Policies and Guidelines on Data Sharing, Confidentiality and Dissemination of ASEAN Statistics

Background

The ASEANstats, under the guidance and support of the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee is responsible for collecting ASEAN statistics and providing the necessary data in support of the ASEAN Community and for making ASEAN data available to all users, including ASEAN stakeholders (ASEAN Governments and ASEAN bodies), businesses, analysts, researchers, international organisations, and the general public.

ASEAN statistics include not only those produced by the National Statistical Offices (NSO) of the AMSs but also those produced by other agencies producing official statistics (the national competent authority) within the respective national statistical system (NSS), such as the Central Bank, Customs Department, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Commerce, among others.

The ACSS Committee tasked the Working Group on Data Sharing, Analysis, Dissemination and Communication Statistics (WGDSA) with the development of the draft policy on data sharing, confidentiality and dissemination of ASEAN statistics, in close collaboration with the ACSS Sub-Committee on Planning and Coordination (ACSS SCPC).

These policies and guidelines shall be reviewed from time to time to assess its relevance, incorporating new and emerging concerns.

Objectives

This paper lays out the policies and guidelines on data sharing, confidentiality and dissemination of ASEAN statistics in accordance with the ACSS Code of Practice (CoP), UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and other international statistical standards. Specifically, the objectives are to help:

a. promote wider accessibility to ASEAN statistics,
b. enhance ASEAN statistics' credibility and gain public trust in ASEAN statistics,
c. resolve technical issues and challenges in the dissemination of ASEAN statistics,
d. promote informed decision-making among policymakers, and
e. Encourage compilers of ASEAN statistics to harmonize available statistics for common understanding of various types of producers and users of ASEAN statistics (e.g. terms and definitions, etc.).

Scope

To achieve the stated objectives, the policies and guidelines shall cover, among others, the following elements:

I. Data confidentiality and security;
II. Data sharing: disclosure, accessibility and availability:
    a. Data disclosure;
    b. Data dissemination and communication;
    c. Use of estimation when national AMSs' data are not available for compilation of ASEAN statistics; and
    d. Advance release calendar.
III. Integrity and accountability:
    a. Transparency/ Metadata; and
    b. Data revision.

I. Data Confidentiality and Security

The policies and guidelines on confidentiality and security pertain to Key Principle 3 of the ACSS CoP on Confidentiality:

> ***"****The confidentiality of the information provided by households, enterprises, administrative units and other respondents for statistical purposes is safeguarded by national statistical authorities of the AMSs and ASEANstats".*

1. Data Confidentiality and Security

1.1. AMSs shall provide ASEANstats details of their national law and/ or legal frameworks or policy documents governing data confidentiality and/ or security;

1.2. ASEANstats shall safeguard statistical confidentiality in the production and dissemination of ASEAN statistics by:
- 1.2.1. Complying with the confidentiality requirements of data received from AMSs in accordance with their national law and/ or legal frameworks governing data confidentiality;
- 1.2.2. Using data received from AMSs only for statistical purposes;
- 1.2.3. Informing AMSs on how their data are being used; and
- 1.2.4. Ensuring that everyone involved in the production of ASEAN statistics is aware of his/ her obligations to protect the confidentiality of data received from AMSs;

1.3. ASEANstats shall develop and adopt aggregation rules to prevent residual disclosure when ASEAN statistics are disseminated, with the assistance of the WGDSA;

1.4. ASEANstats shall conduct reviews on ASEAN statistics prepared for dissemination to check for possible indirect disclosure of individually-identifiable data and prepare tables and outputs in a way that prevents such disclosure;

1.5. ASEANstats shall provide information about the terms and conditions under which the statistics are produced and disseminated, including safeguards on the confidentiality of data, with the assistance of the WGDSA;

1.6. ASEANstats shall put in place physical and technological infrastructure to protect the security and integrity of statistical databases and archives; and

1.7. ASEANstats shall set standards for protecting confidentiality in accordance with AMSs' relevant statistical laws/ legal frameworks to guarantee that statistics disseminated shall not identify any person or establishment.

II. Data Sharing: Disclosure, Accessibility, and Availability

The policies and guidelines on disclosure, accessibility and availability pertain to the following key principles and indicators of the ACSS CoP:

Key Principle 8 on Quality,

> *"The national statistical authorities of the AMSs and the ASEANstats are committed to quality and to regularly review and improve the quality of statistical processes and products."*

Indicator 8.3 on Timeliness:

> *"A release calendar is established for ASEAN statistics at both national and ASEAN levels, and the periodicity of statistics released takes into account user requirements as much as possible."*

Indicator 8.4 on Comparability:

> *"ASEAN statistics are comparable, and detailed concordance as set by international standards exists between national classification systems and the corresponding ASEAN classification systems."*

Indicator 8.5 on Accessibility:

"ASEAN statistics are produced and made readily available through dissemination mechanisms utilising modern information and communication technology, and where appropriate, traditional hard copy."

