



REINFORCED QUALITY ASSURANCE OF GOVERNMENT FINANCE STATISTICS

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The European Statistics Code of Practice sets the standards for developing, producing and disseminating European statistics; it covers the institutional environment, the statistical production processes and the output of statistics. The Principles of the Code of Practice together with the general quality management principles represent the common quality framework of the European Statistical System. The Code aims at improving trust and confidence in the independence, integrity and accountability of the statistical authorities as well as in the credibility and overall quality of the statistics they develop, produce and disseminate. Through the 15 Principles and their 82 Indicators it defines the first and second level of quality assurance of the European statistics.

The Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System assists the implementation of the Code of Practice by identifying possible activities, methods and tools for the operationalization of the different Indicators – it therefore can be regarded as the supporting document of the Code of Practice. Through the different quality assurance methods and tools it defines the third level of quality assurance of the European statistics.

In addition, statistical domains often develop their own, domain-specific quality assurance methods and tools which then constitute a fourth level of quality assurance. The paper describes the different elements and components of the reinforced quality assurance mechanism of Government Finance Statistics, and more specifically, of the statistics used for the Excessive Deficit Procedure. The paper also explains how this quality assurance mechanism guarantees the high quality of these statistics which is of utmost importance considering that they have an important and automatic impact on Member States and the European Union through their direct application in the implementation of European economic policies.

Keywords: European statistics, Code of Practice, Quality Assurance Framework, quality assurance, Government Finance Statistics, Excessive Deficit Procedure, reinforced / increased verification, audit-like approach, in-depth review of upstream data sources, country visits, inventories of sources and methods