

SIAP 2025 MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

Enhancing Leadership Advocacy

EFFECTIVE USER ENGAGEMENT IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Twentieth Management Seminar for Heads of National Statistical Offices in Asia and the Pacific

Chiba & Tokyo | 2 – 3 December 2025



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Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Statistics



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User Engagement as a Strategic Leadership Priority



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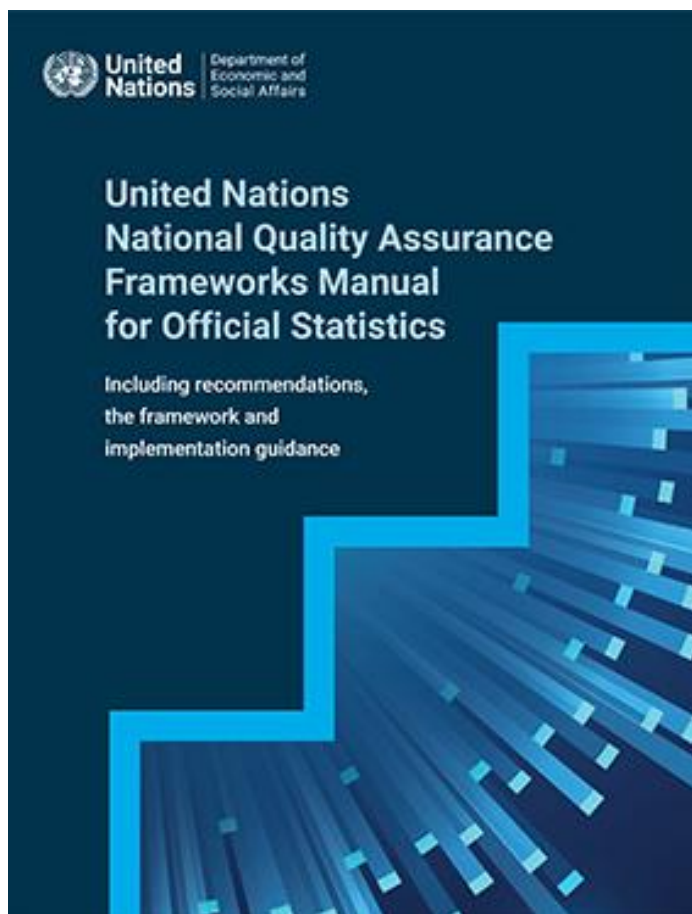


- **User engagement is a core leadership responsibility in official statistics.**
- Ensures relevance, timeliness and usefulness of statistics for decisions across society.
- Helps identify priority data needs, gaps and emerging issues with key user groups.
- Provides feedback to improve statistical products, services and dissemination channels.
- Requires clear governance, roles and cooperation across the national statistical system.
- Depends on leadership commitment, resources and a supportive organisational culture

User Engagement and Quality of Official Statistics



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- **User engagement is essential for key quality dimensions of official statistics.**
- Links especially to relevance, accessibility, clarity and coherence of data and metadata.
- Helps identify priority topics, disaggregations and new products that users need most.
- Informs choices on formats, channels and timing of data releases and communication.
- Provides feedback to assess whether statistics are understood, trusted and used.
- Integrates user perspectives into national quality assurance and review processes

Quality Dimensions Strengthened Through User Engagement (UN-NQAF)



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Quality dimension	Role of user engagement
Relevance	Identifying priority topics, indicators and disaggregations that matter most to users
Accessibility	Shaping formats, portals and access channels that are easy for different users to navigate
Interpretability	Improving metadata, explanations and guidance based on what users find hard to understand
Accuracy and reliability	Providing feedback on anomalies, inconsistencies and limitations detected in practice
Timeliness	Signalling when data are needed for planning, budgeting and reporting cycles
Coherence	Highlighting needs to link and harmonise data across domains and producers

Users of Official Statistics and Their Needs?