1. Data Disclosure

1.1. AMSs shall provide national statistics to ASEANstats for the compilation of ASEAN statistics in accordance with the agreed purpose and data transmission format;

1.2. Relevant working groups and task forces under the ACSS Committee shall define and document the statistics to be provided by the AMSs to ASEANstats in their respective data transmission protocol, template or meeting records;

1.3. ASEANstats shall refrain from presenting bilateral data comparison;

1.4. For International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS):

1.4.1 ASEANstats shall disseminate IMTS Monthly Data at aggregate level without breakdown by commodity upon request through email for the period 2012 data to the latest available;

1.4.2 ASEANstats shall disseminate IMTS Quarterly Data at AHTN 2-digits in the ASEANstats Data Portal, ASEAN Statistical Yearbook, and other media for the period 2012 data to the latest available;

1.4.3 ASEANstats shall disseminate IMTS Annual Data at AHTN 2-digits in the ASEANstats Data Portal, ASEAN Statistical Yearbook, and other media for the period 2003 data to the latest available;

1.4.4 ASEANstats shall disseminate IMTS Annual Data at AHTN 4-digits in the ASEANstats Data Portal, ASEAN Statistical Yearbook, and other media for the period 2010 data to the latest available;

1.4.5 ASEANstats shall disseminate IMTS Annual Data at AHTN 6-digits in the ASEANstats Data Portal, ASEAN Statistical Yearbook, and other media for the period 2010 data to the latest available;

1.4.6 ASEANstats shall disseminate IMTS Annual Data at AHTN 8-digits in the ASEANstats Data Portal, ASEAN Statistical Yearbook, and other media for the period 2012 data to the latest available;

1.4.7 ASEANstats shall disseminate IMTS Annual Data by Mode of Transport (MoT) at 1-digit level of category (1. Air; 2. Water; 3. Land; 4. Not elsewhere classified; 9. Unknown) at AHTN 2-digits level in the ASEANstats Data Portal, ASEAN Statistical Yearbook, and other media for the period 2021 data to the latest available;

1.4.8 Sharing and accessibility of special data request should be agreed through Working Group on IMTS (WGIMTS;

1.5. For Foreign Direct Investment Statistics (FDIS):

1.5.1. ASEANstats shall disseminate aggregated FDIS as agreed by Working Group on International Investment Statistics (WGIIS), and

1.5.2. AMSs shall provide FDIS based on the template agreed by the WGIIS for internal ASEAN analysis purposes;

1.6. For Statistics on International Trade in Services (SITS):

1.6.1. ASEANstats shall disseminate aggregated SITS by 12 components at individual country as agreed by the Working Group on Statistics on International Trade in Services (WGSITS).

1.6.2. ASEANstats shall provide SITS by partner country at ASEAN level for internal ASEAN analysis purposes[1]
1.6.3. Sharing and accessibility of granular data should be agreed by individual AMS.

1.7. For System of National Accounts (SNA)
1.7.1. ASEANstats shall disseminate aggregated GDP by Production at 12 industry breakdowns based on International Standard Industrial classification (ISIC) at National and Regional level as agreed by the Working Group on System of National Accounts (WGSNA);
1.7.2. AMSs shall provide GDP based on the template agreed by the WGSNA for internal ASEAN analysis purposes;
1.7.3. Sharing and accessibility of granular data should be agreed through WGSNA;

1.8. For other areas of statistics and specific publications, ASEANstats shall consult and seek WGDSA's and other relevant working groups' concurrence and seek ACSS Committee's approval;

1.9. Relevant working groups and task forces under the ACSS Committee shall conduct regular review of the level of detail for the statistics to be disseminated.

