



**State of Palestine  
Palestinian Central Bureau of  
Statistics**

**Dissemination Policy**

June/ 2014

## **1. Introduction**

Statistics, in contemporary societies, have grown in importance for planning, development, research and analysis processes. They effectively contribute to decision-making in all sectors. As stated in the Code of Practice for Palestine's Official Statistics, official statistics are a public commodity accessible to all beneficiaries free of charge without any discrimination among them or granting any party time priority over other parties. Official statistics must therefore be presented in a clear and easily understandable manner that does not require specialized statistical expertise. Moreover, it is necessary to develop means and channels for dissemination of statistics in the Palestinian society and cope with latest technological and professional development to ensure that all beneficiaries have access to the Palestinian official statistics according to international recommendations and standards and in a manner that fulfills national needs.

## **2. General pillars for the dissemination policy of official statistics in Palestine**

The Palestinian official statistics dissemination policy depends on the legal and professional frameworks of production and dissemination of official statistics, namely:

- The Palestinian General Statistics Law (4) for the year 2000 and its executive regulations
- The Basic Principles of Official Statistics issued by the UN Statistical Committee in its thirty fifth session, 2004 and its subsequent amendments
- The Palestinian Official Statistics Code of Practice (work principles and procedures)
- The National Development Plan and the National Strategy for the development of Official Statistics
- The Public Service Code of Conduct and Ethics.

## **3. Trends**

Deviating from the traditional form of former dissemination policies, this policy focuses on a number of general trends of dissemination. These trends are currently under discussion in reason of the salient urgent need to apply best practices in dissemination. The policy focused on the following trends:

- **Accessibility**

The Palestinian statistical system provides Palestinian official statistics and other statistical products to respond to beneficiaries' needs and maximize benefit to reach effective accessibility. Statistics are tied to interrelated basic principles that must be taken into account upon production and dissemination of statistics. These principles include easy access to information for users; information must be available in different forms via various media to enable users access it with minimum effort. Even highly accessible published information cannot be fully useful if presented in a manner that is not easily understood. Users need to be provided with additional information (like metadata) to be able to understand and use information. Another core principle in this policy is the usability of information; in other words, statistics must fulfill a number of standards including responding to users' genuine need and possible exploitation for development purpose. Therefore, producers of statistics need to apply different methods to identify users' real needs including user-producers dialogue, reception of feedback through users' satisfaction surveys and other means.

- **Partnership**

Partnership, for the purpose of official statistics dissemination, means involvement of all statistical system components in the dissemination of official statistics. It relates mainly to partnership between statistics producer (official statistical system) and user. As such, the role of users and beneficiaries is activated to ensure enlisting real needs and improving the dissemination style for effective use of statistics. Partnership is also between official statistics producers from the official statistical system, which includes in addition to PCBS other components like ministries and governmental institutions. It is necessary to harmonize work of all components in the production and dissemination of official statistics.

To enhance partnership, it is necessary to focus on the core role PCBS plays to include, in addition to production and dissemination of statistics, coordination with other components of the statistical system (namely statistical units in different ministries and governmental institutions). It should help them in the production and dissemination of official statistics that PCBS does not produce and ensure they respect clear agreed upon procedures to standardize methodologies of dissemination of official statistics via electronic and other channels. It is also necessary to update such standards and procedures to respond to work development and needs.

It is also necessary to reinforce partnership with another key player, namely the media. Different forms of media (audiovisual and printed) publish official statistical data that reach out to all local and international societal segments to increase their awareness of the socioeconomic and demographic realities of Palestine.

- **Be updated with evolution**

The Palestinian statistical system always updates itself with the latest developments in the area of statistics. It always applies latest and best statistical practices and standards in all of its activities at local and global levels. It also uses cutting-edge technologies to disseminate data with its metadata to enable users employ such data in the best manner possible.