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- **Official statistics serve a wide range of decision makers and stakeholders.**
- **Policymakers** and planners in central and local government using statistics for laws, programmes and budgets.
- **Sector ministries** and agencies integrating statistics into sector policies and monitoring frameworks.
- **Private sector** and financial institutions for investment decisions, markets and innovation.
- **Academia** and research institutions analysing data and developing new methods and indicators.
- **Media** to inform the public debate and report on key issues.
- **Civil society** and the general public to understand developments, advocate for change and hold institutions accountable

Barriers faced by users of official statistics



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- **Many users still face obstacles when trying to find, understand and use official statistics.**
- Limited awareness of available statistics or where to find them.
- Complex websites, portals and formats that are difficult to navigate for non-experts.
- Technical language, lack of explanations and metadata that users can easily understand.
- Gaps in disaggregated data, geographic detail or timeliness for specific user needs.
- Limited digital access, low data literacy or lack of support in interpreting statistics.
- Perceptions that statistics are not neutral or do not reflect people's lived realities

Common barriers faced by users of official statistics



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Barrier	Description	Examples of effects
Communication and language	Information is too technical or available only in dominant languages	Misinterpretation or reliance on unofficial sources
Digital access and literacy	Limited access to technology or inadequate skills to navigate portals	Lower use of open data platforms and online tools
Cultural and community relevance	Data do not reflect community priorities or lived realities	Lack of trust, disengagement, or low use of official statistics
Navigation and usability	Websites or portals are difficult to search or understand	Users abandon attempts to access data
Lack of transparency or metadata	Methods or limitations are not clearly explained	Misuse or misunderstanding of statistical information

From Ad Hoc Contacts To a User Engagement Cycle



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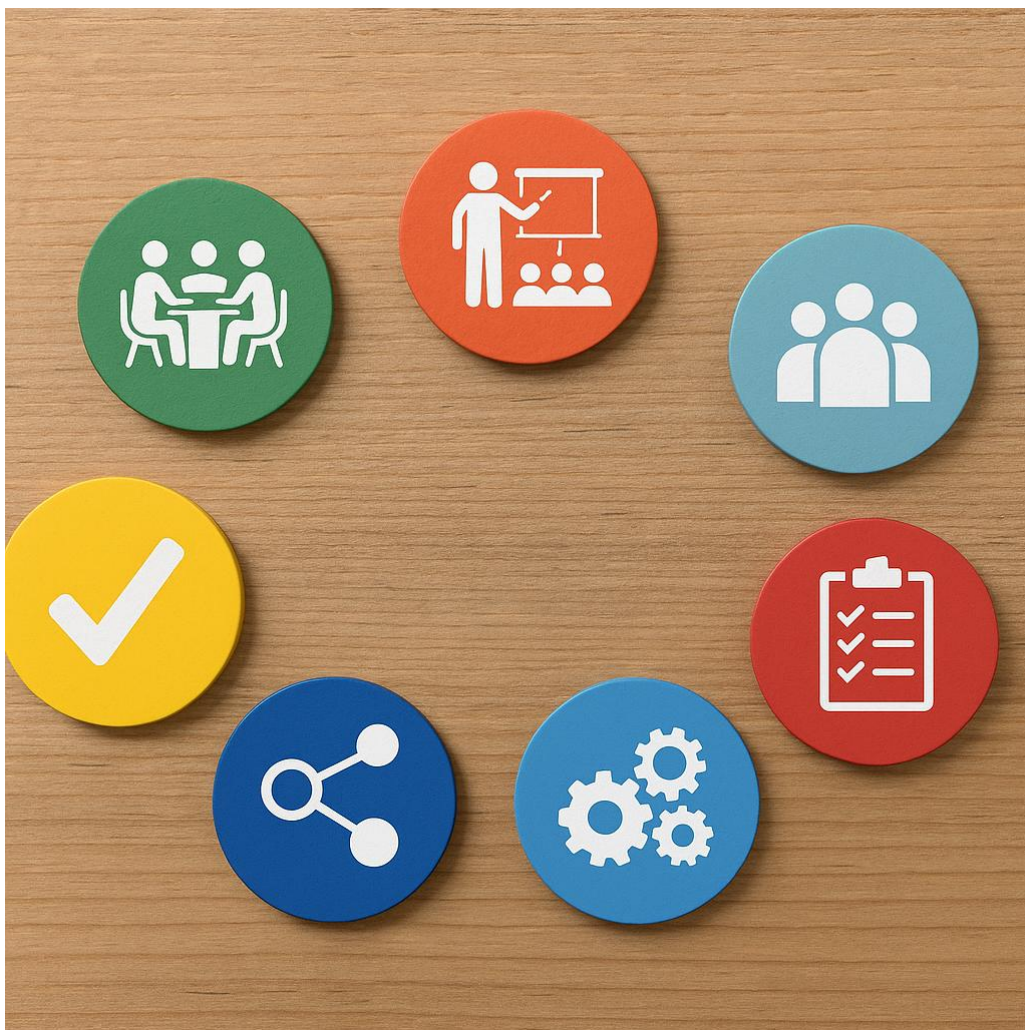


