

Implementation of Code of Practice for the ENP South countries- Example: The access and use of administrative data in Morocco

Mr. Bouazza Bouchkhar

Directorate of Statistics (High Commission for Planning), Rabat, Morocco; bbouchkhar@gmail.com

Abstract

Statistics producers in Morocco are increasingly making use of administrative sources for the production of official statistics. Thus the High Commission for Planning (HCP), since 1975, has created a specific structure for the collection, processing and dissemination of administrative data on different sectors. Because identifying administrative data quality issues is an important aspect of preparing the data for use, HCP has developed metadata on administrative data collected. After its exploitation, several indicators have been developed, which allows having information on different dimensions of the quality.

However, there are some challenges to wider use of administrative data such as: access to certain administrative data, increasing privatization of public functions, growth of private sector data, user interest in new types of data, etc. This accounts for the importance of the review of the regulatory and institutional framework of official statistics in Morocco.

Recently, many quality initiatives were launched. At national level, there are the project of implementation of National Quality Assurance Framework by the HCP and the new law on statistics. At regional level, there is the implementation of the Code of Practice for ENP South countries. These quality frameworks and actions will improve the institutional environment and allow to systemize existing methods and to implement a new ones, such those relating to the use of administrative data.

The paper will present an overview of the institutional, organizational and technical frameworks and the process of using administrative data. Also, the paper will focus on some practices applied and will be applied in Morocco, especially those concerning the use of administrative data, and necessary for the implementation of the newly adopted CoP.

Keywords: Administrative data, Code of Practice, Quality Dimensions.

1. Introduction

The administrative data sources owned by public institutions set up an important information asset for official statistics. Thus, the use of administrative data in the production of the official statistics has exceedingly increased in the recent years.

In Morocco, Statistics producers are more and more making use of administrative sources for the production of official statistics. Thus, Directorate of Statistics of Morocco use administrative data in the production of official statistics for several reasons: reducing the perceived response burden and obtaining efficiency gains by the re-use of data from external sources are often cited as the main arguments for maximising the use of administrative data. And, before administrative data are used in statistics, they typically pass through a number of steps involving human interaction and computation.

Nevertheless, using these administrative data instead of survey data requires more care, since the administrative data holder has not usually tailored his collection in accordance with statistical concepts, standards and requirements. It follows that the data may need pre-processing in order to solve conceptual and matching problems before they can be used. It might be necessary to transform the incoming data in order to make them compatible with data from other (including survey) sources.

Therefore, efforts are needed to ensure the quality of the data, because very often the administrative data are not available in the form needed for statistics. Because, identifying administrative data quality issues is an important aspect of preparing the data for use. And, it is essential to have quality statistics to make effective and sound policy decisions.

2. Legal and Institutional environment

2.1. Legal framework

The Directorate of Statistics (DS), under the authority of the High Commission for Planning (HCP), is the core of the National Statistical System (NSS), insofar as it is the main producer of economic, demographic and social statistical data, in addition to its other missions in national accounts and studies in areas of the applied economics.

The following legislative and regulatory instruments govern the field of statistics, mainly:

- Royal Decree Law No. 370-67 August 5, 1968 on the statistical studies.
- Decree No. 2-75-463 of 19 August 1975 relating to the duties and the organization of the Secretariat of Planning and Regional Development.
- Decree No. 2-02-397 of 17 July 2002 establishing the new organization of the High Commission for Planning.

In the same context, the HCP has prepared, in consultation with the General Secretariat of the Government (SGG), the project of the National Statistical System (NSS) Act. The draft was presented to the Council of Government May 27, 2015 and was subject to the opinion of an inter-ministerial committee for review.

The project of the National Statistical System (NSS) Act is to:

- The adoption of the fundamental principles governing official statistics as proclaimed internationally;
- The definition of the components of the national statistical system and their missions;
- The creation of the National Statistics Council (NSC).

2.2. Institutional framework

The Moroccan statistical system is a decentralized system. Production and dissemination of data are handled primarily by the DS and also by other government departments. According to the law, the COCOES is responsible for coordinating and promoting this system and the Directorate of Statistics (DS) provides the secretariat.

The new National Statistical System Act, pending approval, redefines the National Statistical System (NSS) and institutionalizes the National Statistics Council (NSC) as promoting organ and Statistical Coordination.

