
GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 1294 OF 2009

STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA

CRITERIA FOR PRODUCING OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN TERMS OF SECTION 14 (7) OF THE STATISTICS ACT (NO.6 OF 1999). APPLICABLE TO ALL ORGANS OF STATE WHO PRODUCE OFFICIAL AND OTHER STATISTICS.

I, Pali Jobo Lehohla, Statistician-General of the Republic of South Africa, in terms of the authority accorded to me by section 14 of the Statistics Act hereby prescribe the quality criteria to be followed for the designation of official statistics by organs of state in the country.

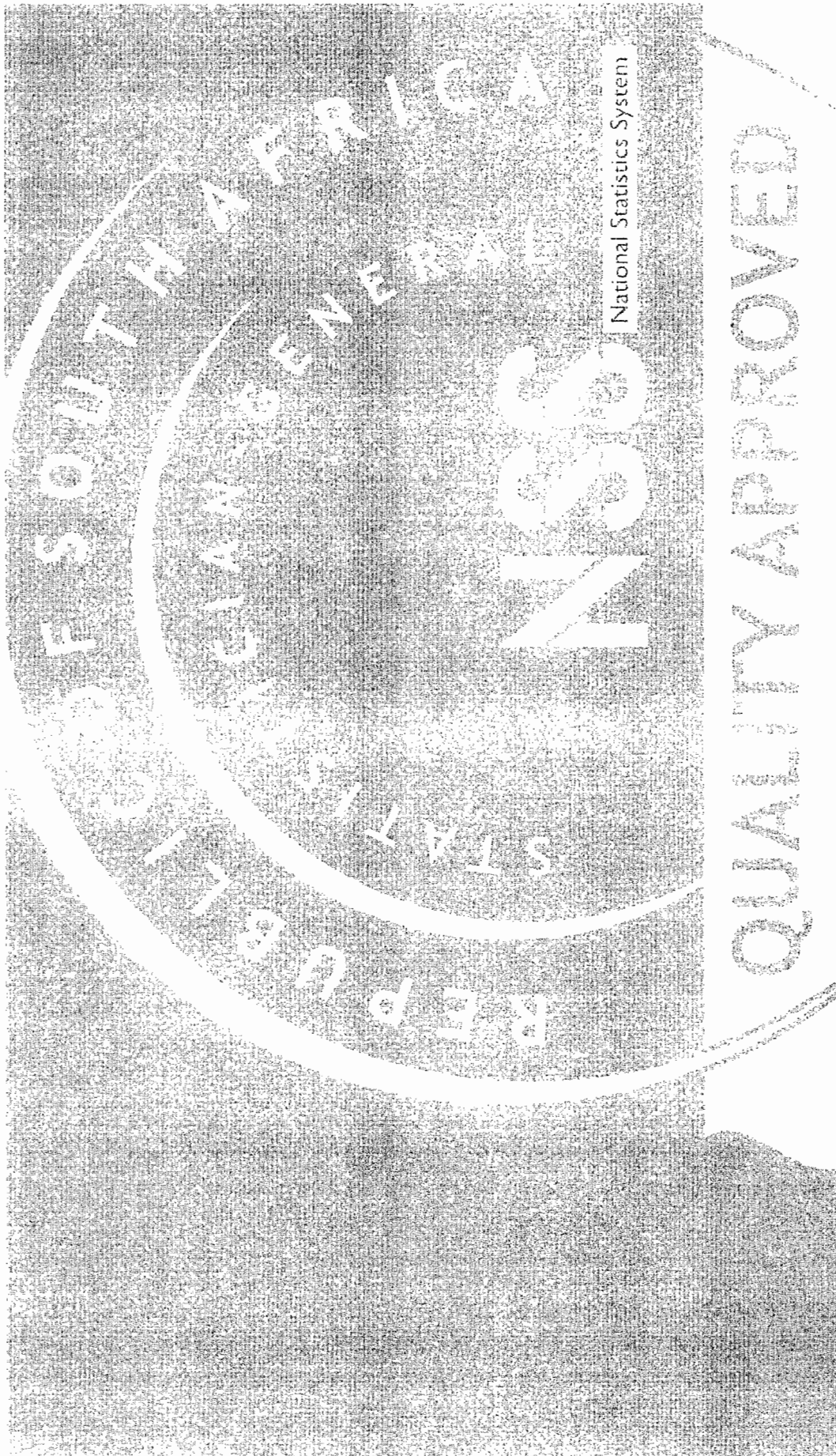
The Act requires the Statistician-General to set the quality criteria for official statistics. This is elaborated in section 7 (2) (e) of the Statistics Act where it says:

“The Statistician-General must formulate quality criteria and establish standards, classifications and procedures for statistics.”