- **Effective user engagement is a continuous cycle, not a series of isolated consultations.**
- Starts with systematically identifying user groups, needs and priorities.
- Plans engagement objectives and chooses appropriate channels and mechanisms.
- Involves users at different stages of the statistical process, not only at dissemination.
- Collects and documents feedback on data gaps, quality, formats and communication.
- Integrates feedback into planning, quality assurance and innovation of products and services.
- Reviews and updates the engagement approach regularly, learning from experience and new demands.

Choosing the Right Mechanisms for User Engagement



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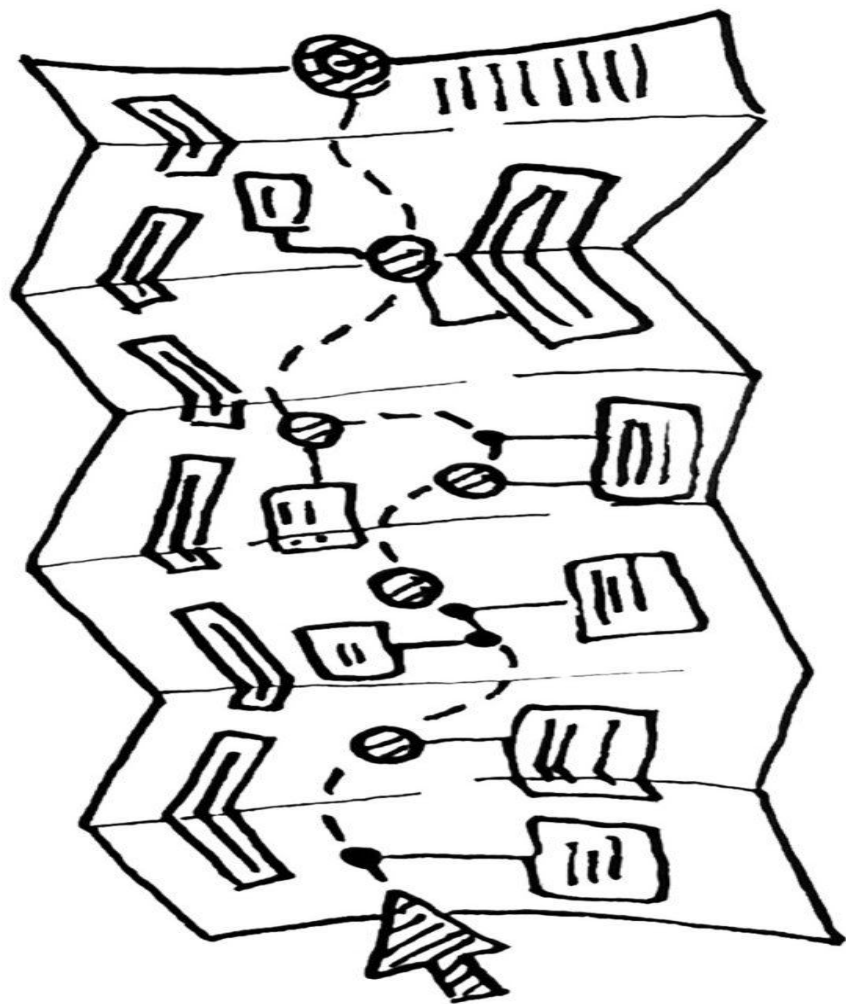
- **Different engagement purposes require different tools and approaches.**
- Strategic dialogue with key users may call for advisory councils, user panels or high-level forums
- Consultation on specific surveys, indicators or classifications can use working groups, technical committees or expert meetings
- Broader feedback on products and services can be gathered through user satisfaction surveys, online feedback forms or helpdesks
- Awareness-raising and data literacy benefit from workshops, webinars, media briefings and social media outreach
- Inclusive engagement requires tailor-made approaches for underserved groups, including local meetings, community intermediaries and partnerships