- **Traditional principles**

The Palestinian official statistics dissemination policy applies traditional professional and technical principles, derived from the policy pillars that identify the relationship with the beneficiaries. It also identifies the role of official statistics producers. These principles are:

- **Relevance**

Palestinian official statistics must be relevant and responding to national and beneficiary needs, as identified in the users-producers dialogue and the users' satisfaction survey. Produced statistics must be comprehensive and as detailed as possible while taking into account quality control and confidentiality of personal data. Statistics must be produced with optimal use of resources available.

- **Quality and coordination**

The quality standards applied in the Palestinian official statistics is reliable and of high professional quality. Therefore, statistics are accurate and reliable in decision-making. Coordination also allows for comparison in time and place series.

- **Independence**

Palestinian official statistics are not subject to any political interference or authoritarian factional intervention. PCBS and statistical system components apply the general statistical law and its code of practice, which confirm their professional independence in producing and disseminating official statistics.

- **Egalitarian in dissemination**

Beneficiaries are treated equally by the statistical system as regards to the timing of dissemination. No priority is accorded to any party regardless of their social, technical or professional status. Accordingly, a prior calendar of dissemination is distributed detailing the locations and media of dissemination. PCBS takes all necessary measures to ensure dissemination of the calendar to all beneficiaries.

- **Impartiality**

The Palestinian statistical system produces and disseminates statistics accessible to all beneficiaries on pure professional bases. There is no interference whatsoever in the interpretation or analysis of such statistics. The Palestinian statistical system has also the right to respond to any misuse or misinterpretation of the Palestinian official statistics.

- **Free of charge**

The statistical system, with all its components, is committed to providing free of charge official statistics to all beneficiaries via various dissemination media. An exception to this will be particular

requests from beneficiaries for statistical data that require additional effort. Symbolic fees will then be charged for the additional effort in accordance with declared specific procedures.

– **Confidentiality of personal data**

The statistical system, with all its components, is committed to applying all necessary procedures and standards to protect the confidentiality of respondents' personal data. It shall use any data it collects merely for statistical purposes, as per Article 17 of the Palestinian General Statistics Law No (4) for the year 2000.

#### **4. Targeted groups**

Statistical data dissemination via all media available targets all segments of local and global communities. Complete, updated accurate statistical data are indispensable for public policy-making, planning and programs aiming to achieve sound empirical sustainable development. In the Palestinian case, the targeted and beneficiary groups may be divided as follows:

- Specialized researchers and research centers use official statistics in their in-depth analysis to come out with broader analytical results that can serve sustainable development.
- University, colleges and higher studies students whose researches require empirical official statistics.
- Schools students of all grades since statistical data are used in school curricula in the form of maps, graphs or tables to explain scientific or literary information. Moreover, students use such outputs in their researches.
- Private sector institutions and investors who need official data to gear their investments in profitable projects that build and support the economy of the state
- Public sector institutions, ministries and agencies as well as decision-makers in this sector who need official statistics to make informed decisions on promoting development and improving the livelihood of all citizens as well as on provision and improvement of services.
- International institutions that use official statistical data in their international comparisons and studies to enhance capacity building and identify areas of risk to tailor assistance as needed in all fields.
- The public in general benefit from official statistics in daily life mainly in the consumer's price index, cost of living and unemployment rates and other indicators; statistics are also depended on in legal and professional disputes.
- Written press and audiovisual media use official statistics to shed light on sensitive issues and direct the public opinion to serve the Palestinian society.

#### **5. Palestinian official statistics dissemination channels**

Consistent with professional and technical developments in the dissemination of official statistics for domestic and global beneficiaries, the statistical system components developed channels for dissemination of Palestinian official statistics. On the other hand, they reduced reliance on traditional printed copies and CD's to focus more on online dissemination. The current channels now include:

- **Data Visualization Techniques** : the global trend in dissemination of statistical data is by use of interactive visual techniques that do not require previous knowledge in statistics or in reading of statistical figures. Such techniques enable us reach different users, mainly the general public and students with an appropriate and interesting method.
- **Social Media**: social media help communicate with a large number of users and locate new customers and users in addition to preserving current users. Social media enable users have quick access to information that goes beyond the traditional search of information. It also allows for quick response on issues raised in the society. Use of social media also helps in improving the reputation of statistics and increasing people and users' confidence in statistical

figures. It makes it also possible to focus on the statistical system activities to highlight its social responsibility on these pages.

