

# Standardisation of Concepts and Definitions

## UNWTO Capacity Building Programme on Tourism Statistics

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# Overview

- Purpose of presentation
- Background
- Standardisation process in Stats SA
- Standardisation of concept definitions
- Registration
- Successes so far...
- Challenges

# Purpose of the presentation

To share Stats SA experience on standardisation of concept definitions

- Successes
- Challenges

# Background

- Stats SA vision: *Preferred supplier of quality statistics*
- Part of the strategy for improving **quality** of products and services is through standardisation of specifications, classifications, **concepts and definitions**, policies, procedures, guidelines and methodologies.
- Work on standardisation of concept definitions started in 2005
  - Enable coherence of statistics across surveys, and within survey series, over time
  - Different stakeholders (external and internal) were involved in this process

- Developed *Good Practice Methodology*
  - Standard for developing standards (proposal, draft, buy-in, edit, test, approve, train, promote)
- Infrastructure for standards development
  - Permanent (standards development experts)
  - Temporary (subject matter experts)
- Principles:
  - Buy-in
  - Consensus (agreement among stakeholders)
  - Development within short period (maintain relevance)
  - Robustness of standard
  - Periodic revision (ensure relevance)

- Why define statistical terminology?
  - To improve **interpretability**
  - Give the **context** in which statistical terminology is used, e.g. the term 'visitor'...
    - everyday usage
    - context of tourism
- Why standardise definitions?
  - To improve **coherence** of data from different surveys

## Standardisation of concept definitions (2)

### ISO/IEC 11179 – 4 (formulation of data definitions)

- Requirements (rules) for data definitions
  - State in the singular
  - State what the concept is, not only what it is not
  - Express without embedding definitions of other data or underlying concepts
- Recommendations (guidelines) for data definitions
  - State the essential meaning
  - Be precise and unambiguous
  - Be able to stand alone
  - Express without embedding rationale, functional usage, or procedural information
  - Avoid circular reasoning

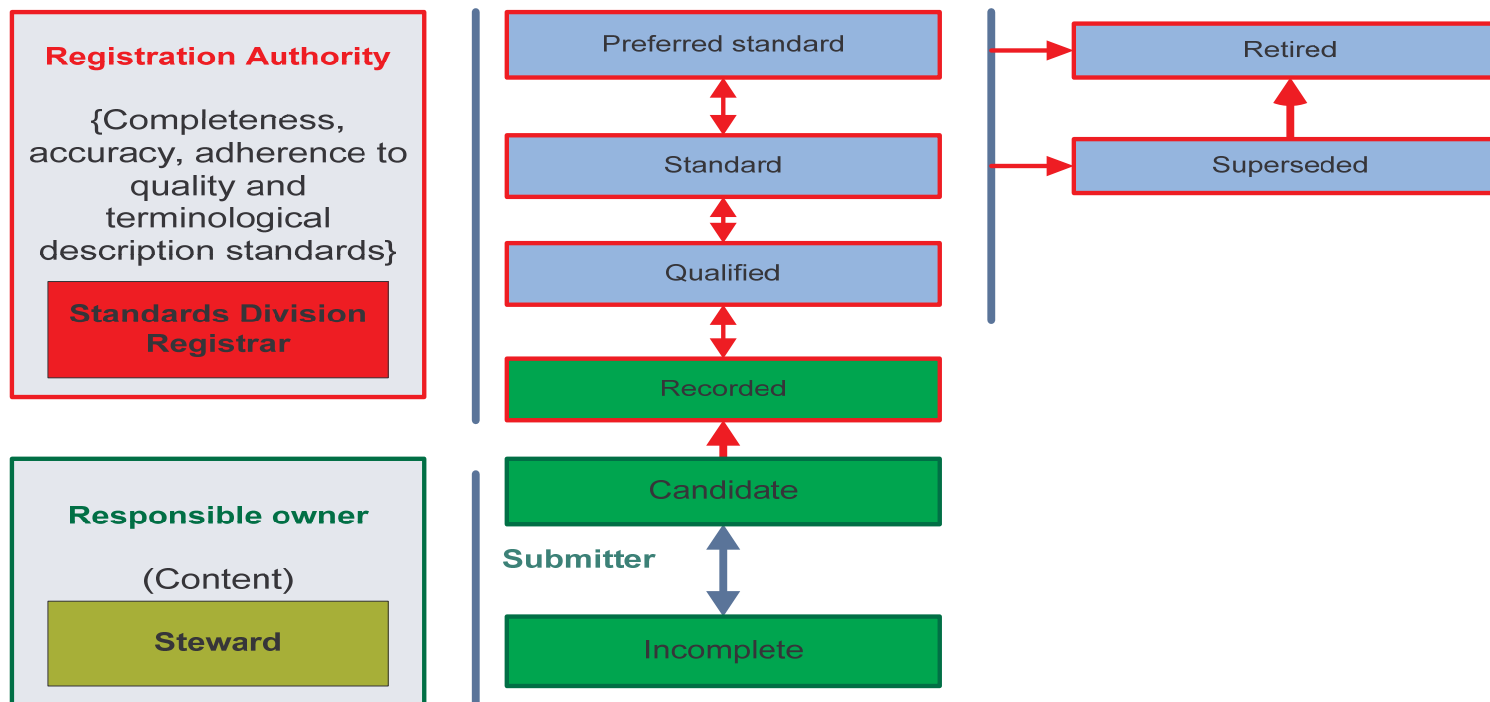
### Special cases:

- Same term/label having different definitions
  - Concepts have different contexts
  - Should be defined separately
  - Qualify term with a prefix or a suffix e.g. **tourism visitor** and **household visitor**
- Different terms, same definition
  - Synonyms
  - Same concept
  - One term preferred over the other e.g. **race** and **population group**; **educational attainment** and **educational achievement**



- Enables proper management of metadata
- Process follows ISO 11179-6 (registration)
- Coincides with standardisation process

## Registration Process



# Successes so far

- Produced a document for all Stats SA definitions
  - Classified under 20 main topics (for easy search)
  - Organisational standard
  - Allows data sharing
  - Reduces respondent burden
- Busy building system for storage and management of definitional metadata
  - Soon starting with registration
  - Now at testing stage

# Challenges

- Implementation
  - Infrastructure not fully in place
  - Monitoring (Standards Division underway!)
- Nationalisation of standards
  - Need to get buy-in from other data producers
  - Maybe a national infrastructure for statistical standards

*Thank you!!!*