The main producers of statistics in the Kingdom of Morocco are:

- Directorate of Statistics (DS) under the authority of the High - Commission for Planning (HCP).
- National Accounts Directorate (DCN) under the HCP.
- Center for Demographic Studies and Research (CERED) under the HCP.
- Observatory of the living conditions of the population (OCVP) under the HCP.
- Ministry of Economy and Finance.
- Bank Al-Maghrib
- Exchange Office
- Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fishing
- Ministry of Health.
- Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.
- Ministry of Tourism.
- Ministry of the Interior.
- High Commission for Water and Forests.
- Minister of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment.
- Ministry of Equipment, Transport and Logistics.

The DS has developed cooperative relationships with other departments and public institutions in the field of production and statistical analysis, especially regarding the administrative data. This is among others the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Central Bank (Bank Al Maghrib) of the Exchange Office, the Ministries of Industry, Trade, Investment and Digital Economy, Agriculture and Marine fisheries, Tourism, Housing and Urban Development, the local authorities and the Directorate General Directorate of national security etc .. This cooperation led to the signing of partnership agreements with Bank al-Maghrib, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine fisheries, the People's Central Bank, the exchange Office, the High Commissioner for water and forests, the Court of Cassation, the Moroccan Office of industrial and commercial property (OMPIC) as well as the national social security Fund (NSSF).

3. The use of administrative data

The Directorate of Statistics (DS) in Morocco need data for the production of statistics. Apart from data obtained through surveys, DS is increasingly using data collected and maintained by other, non-statistical, organizations. It is produced because of administrative processes of organizations but it is -very often- also an interesting data source for DS.

Before administrative data (or for that matter any type of data) are used in statistics, they typically pass through a number of steps involving human interaction and computation. In this regard, monitoring the quality of the administrative data supply that enter the statistical production process, evaluating its possible use for statistical purposes and supporting administrative data acquisition are the mainly tasks that should be performed in the early stages of the production process of administrative data.

However, there are some barriers to the wider use of such data for statistical purposes, mainly:

- Administrations collect data for their own needs, not to the DS's needs.
- As data are collected for administrative purposes. Thus, a change in policy can suddenly disrupt or change the registration.
- Administrative reporting can, in many cases, relate to individual rights or obligations (e.g. taxation), whereas individual survey responses are protected by privacy regulations, and have no individual effect.
- Administrations tend to focus on variables that are directly relevant for their administrative function.
- The administration's updating and processing procedures are not always transparent to the DS.
- The quality of the metadata can vary from source to source.
- Corrections of the data cannot always be verified, so there is no clean "reference" dataset to benchmark automatic editing methods against.

4. CoP and use of administrative data: Examples of some practices

In the framework of EU- Mediterranean Statisticians Forum, a regional Code of Practice of Statistics South Neighborhood countries of Europe (based on the European Statistics CoP) was developed and adopted during the Forum meeting in May 2015. Moreover, as the code of practice is the rulebook for producing all official statistics including those based on administrative data, we can find several indicators of many principles, especially the principle 2 on mandate for data collection and the principle 16 on coordination and cooperation, in relation with the use of administrative data. That highlight the importance given to the administrative data in such CoP.

Based on the principles outlined in the CoP, we arrive to draft a data quality statements for Administrative Data which we can find in the table below. This table provides quality common issues to be considered using the principles of the CoP.

Data Quality Dimension	Practices and activities
Institutional Environment	The legal framework governing the powers of the HCP and statistical studies aligns with the fundamental principles of official statistics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principle 1 - Professional independence ○ Principle 2 - Mandate for data collection: promulgated in Article 11 of Royal Decree No. 2.02.397 of Jumada I-1423 (17 July 2002) establishing the powers and organization of the High Commission for Planning ○ Principle 5 - Statistical Confidentiality: Article 8 of the decree on statistical studies governing statistical confidentiality.
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data on the use of statistics (e.g. evaluation of downloads, subscribers of reports) are analysed to support priority setting and user consultation. ▪ A list of key users and their data uses, including a list of unmet user needs, is regularly updated. ▪ Procedures are implemented to prioritise different user needs in the work programme.

Timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data are collected on a regular basis: monthly and annually. ▪ After collecting and processing, the data are available to users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For monthly data: Month + 2 ○ For quarterly data: Three months + 3 months ○ For annual data: Years + 6 months
Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Systems for assessing and validating source data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are developed, implemented and managed. ▪ In Directorate of Statistics of Morocco, Internal procedures and guidelines for data quality assessment exist and address accuracy and reliability issues. ▪ On a regular basis, results of all the statistical processes are compared with other existing sources of information in order to ensure validity.
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In Directorate of Statistics in Morocco, many procedures and guidelines to monitor internal coherence are developed and carried out in a systematic way. ▪ Process specific procedures and guidelines ensure that outputs obtained from complementary sources are combined so as to assure internal coherence and consistency. ▪ Significant changes in reality are reflected by appropriate changes to concepts (classifications, definitions and target populations). ▪ Changes in methods are clearly identified and their impact measured to facilitate reconciliation. ▪ A common repository of concepts or a mechanism to promote coherence and consistency is used. ▪ Periodic assessments of compliance with standards on definitions, units and classifications are carried out and reflected in Synthesis Reports. ▪ Deviations from standards on definitions, units or classifications are made explicit and the reasons for deviating are explained. ▪ Statistical outputs are compared with other statistical or administrative data that provide the same or similar information on same domain/phenomenon.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Directorates of Statistics in Morocco conducted in the past, a non-regular basis, some training courses for interpretation of statistics and writing press releases. ▪ The website and statistical databases and are the main means for disseminating statistical results. ▪ The statistics window or “Guichet Statistique”(which is a unit within the Department of Statistics) is an information service/call centre service composed of knowledgeable staff is available for answering requests, satisfying the demands of different users and clarifications of statistical results.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A publication catalogue is available to users. ▪ Statistical results are disseminated using tools and formats that facilitate re-dissemination by the media by means of, for example press releases, ready-made tables, charts, Atlas (maps connected to statistics), metadata.
<p>Coordination and Cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to the law, the COCOES is responsible for coordinating and promoting this system and the Directorate of Statistics (DS) provides the secretariat. ▪ Coordination within the National Statistical System (NSS) is conducted through partnership agreements or agreements with national partners and the involvement of DS in the work of inter-institutional and sectoral committees. ▪ The new Law on NSS, pending approval, provides for the creation of the National Statistical Council to coordinate the National Statistical System. ▪ Several agreements or any other form of cooperation protocols are signed/in place between the NSI and other producers of official statistics. ▪ Many other form of cooperation protocols are in place between the DS and other producers of official statistics, like: technical working groups/committees, regular technical meetings.... ▪ The Directorate of Statistics (DS) in Morocco is responsible for the statistical processing of administrative data used for Official Statistics. ▪ Directorate of Statistics (DS) in Morocco, statistical processing is clearly distinguished from administrative data processing and includes appropriate validation rules and specific procedures for checking quality. ▪ Metadata and other reports/publications exist as documentation describing the differences between administrative and statistical processes in terms of definitions, concepts, coverage, etc. ▪ Every year, regular meetings and discussions take place between the Directorate of Statistics and the owners of administrative data in order to be kept informed about amendments to the administrative data. ▪ As part of the MEDSTAT program, inter-institutional working groups were created to better statistical coordination, especially for transport, energy and environment.

5. Conclusion

The Directorate of Statistics in Morocco is increasingly making use of administrative and other secondary data sources for the production of statistics. This makes DS highly dependent on the quality of those sources.

Therefore, a close working relationship with administrative data holders is recommended. Because, it is important to receive information on planned changes that can have an effect on the definitions of variables, coverage or the (timely) provision of the data. Ideally, DS could have much to win from more advanced forms of cooperation, like sharing reports on types of errors found, discussing layout and documentation of administrative forms (or even content of forms) or coordinating basic data checks.

It is also recommended to standardize the transfer of data from administrative data holders to the DS, not only because well-organized data transfer procedures can cut out unnecessary intermediate steps, which is important from the viewpoint of timeliness and punctuality, but also because this opens up the possibility for introducing effective administrative data quality management procedures.

It is therefore of vital importance that a procedure have to be available to determine the quality of such data sources in a systematic, objective, and standardized way. For this purpose, a quality framework and a checklist have to be developed.

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