropriate statistical procedures, non-excessive burden on respondents and cost effectiveness.</p>	
<p><b>Principle 7: Sound Methodology</b> - <i>Sound methodology must underpin quality statistics. This requires adequate tools, procedures and expertise.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
<p>The overall methodological framework of the statistical authority follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices.</p>	<p><b>9) Coordination of international statistical programmes is essential to strengthen the quality, coherence and governance of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work</b></p> <p>- Working systematically towards agreements about common concepts, classifications, standards and methods</p>
<p>Procedures are in place to ensure that standard concepts, definitions and classifications are consistently applied throughout the statistical authority.</p>	<p><b>8) Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility</b></p> <p>- Monitoring the implementation of agreed standards</p>
<p>The business register and the frame for population surveys are regularly evaluated and adjusted if necessary in order to ensure high quality.</p>	
<p>Detailed concordance exists between national classifications and sectorisation systems and the corresponding European systems.</p>	
<p>Graduates in the relevant academic disciplines are recruited.</p>	
<p>Staff attend international relevant training</p>	<p><b>4) Concepts, definitions, classifications,</b></p>

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<p>courses and conferences, and liaise with statistician colleagues at international level in order to learn from the best and to improve their expertise.</p>	<p><b>sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users</b></p> <p>- Enhancing the professional level of staff by encouraging them to attend training courses, to do analytical work, to publish scientific papers and to participate in seminars and conferences.</p>
<p>– Co-operation with the scientific community to improve methodology is organised and external reviews assess the quality and effectiveness of the methods implemented and promote better tools, when feasible.</p>	<p><b>9) Coordination of international statistical programmes is essential to strengthen the quality, coherence and governance of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work</b></p> <p>- Participating in international statistical meetings and bilateral and multilateral consultations whenever necessary</p> <p><b>10) Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contribute to the professional growth of the statisticians involved and to the improvement of statistics in the organisations and in countries</b></p> <p>- Cooperating and sharing knowledge among international organisations and with countries and regions to further develop national and regional statistical systems</p>
<p><b>Principle 8: Appropriate Statistical Procedures</b> – <i>Appropriate statistical procedures, implemented from data collection to data validation, must underpin quality statistics.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
<p>Where European Statistics are based on administrative data, the definitions and concepts used for the administrative purpose must be a good approximation to those required for statistical purposes.</p>	
<p>In case of statistical surveys, questionnaires are systematically tested prior to the data collection.</p>	

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Survey designs, sample selections, and sample weights are well based and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required.	
Field operations, data entry, and coding are routinely monitored and revised as required.	
Appropriate editing and imputation computer systems are used and regularly reviewed, revised or updated as required.	
– Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.	

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<p><b>Principle 9: Non-Excessive Burden on Respondents</b> - <i>The reporting burden should be proportionate to the needs of the users and should not be excessive for respondents. The statistical authority monitors the response burden and sets targets for its reduction over time.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
<p>The range and detail of European Statistics demands is limited to what is absolutely necessary.</p>	<p><b>5) Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimise the reporting burden for data providers</b></p> <p>- Periodic review of statistical programmes to minimise the burden on data providers</p>
<p>The reporting burden is spread as widely as possible over survey populations through appropriate sampling techniques.</p>	
<p>The information sought from businesses is, as far as possible, readily available from their accounts and electronic means are used where possible to facilitate its return.</p>	
<p>Best estimates and approximations are accepted when exact details are not readily available.</p>	
<p>Administrative sources are used whenever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information.</p>	
<p>– Data sharing within statistical authorities is generalised in order to avoid multiplication of surveys.</p>	<p><b>5) Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimise the reporting burden for data providers</b></p> <p>- Sharing collected data with other organisations and collecting data jointly where appropriate</p>
<p><b>Principle 10: Cost Effectiveness</b> - <i>Resources must be effectively used.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	

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Internal and independent external measures monitor the statistical authority's use of resources.	
Routine clerical operations (e.g. data capture, coding, validation) are automated to the extent possible.	
The productivity potential of information and communications technology is being optimised for data collection, processing and dissemination.	<p><b>5) Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimise the reporting burden for data providers</b></p> <p>- Facilitating the provision of data by countries</p>
– Proactive efforts are being made to improve the statistical potential of administrative records and avoid costly direct surveys.	
<p><b>Statistical Output</b></p> <p>Available statistics must meet users' needs. Statistics comply with the European quality standards and serve the needs of European institutions, governments, research institutions, business concerns and the public generally. The important issues concern the extent to which the statistics are relevant, accurate and reliable, timely, coherent, comparable across regions and countries, and readily accessible by users.</p>	
<p><b>Principle 11: Relevance</b> - <i>European Statistics must meet the needs of users.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
Processes are in place to consult users, monitor the relevance and practical utility of existing statistics in meeting their needs, and advise on their emerging needs and priorities.	<p><b>1) High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems</b></p> <p>- Having regular consultations with key users both inside and outside the relevant organisation to ascertain that their needs are met</p>
Priority needs are being met and reflected in the work programme.	<p><b>1) High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems</b></p>

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	- Periodic review of statistical programmes to ensure their relevance
– User satisfaction surveys are undertaken periodically.	
<p><b>Principle 12: Accuracy and Reliability</b> - <i>European Statistics must accurately and reliably portray reality.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
Source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are assessed and validated.	
Sampling errors and non-sampling errors are measured and systematically documented according to the framework of the ESS quality components.	
– Studies and analyses of revisions are carried out routinely and used internally to inform statistical processes.	
<p><b>Principle 13: Timeliness and Punctuality</b> - <i>European Statistics must be disseminated in a timely and punctual manner.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
Timeliness meets the highest European and international dissemination standards.	<p><b>5) Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimise the reporting burden for data providers</b></p> <p>- Working systematically on the improvement of the timeliness of international statistics</p>
A standard daily time is set for the release of European Statistics.	
Periodicity of European Statistics takes into account user requirements as much as possible.	

