Unitar Online Catalogue

Introduction to Official Statistics

Prosperity

Deadline: 31 Dec 2026

Type:	Course
Location:	Web-based
Date:	17 Feb 2026 to 31 Dec 2026
Duration:	11 Months
Thematic Area:	Other
Website:	https://unitar.org/
Price:	$0.00
Event Focal Point Email:	a2030@unitar.org
Partnership:	United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) (854)

BACKGROUND

This e-learning course is primarily developed based on the 4th edition of the Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems (Version 2025/A), as well as the newly added chapter on the National Data Ecosystem and Governance. This course is designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to official statistics, highlighting their distinctiveness and unique role in today's evolving data landscape as well as the needed transformative changes

and opportunities for innovation and modernization.

The course provides a foundational understanding of how official statistics are produced, and the principles that govern them i.e. the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS). It explains the unique role of NSO, specifically the chief statistician and of other stakeholders involved in the national statistical system. The course also helps identify specific capacity gaps, and the required behaviour changes for chief statisticians and senior policymakers as well as promote collaboration, agility, and innovation within the national and international data ecosystems.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

The course also aims to raise awareness of the importance of the National Statistical Office (NSO) as a national data steward and in instituting a national data governance framework for secure data sharing and exchange to enhance added value, supporting policy-making, and facilitating digital transformation at national and international levels.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

It is expected that, by the end of the course, participants will be better positioned to:

- Define official statistics and explain their importance in today’s evolving data landscape, and their distinctiveness from other types of data;
- Discuss the need and ways for transformative changes required to modernize official statistics in response to emerging challenges and opportunities at national and international levels;
- Describe the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS) and the way they govern statistical production processes as well as key data considerations;
- Identify and explain the critical role of National Statistical Offices (NSO) within the National Statistical System (NSS), as well as the unique role of the chief statistician as a key coordinator in producing official statistics;
- Evaluate opportunities for engaging with the broader data ecosystem in the production of official statistics as well as data value chain for better impact

and garnering more support for statistical activities;
- Discuss the importance of data governance frameworks in enabling value-added outcomes through effective data sharing and exchange;
- Describe methods and best practices for effectively communicating and disseminating statistics;
- Recognize the importance of international statistical cooperation for comparability, capacity building, and knowledge and experience sharing.

As a result of this course, it is expected that the participants will be able to:

Chief statisticians, senior managers from the National Statistical System:

- Articulate the unique role of NSOs as national data stewards and their responsibilities in ensuring secure data sharing and governance.
- Initiate transformative changes to modernize statistical processes and systems.
- Promote innovation and collaboration within the NSS and the broader data ecosystem to address emerging challenges.
- Identify existing capacity gaps within their organizations and propose concrete plans to address them.
- Exhibit adaptive leadership to foster a culture of agility, innovation, and responsiveness in a rapidly evolving data landscape.
- Foster partnerships with other national and international stakeholders to strengthen data governance frameworks and enhance the value of official statistics.

Policymakers:

- Recognize the value of FPOS governing official statistics and the role of NSOs in providing reliable, high-quality data for evidence-based policymaking.
- Engage with NSOs to ensure alignment between statistical outputs and policy priorities at national and international levels.
- Promote inter-ministerial and inter-agency cooperation to support the implementation of data governance frameworks and digital transformation initiatives.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The course consists of 4 lessons:

1. *Introduction*

This lesson provides an overview of the two data revolutions that occurred in the past decade and explains how National Statistical Systems (NSSs) are modernizing and transforming their statistical production processes to address challenges and opportunities.

2. *Official Statistics*

This lesson explains how to distinguish the official statistics, by their distinctiveness, from other data and statistics. It also elaborates on the basis of official statistics. It covers the following points:

- Definition of official statistics
    - Distinctiveness of official statistics
    - Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
    - Statistical confidentiality
    - Data protection of private/individual data
    - Public trust and data integrity and ethics
    - Definition of official statistics
    - Definition of official statistics
- Basis of Official Statistics
    - National statistical offices mandate and statistical legislation
    - The role of chief statistician
    - Data for official statistics
    - Statistical production processes (GSBPM)
    - Data quality

3. National Statistical System vs National data ecosystem

This lesson focuses on the role and functions of NSO within NSS. It delves into the governance and coordination mechanisms of the NSS, emphasizing the importance of statistical legislation, clear delimitation of responsibilities, and collaboration across diverse stakeholders. Furthermore, it highlights the evolving role of NSO as a national data steward in shaping the national data ecosystem and governance, ensuring data is ethically managed and effectively used for public benefit. It also introduces a new term as data value chain that emphasizes the uptake and the impact of data. Finally, it discusses the importance of data dissemination and various methods in how to ensure an effective dissemination and communication of data.

4. *International data ecosystem and international statistical cooperation*

This lesson discusses the importance of international statistical cooperation, highlighting the organizations, frameworks, and initiatives that shape modern official statistics. It details the collaborative efforts of national and international statistical systems to develop standards, enhance capacity, and exchange knowledge and experiences. It covers the following points: standards, frameworks and methods; statistical capacity development; and knowledge and experience sharing.

METHODOLOGY

This e-learning course is developed in English and consists of four lessons. Each lesson is developed around the overall learning objectives and includes an interactive presentation complemented by a set of practice quizzes (“knowledge checks”/formative assessment). The course is followed by an objective graded quiz (summative assessment) to be taken after completing the course to assess the knowledge and skills acquired. The estimated net sitting study time ranges between 2 - 2.5 hours depending on individual’s pace.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

The target audience of the e-learning course is chief statisticians, senior managers from the National Statistical System, and policymakers.