For this purpose the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF) was published in 2008. The intention is for SASQAF to become the framework for the assessment of quality in the national statistical system for the purposes for certification as official statistics. The Act requires this to be implemented via a notice in the government gazette as stipulated in section 14 (7) (a) and (b)

- (a) *“The Statistician-General may designate as official statistics any statistics or class of statistics produced from statistical collections by—*
 - (i) *Statistics South Africa; or*
 - (ii) *other organs of state, after consultation with the head of the organ of state concerned.*
- (b) *Such designation must be in accordance with—*
 - (i) *the purpose of official statistics and the statistical principles contemplated in section 3; and*
 - (ii) *such other statistical criteria as the Statistician-General may determine by notice in the Gazette.”*

Enquiries may be directed to the National Statistics System Division at Statistics South Africa via the e-mail nss@statssa.gov.za or 012-310-8635



National Statistics System



**Statistics
South Africa**
Preferred supplier of quality statistics

South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF)
Final Edition

South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF)

First edition

Statistics South Africa
2008

Pali Lehohla
Statistician-General

Published by Statistics South Africa, Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

Website address: www.statssa.gov.za

Email: info@statssa.gov.za

© Statistics South Africa, 2008

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any manner without full acknowledgement of Stats SA

Statistics South Africa Library Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) Data

South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF). 1st ed. / Statistics South Africa - Pretoria: Statistics South Africa, 2008

iv, p. 28

ISBN 0- 0-621-37108-4

1. Statistics - Data quality
 2. Data Quality - Assessment.
 - I. Statistics South Africa.
 - II. Title.
- (LCSH 24)

A complete set of Stats SA publications is available at the Stats SA Library and the following libraries:

National Library of South Africa, Pretoria Division
National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Division
Library of Parliament, Cape Town
Bloemfontein Public Library
Natal Society Library, Pietermaritzburg
Johannesburg Public Library
Eastern Cape Library Services, King William's Town
Central Regional Library, Polokwane
Central Reference Library, Nelspruit
Central Reference Collection, Kimberley
Central Reference Library, Mmabatho

Enquires regarding the content of this manual:

Data Management and Information Delivery (DMID): (012) 310 8602

National Statistics Systems Division (NSSD): (012) 310 8635

Email: quality@statssa.gov.za

Preface

Democracy involves contestation, debate and disagreement between contending interests. This is both necessary and healthy. Statistics are often mobilised in support of, or in opposition to, several of these contending interests. This, too, is part of the ordinary lifecycle of any democratic society, especially where statistics are used as a basis for evaluating and measuring the impact of policies, estimating progress in meeting national priorities such as economic growth and job creation, and assessing the success of initiatives aimed at reducing scourges such as crime and poverty.

Evaluation of statistics collected in different ways, over time, and for different purposes, is an essential element in assessing their reliability and quality. However, this sort of comparison is no easy matter, unless the evaluation is based on common and standard criteria, which are broadly agreed upon by both the users and producers of statistical information.

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), as the agency responsible for collection and dissemination of official statistics, has a particularly central role in evaluation and improvement of data quality. This is not only because of its responsibility for the quality and reliability of the official statistics it produces. It is also because the Statistics Act (Act No. 6 of 1999) mandates the Statistician-General (SG) to put a framework in place to enable evaluation of statistics collected by organs of state. Section 14(7) of the Act empowers the SG to *'designate as official statistics any statistics or class of statistics'* produced by Stats SA or any other organ of state.

In addition, the Statistician-General may, in certain circumstances and, on request by a producer of statistics which is not an organ of state, comment on the statistics it produces, and evaluate and rank those statistics. Ranking of such statistics produced by, for example, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, or research institutes, must follow the identical procedures used for the ranking and certification of statistics produced by organs of state.

To assist in this process of evaluation, ranking and certification, Stats SA has developed the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF). The first draft of this framework, which was issued in 2006, drew extensively from the International Monetary Fund's Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF).

The new version of the document is a more developed framework, incorporating comments and suggestions from a range of users and producers of statistics.

Four requirements have to be met for statistics to be certified as official. Before the data can be considered for certification, it needs to be established whether the statistics collected go beyond the needs of the producer; whether the series involved is sustainable in terms of human and financial resources; and whether the producing agency applying for certification has membership of the National Statistics System (NSS). Once these three preconditions have been met, the data is evaluated against prerequisites, and the eight dimensions of quality set out in SASQAF. These cover relevance, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability, coherence, methodological soundness, and integrity. The framework details the key criteria to be met in each of these dimensions, together with their related measures or indicators.

Transparent procedures and criteria are essential if producers and users of statistics are to willingly accept and embrace official evaluation of data for quality. Certification is based on these procedures. The development of SASQAF by Stats SA enhances and extends transparency in data evaluation. It also effectively calls on other producers of statistics to be transparent in informing users of the concepts, definitions, classifications, methodologies, and frames used in collecting, processing and analysing their data, as well as informing them on the accuracy of the data, and any other features that may affect the quality of the data or their "fitness for use".

Within Stats SA, SASQAF is already being used to evaluate the quality of our statistics according to the eight dimensions specified. Through putting SASQAF into operation, we have found that not every measure or indicator applies equally to every statistical series or product. Extending SASQAF as a tool to evaluate statistics collected by other organs of state, especially where they seek to have their statistics declared official, will assist in establishing which measures are most applicable to the state's various statistical collections.

PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General