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Any divergence from the dissemination time schedule is publicised in advance, explained and a new release date set.	
Preliminary results of acceptable aggregate quality can be disseminated when considered useful.	
<p><b>Principle 14: Coherence and Comparability</b> - <i>European Statistics should be consistent internally, over time and comparable between regions and countries; it should be possible to combine and make joint use of related data from different sources.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
Statistics are internally coherent and consistent (e.g. arithmetic and accounting identities observed).	
Statistics are coherent or reconcilable over a reasonable period of time.	
Statistics are compiled on the basis of common standards with respect to scope, definitions, units and classifications in the different surveys and sources.	
Statistics from the different surveys and sources are compared and reconciled.	
<p>– Cross-national comparability of the data is ensured through periodical exchanges between the European Statistical System and other statistical systems; methodological studies are carried out in close co-operation between the Member States and Eurostat.</p>	<p><b>7) Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed</b></p> <p>- Responding to perceived erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics</p> <p><b>8) Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility</b></p> <p>- Systematically involving national statistical offices and other national organisations for official statistics in the development of international statistical programmes, including the development and promulgation of methods, standards and good practices</p>
<p><b>Principle 15: Accessibility and Clarity</b> – <i>European Statistics should be presented in a clear and understandable form,</i></p>	

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<p><i>disseminated in a suitable and convenient manner, available and accessible on an impartial basis with supporting metadata and guidance.</i></p> <p><u>Indicators</u></p>	
<p>Statistics are presented in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.</p>	
<p>Dissemination services use modern information and communication technology and, if appropriate, traditional hard copy.</p>	
<p>Custom-designed analyses are provided when feasible and are made public.</p>	
<p>Access to microdata can be allowed for research purposes. This access is subject to strict protocols.</p>	<p><b>6) Individual data collected about natural persons and legal entities, or about small aggregates that are subject to national confidentiality rules, are to be kept strictly confidential and are to be used exclusively for statistical purposes or for purposes mandated by legislations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing a framework describing methods and procedures to provide sets of anonymous micro-data for further analysis by bona fide researchers, maintaining the requirements of confidentiality</li> </ul>
<p>Metadata are documented according to standardised metadata systems.</p>	<p><b>4) Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documenting how data are collected, processed and disseminated, including information about editing mechanisms applied to country data</li> <li>- Making officially agreed standards publicly available</li> </ul>
<p>– Users are kept informed on the methodology of statistical processes and the quality of statistical outputs with respect to the ESS quality criteria.</p>	<p><b>4) Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documenting the concepts, definitions and classifications, as well as data collection and</li> </ul>

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	<p>processing procedures used and the quality assessments carried out and making this information publicly accessible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documenting how data are collected, processed and disseminated, including information about editing mechanisms applied to country data</li> </ul>
<b>Not in European statistics Code of Practice</b>	<p><b>1) High quality international statistics, accessible for all, are a fundamental element of global information systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring free public accessibility of key statistics</li> </ul> <p><b>2) To maintain the trust in international statistics, their production is to be impartial and strictly based on the highest professional standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing and using professional codes of conduct</li> </ul> <p><b>4) Concepts, definitions, classifications, sources, methods and procedures employed in the production of international statistics are chosen to meet professional scientific standards and are made transparent for the users</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving credit, in the dissemination of international statistics, to the original source and using agreed quotation standards when re-using statistics originally collected by others</li> </ul> <p><b>3) The public has a right to be informed about the mandates for the statistical work of the organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making decisions about statistical work programmes publicly available</li> </ul> <p><b>5) Sources and methods for data collection are appropriately chosen to ensure timeliness and other aspects of quality, to be cost-efficient and to minimise the reporting burden for data providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contributing to an integrated presentation of statistical programmes, including data</li> </ul>

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	<p>collection plans, thereby making gaps or overlaps clearly visible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring that national statistical offices and other national organisations for official statistics are duly involved and advocating that the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics are applied when data are collected in countries</li> </ul> <p><b>7) Erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics are to be immediately appropriately addressed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancing the use of statistics by developing educational material for important user groups</li> </ul> <p><b>8) Standards for national and international statistics are to be developed on the basis of sound professional criteria, while also meeting the test of practical utility and feasibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advising countries on implementation issues concerning international standards</li> </ul> <p><b>9) Coordination of international statistical programmes is essential to strengthen the quality, coherence and governance of international statistics, and avoiding duplication of work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Designating one or more statistical units to implement statistical programmes, including one unit that coordinates the statistical work of the organisation and represents the organisation in international statistical meetings</li> <li>- Working systematically towards agreement on which series to consider as authoritative for each important set of statistics</li> <li>- Coordinating technical cooperation activities with countries between donors and between different organisations in the national statistical system to avoid duplication of effort and to encourage complementarities and synergy</li> </ul> <p><b>10) Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contribute to the professional growth of the statisticians involved and to the</b></p>

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	<p><b>improvement of statistics in the organisations and in countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basing cooperation projects on user requirements, promoting full participation of the main stakeholders, taking account of local circumstances and stage of statistical development</li> <li>- Empowering recipient national statistical systems and governments to take the lead</li> <li>- Advocating the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in countries</li> <li>- Setting cooperation projects within a balanced overall strategic framework for national development of official statistics</li> </ul>