- **YouTube Account:** the Statistics YouTube channel specializes in display of visual presentations of the statistical system including TV interviews, films, and statistical presentations. Other specialized visual presentations are also prepared and gathered on a single challenge to facilitate user's access thereto. Data are uploaded as video clips on Palestinian statistics with links from the social media pages. They serve statistical, educational, awareness as well as promotional purposes of the Palestinian statistical system.
- **Interactive matrices and international standards for statistics dissemination:** focus on the use of international tools and standards to disseminate and document statistics including SDDS, PX-Web, DevInfo, SDMX and ADP. Use of the international standards helps in the interactive dissemination of documents using interactive matrices and visual techniques. It also facilitates integration of statistical data and indicators at domestic and global levels and allows for global exchange of data. Moreover, it grants authorization to users via a user's name and password, each within its competence, in application of the policies of dissemination of statistics.
- **Interactive statistical maps and atlases:** production of e-geographic atlases linked to the statistics available, which interactively allows users to access statistical data available on the geographic level. The maps and atlases are published on an online electronic database and on the statistical system's web pages.
- **PCBS' portal and statistical calendar:** develop the statistical calendar to enable data and web pages' users utilize it like a complementary program that is not restricted to mere presentation of topics. PCBS developed its web site, realizing the importance of online dissemination and its broad spread. It allows beneficiaries of all segments access information in Arabic and in English. The dissemination is regularly updated and developed to maximize use and efficiency.
- **Mobile Applications/ SMS:** Most data users nowadays rely on smart phones. Many institutions have their own programs with services provided via smart devices. Consequently, PCBS provides timely core data and statistical figures via mobile phone applications specially made for official Palestinian statistics. Users and interested beneficiaries only need to upload the applications from approved sites on their phones. Figures and core results are also sent to beneficiaries via SMS, provided that they submit an application and pay subscription to the service.
- **Customers' services section and reception section at PCBS:** employees of PCBS customers' service section are highly qualified to deal with users; they possess the statistical experience to quickly and transparently provide the requested information immediately or direct users to a particular statistical entity. They are also capable of receiving and answering requests for services through different means. The customers' service section is the official institution's body responsible for reception of and responding to statistical requests.
- **Interactive statistics museum:** statistics have realistic, cultural and historical necessity. They gain in importance with the spread of construction and achievements in all states' life projects. The idea stems from the necessity to familiarize researchers and other interested parties of the history of statistics and the corner stones of statistical work. The museum will collect and present the most important statistical documents and distinguished projects as well as local and international prizes accorded to the Palestinian statistics. The presentation shall be interactive using available modern techniques.
- **Special traditional newsletters:** the statistical system provides paper newsletters to those interested in collecting special books; the hard copies are only available for annual disseminations and special issues. Prints are provided with refined cover for users interested in keeping hard copies of statistical disseminations like the annual reports, governorates' reports and special statistical issues.

- **Library:** specialized in statistical sciences and support areas that respond to the needs of statisticians and researchers from within or outside the statistical system. It includes many books and documents in Arabic and in English in addition to periodicals published annually, quarterly or monthly as well as researches and acts of conferences held in Palestine or abroad. The library documents all these material in accordance with the system used. It hosts a specialized research center on all material ranging from statistical data to social sciences, history, administration and other subjects that help upgrading productivity of statistical system employees. It also includes audiovisual and electronic material, classified according to Diwi's decimal system of classification.
- **public use data:** the national statistical system provides ready raw data packages for public use after treatment and rehabilitation for this purpose to ensure confidentiality of personal data of individuals and institutions as per statistical law.
- **Scientific research center:** enhances use of statistical data in empirical research and enables researches access diversified information in accordance with standards that protect the confidentiality of personal data, as per the General statistics law for the year 2000. Many institutions and agencies benefit from such data, which enable them devise policies and decisions on scientific and informed basis.