2. Data Dissemination and Communication

2.1. ASEAN statistics shall be disseminated by ASEANstats and AMSs in the form that meet users' needs, utilising the appropriate information and communication technology;

2.2. ASEANstats shall have a mechanism of regular review of the existing ASEAN statistics dissemination and communication practices to enhance visibility, comparability and promote wider use of ASEAN statistics;

2.3. ASEANstats may provide ASEAN regional level statistics to other international statistical institutions, observing the data confidentiality policies/ guidelines in Section I above, and impose terms and conditions to the use of such statistics;

2.4. ASEANstats may provide ASEAN regional level statistics which are already available in ASEANstats web page or publications to third party data providers, and impose terms and conditions to the use of such statistics; and

2.5. ASEANstats may provide other regional and national level statistics after obtaining the AMSs' approval.

3. Use of Estimation when National AMSs Data are Not Available for Compilation of ASEAN Statistics

3.1. ASEANstats shall use national data of AMSs to the extent available for ASEAN statistical publications;

3.2. In cases when national data are not available,
3.2.1. ASEANstats shall consult the relevant AMSs on the estimation for missing data; or
3.2.2. ASEANstats shall use an 'ASEAN estimate' or 'estimate by international organisation', in consultation and with the agreement from the relevant AMSs on the estimation methodology. In the absence of an agreed 'ASEAN estimate' or 'estimate by international organisation', ASEANstats shall exclude the particular AMSs from the aggregated total, and include appropriate footnotes;

[1] AEM, SEOM and other ASEAN Sectoral Bodies

3.3. In cases where national data or estimates from the AMSs are available, ASEANstats shall publish data or estimates in aggregated form at ASEAN, country group, and individual national level;

3.4. In cases where national data are available but with some missing observations, ASEANstats shall provide an estimate in consultation with and subject to approval by the relevant AMSs. If no agreement is reached on the methodology, ASEANstats shall publish the estimate only at ASEAN level with an appropriate footnote; and

3.5. The use of data/ estimate from international organisations can be published at the ASEAN, country group, or national level data in consultation with and subject to approval by the relevant AMSs. If no agreement is reached on the national level, ASEANstats shall publish only at the ASEAN level with an appropriate footnote.

4. Advance Release Calendar

4.1. AMSs shall establish an advance release calendar for national statistics;

4.2. ASEANstats shall establish a release calendar for ASEAN statistics and key ASEAN statistical products, with assistance of the WGDSA and in consultation with the respective Working Groups and upload it at ASEANstats website.

4.3. ASEANstats shall protect information against any unauthorised pre-release, and release information only according to established release procedures;

4.4. The periodicity and timeliness of ASEAN statistics released by ASEANstats shall follow dissemination standards to be defined by the WGDSA in consultation with the relevant Working Groups; and

4.5. AMSs and ASEANstats shall communicate changes in the advance release calendar to users through their respective websites.

III. Integrity and Accountability

The policies and guidelines on integrity and accountability pertain to the following key principles of the ACSS CoP:

Key Principle 2 on Professionalism and Integrity:

"National statistical authorities of the AMSs and ASEANstats decide according to strictly professional consideration on methods and procedures in various stages of statistical activities from data collection to data dissemination."

Key Principle 4 on Accountability:

"ASEAN statistics are presented in a clear and understandable form with sources and methodology, and disseminated in a suitable and convenient manner with clear mention of their limitations."

Indicator 8.2 on Reliability for the Key Principle 8 on Quality:

"Monitoring mechanisms are in place to regularly review and improve the quality of the statistical processes and products."

1. Data Transparency

1.1. ASEANstats shall present ASEAN statistics in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparison, e.g., through clarity of text, tables, charts and other types of visualisations, based on professional consideration and independent of policy or political statement;

1.2. AMSs and ASEANstats shall make available appropriate documentation on concepts, scope, classifications, data sources and methodologies;

1.3. AMSs shall submit required data to ASEANstats along with the necessary metadata and correspondent tables, where appropriate, to facilitate comparability, meaningful interpretation and analysis;

1.4. AMSs and ASEANstats shall clearly disclose prices of statistical products and services, and methods of payments, where appropriate;

1.5. AMSs and ASEANstats shall comment and correct publicly erroneous interpretations or misuse of statistics as appropriate and in a timely manner; and

1.6. AMSs and ASEANstats shall correct errors discovered in published statistics and communicate appropriately about the errors.

2. Data Revision

2.1. AMSs and ASEANstats shall inform users and stakeholders of any data revisions;

2.2. AMSs and ASEANstats shall clearly identify preliminary, rebased or revised data, and explain the revisions to users; and

2.3. AMSs and ASEANstats shall establish a policy on revisions to provide details as to when revisions are made and the basis of revisions.

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Revision Histories

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	September 2013	Adopted at ACSS3
2.0	December 2020	Revision by WGIMTS6 Meeting Adopted at ACSS10
3.0	November 2023	Revision by WGIMTS9 and WGSNA7 Meeting Adopted at ACSS13