Engagement Methods and When to Use Them



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Method	Typical purpose / when to use it
Statistical advisory council	Regular high-level dialogue on priorities, work programmes and major reforms
User panels or reference groups	Ongoing feedback from specific user communities (e.g. business, academia, civil society)
Technical working groups	Detailed consultation on methods, classifications, indicators and standards
User satisfaction surveys	Periodic assessment of how users perceive access, clarity, relevance and service quality
Helpdesks and query services	Responding to individual questions and supporting correct interpretation of statistics
Workshops, webinars and briefings	Explaining new products, complex indicators or key releases to targeted audiences
Online feedback forms and social media	Collecting suggestions, questions and signals about emerging user needs



- **User journeys help us see how people actually experience official statistics.**
- Describe step by step how a specific user group looks for, accesses, understands and applies statistics.
- Reveal practical obstacles such as search difficulties, unclear messages, missing disaggregation or formats.
- Highlight “moments that matter”, where communication, guidance, or support can make the biggest difference.
- Provide a structured basis for redesigning products, services and engagement mechanisms around user needs.
- Will be used in the seminar’s group work to develop concrete improvements for selected user groups and services.



- **User engagement needs to be anchored in governance, not only in individual initiatives.**
- Clear mandates, roles and coordination mechanisms across the national statistical system support consistent engagement with users.
- Leadership sets expectations that user engagement is part of core business, not an optional activity or only a communication function.
- Decisions on work programmes, priorities and resource allocation should reflect evidence from user needs and feedback.
- Organisational culture should encourage openness, collaboration across units and willingness to listen and adapt
- Staff at all levels need support, guidance and recognition for engaging with users in a professional and constructive way.

Key Messages and Looking Ahead



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- **User engagement is a core leadership function, essential for quality, relevance and trust in official statistics.**
- Understanding user groups, their needs and barriers helps to prioritise products, services and communication efforts.
- A structured engagement cycle and appropriate mechanisms make user engagement systematic rather than ad hoc.
- Governance, leadership and organisational culture need to support staff in working in a user-centred way.
- The seminar sessions will build on the concept paper to develop concrete assessments, user journeys and leadership-level action plans

From Concept Paper to Seminar Sessions



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Session	Linked sections of the concept paper
Session 1 – Open and objectives	Section 1 (Introduction) and Section 7 (Conclusions and Expected Outcomes)
Session 2 – Concept paper on user engagement	Executive Summary
Session 3 – Country experiences	Annex 1
Session 4 – Stocktaking and maturity matrix	Section 2 (User of Statistics), Section 3 (Strategies) and Section 6 (Challenges and opportunities)
Session 5 – User journeys and service design	Section 2 (User of Statistics), Section 3 (Strategies)
Session 6 – Leadership-level action plans	Section 4 (Governance and leadership) and Section 5 (Capacity development)
Session 7 – Organisational culture and staff potential	Sub-sections 4.3-4.4 and 5.5 (Leadership skills, organisational culture and capacity)

Thank You for Your Attention



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