

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

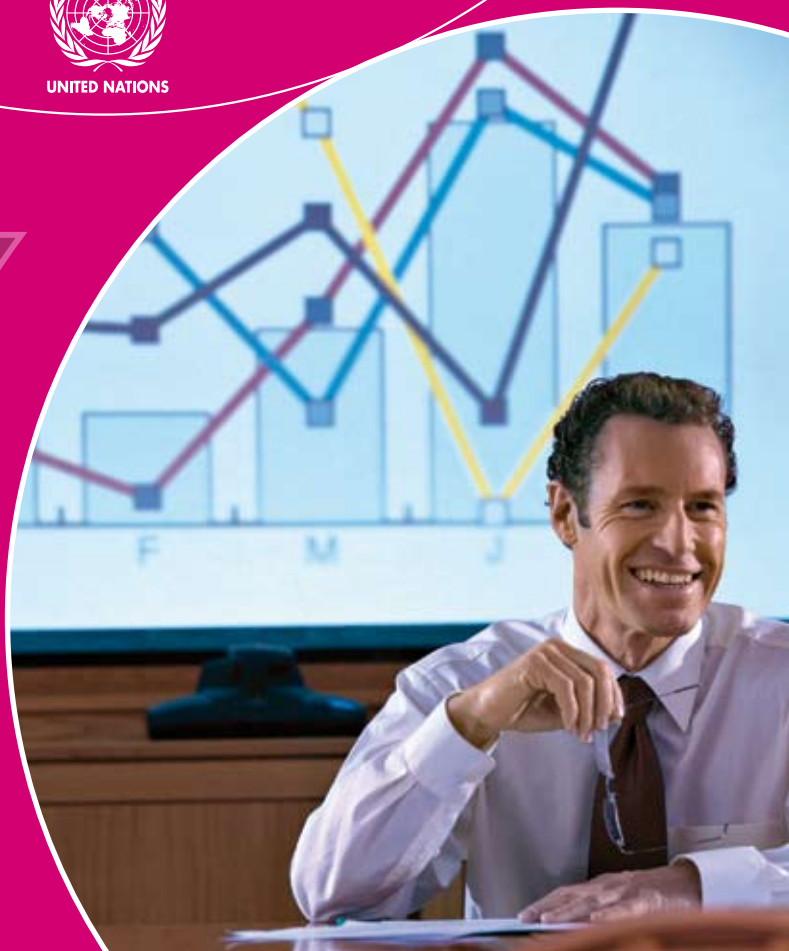
# What **UNECE** does for you



UNITED NATIONS

...**UNECE** works  
for standards  
for official statistics

The UNECE Statistical Division helps to strengthen national statistical systems by developing and promoting standards for official statistics.



## What is the purpose of UNECE work in this field?

We aim to improve the quality and comparability of official statistics to provide a sound basis for policy formulation and evaluation, and to better inform the citizens of our region about economic and social development. To achieve this, we have a range of activities including:

- Organizing meetings and workshops to exchange knowledge and good practices, and to develop common standards and methodological guidelines;
- Providing advice and assessments on compliance with standards;
- Developing technical assistance programmes to help countries bring their statistical systems into line with international standards;

- Maintaining a database of international statistical activities to ensure the coordination of statistical development work between international organizations (<http://unece.unog.ch/disa/disa.default.asp>).

This work is overseen by the Conference of European Statisticians, an annual meeting of heads of national and international official statistical agencies from around the world.

## What sort of standards do you develop?

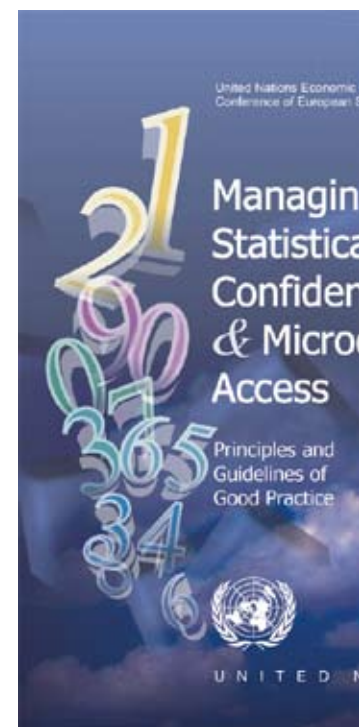
Perhaps the most important and far-reaching standard to date is the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (<http://www.unece.org/stats/archive/docs.fp.e.htm>). This standard was adopted for the UNECE region in 1992.

Two years later, the United Nations Statistical Commission adopted these principles as a global standard. The ten principles are designed to ensure the integrity and impartiality of official statistics by promoting transparency, scientific methods and professional ethics.

A wide range of other standards and technical or methodological guidelines have been produced over recent years, all of which are available free of charge on our website (see <http://www.unece.org/stats/publ.htm>). Examples of recent standards include:

- Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing
- Best practices in designing websites for dissemination of statistics
- Recommendations on formats relevant to the downloading of statistical data from the Internet
- Common metadata framework
- Guidelines for statistical metadata on the Internet
- Guidelines for modelling statistical data and metadata
- Information systems architecture for national and international Statistical Offices
- Guidelines for statistical data editing
- Managing statistical confidentiality and micro-data access
- Making data meaningful – a guide to writing stories about numbers.

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## How do you develop these standards?

These standards are drafted by UNECE officials and subject-matter experts from national and international statistical agencies. They are reviewed by expert group meetings with representatives of our member countries. Finally they are adopted by the appropriate high-level committee; often this is the Conference of European Statisticians.

## What impact do they have?

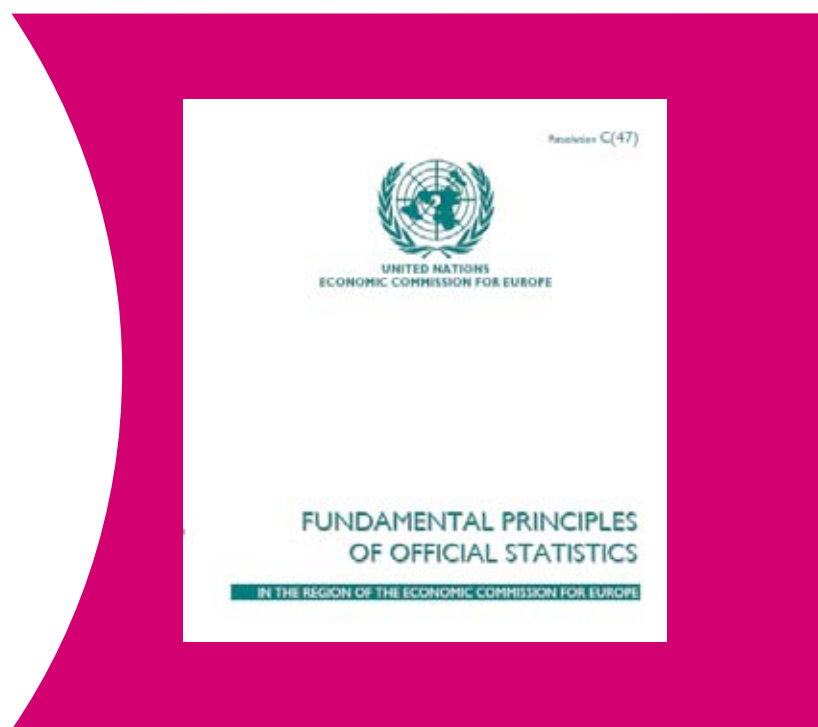
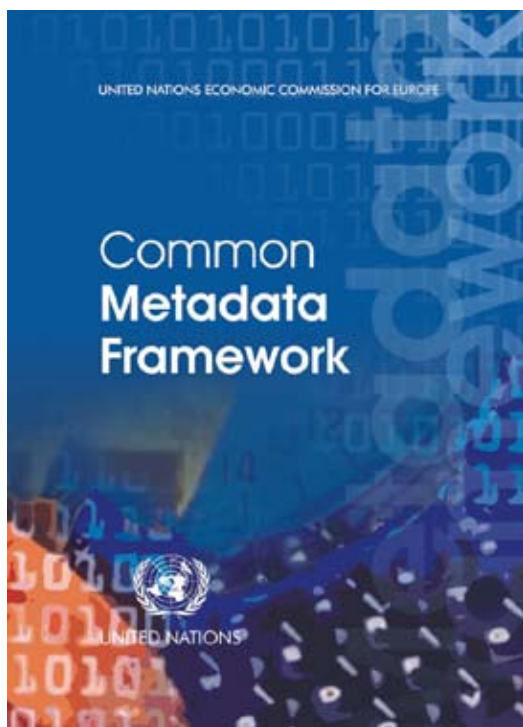
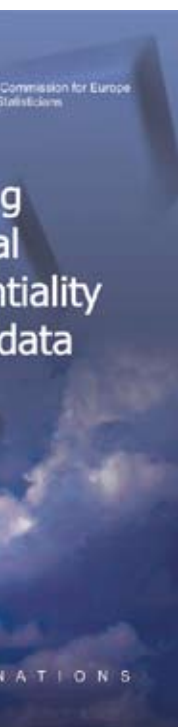
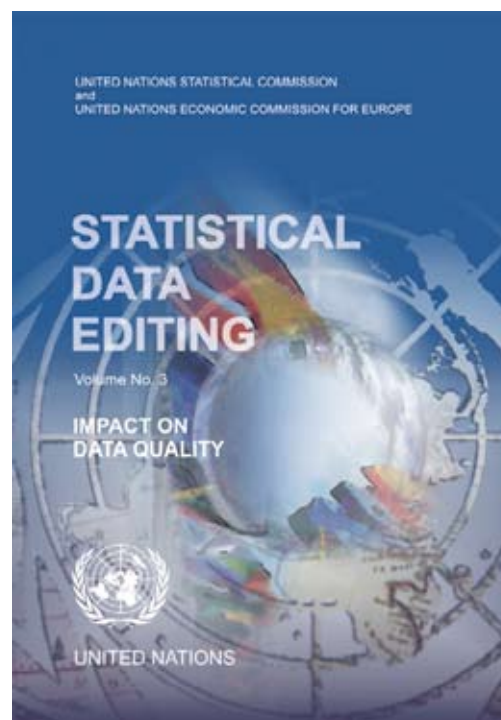
Despite being voluntary in nature, these standards have a huge impact on the quality and comparability of official statistics. For example, the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics provide the benchmark against which the institutional frameworks and legal basis of official statistics around the world are assessed. The Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing, jointly prepared with the Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat), build on the success of the 2000 version, which

made a significant contribution to improving the comparability of these key statistics.

Perhaps the best indication of the impact of these standards, however, is the high rate of adoption by statistical agencies outside the UNECE region, often leading to them becoming de facto global standards.

## Where can I find more information?

Our website (<http://www.unece.org/stats>) contains electronic versions of these standards, as well as papers from the expert meetings where these standards are developed and discussed. Specific questions can also be sent to [support.stat@unece.org](mailto:support.stat@unece.org).



For more information:  
<http://www.unece.org/stats>

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