

For Official Use**English - Or. English****2 September 2020****COUNCIL****Council****REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF
THE COUNCIL ON GOOD STATISTICAL PRACTICE****(Note by the Secretary-General)****JT03464848**

1. This note presents a Report by the Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP) on the implementation of the Recommendation of the Council on Good Statistical Practice [[OECD/LEGAL/0417](#)] (hereafter, the “Recommendation”) and sets out conclusions regarding the instrument’s relevance, dissemination and whether it requires updating or revision. The Report [[SDD/CSSP\(2020\)10](#)], which is reproduced in the Annex to this document, was approved by the CSSP during its 26 June 2020 meeting [[SDD/CSSP/M\(2020\)1](#)].

1. Background

2. The Council adopted the Recommendation on 23 November 2015 [[C\(2015\)128](#) and [C\(2015\)128/CORR1](#)]. It became immediately applicable to all OECD Member countries, but was also open to non-Members’ adherence (referred together as the “Adherents”). The Recommendation was amended by the Council in 2019 to include a pre-adherence review process to assess the commitment of interested non-Members [[C\(2019\)28](#)]. To date, five non-Members have adhered to the Recommendation: Argentina, Croatia, Peru, Romania and Bulgaria.

3. The Recommendation is the first and only OECD legal instrument concerning statistics. It represents a key reference for assessing and benchmarking national statistical systems, and a detailed blueprint to establish a sound and credible national statistical system.

4. It comprises twelve recommendations, covering:

- the institutional, legal and resource requirements for statistical systems;
- the methods and quality of processes of statistical collection, production and dissemination; and
- coordination, cooperation, and statistical innovation.

5. For each recommendation, a Set of Good Statistical Practices¹ has been compiled on the basis of then existing international and national guidelines and on OECD’s experience in accession reviews. This Set of Good Statistical Practices was approved by the CSSP on 31 July 2015 [[STD/CSSP\(2015\)4/REV1](#)] and does not form an integral part of the Recommendation. The good practices included are indicative and none of them in themselves are necessary or sufficient to consider a particular recommendation as fulfilled.

6. The Recommendation instructs the CSSP to “monitor [its] implementation [...] and to report thereon to the Council no later than three years following its adoption and regularly thereafter”. The Council received an update on the implementation of the Recommendation in March 2019, including a revised timeline for submitting the present Report [[C\(2019\)28](#)].

¹ Available at: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/331/681516bc-1e97-4915-83e7-38211259ad41.pdf>.

2. Methodology

7. The Secretariat used several tools to collect extensive material since the adoption of the Recommendation by the Council, while avoiding unnecessary duplication and to reduce the burden on Adherents. This Report is mainly based on information on legal and institutional frameworks for official statistics available in:

- self-assessment questionnaires on the implementation of the Recommendation provided by nearly all Adherents which are not member states of the European Statistical System (EU member states and EFTA countries)² and made available on the online Toolkit³;
- an OECD peer review report on the implementation of the Recommendation in Mexico;
- OECD statistical reviews (e.g. Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru);
- thorough examination of the statistical legislations in Adherents as well as investigations conducted by the Secretariat and material collected from international organisations (International Monetary Fund (IMF), Eurostat, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UN Statistics Division (UNSD), etc.); and,
- information from the peer review reports on the compliance with the European Code of Practice and the Coordination Role of the National Statistical Institute released by Eurostat in 2015⁴ updated with publicly available information on the implementation of the recommendations set out by the reviews.

8. To complement these sources of information, a questionnaire was sent to Adherents in 2018 to gather further information on the use and implementation of the Recommendation.

9. Finally, the degree of implementation of the Set of Good Statistical Practices also provides a good indication whether Adherent practices live up to the different recommendations.

3. Process

10. The implementation of the Recommendation has been discussed during several of CSSP's annual meetings since its adoption in 2015, thereby illustrating the continuous engagement of the Committee in the implementation process of the Recommendation. Key elements of the Report were presented and discussed during the Committee's 16th meeting on 25 June 2019 [[SDD/CSSP\(2019\)7](#)]. The CSSP then reviewed and approved the Report at its 17th meeting on 26 June 2020 [[SDD/CSSP\(2020\)10](#)].

11. In the present document, the Council is invited to note and declassify the Report set out in the Annex. Thereafter, a link to the Report will be included in the public webpage of

² At the time of drafting, self-assessment by the United States was still outstanding.

³ See <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/self-assessmenttools/>

⁴ The 2015 round of peer reviews assessed the compliance of the ESS national statistical systems against the quality assurance framework based on the 2011 version of the Code, which has been revised in 2017.

the Recommendation on the [online Compendium of OECD legal instruments](#) as well as on the online Toolkit on the Recommendation (see pars. 13-14 below).

4. Dissemination

12. The Recommendation “invites Adherents and the Secretary-General to disseminate this Recommendation”. This has taken place in four ways:

- dedicated discussions in meetings of the CSSP and its subsidiary bodies;
- presentation of the Recommendation in international conferences (e.g. the European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics in 2016 and again in 2018)⁵;
- dissemination and promotion of the Recommendation by Adherents at the national and regional levels;
- translation in Spanish, thus helping dissemination in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

13. At the request of the CSSP, the Secretariat developed an online Toolkit to support the dissemination and implementation of the Recommendation and to ensure minimum consistency in reporting practices. The Toolkit comprises the following items:

- a self-assessment questionnaire⁶ based on the twelve recommendations and Set of Good Statistical Practices;
- a webpage⁷ to bring together country assessments, responses to the self-assessment questionnaires, and provide links to relevant information on national statistical legislation and international documentation (such as reviews conducted in the European Statistical System (ESS)). This webpage offers the possibility to disseminate country assessments to the public and to provide a convenient central location that can be referred to in future reports on implementation to the OECD Council;
- the text of the Recommendation with the Set of Good Statistical Practices, available in English, French, and Spanish.⁸

14. The Toolkit constitutes both a tool that promotes transparent information on statistical practices (all assessments are publicly accessible) and a tool for knowledge sharing: with the self-assessment questionnaire, concrete information is available on how, for instance, Adherents implement the Recommendation with regard to the co-ordination

⁵ These worldwide conferences bring together a wide range of statisticians from national statistics offices and international organisations involved in the design of quality management processes and policies: <http://q2016.ine.es/?lang=en> and <https://www.q2018.pl/>.

⁶ See <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/self-assessmenttools/>.

⁷ See <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/countryassessments/>.

⁸ See https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/Brochure_Recommendation%20of%20the%20OECD%20Council%20on%20Good%20Statistical%20Practice%20March2019.pdf.

of their national statistical system. To remain relevant, the Toolkit requires ongoing updating, necessitating resources and co-operation with Adherents.

15. The Recommendation has also been successfully disseminated to non-Adherents (leading ultimately to their adherence in a number of cases). In particular:

- It has proved to be very useful in assessing the national statistical system of former accession candidate countries (Costa Rica and Lithuania, and to a lesser extent Colombia)⁹. Indeed, the adoption of the Recommendation had been largely triggered by the need for a legal instrument that could serve as a reference in accession reviews. The Report includes also the findings from these accession processes even though Colombia and Costa Rica were not yet Adherents at time of its finalisation.
- Several non-Members, including Argentina, Bulgaria,¹⁰ Croatia, Peru, and Romania adhered to the Recommendation¹¹ and this Report includes findings on its implementation for these Adherents. Other countries, including Brazil, South Africa, Kazakhstan, and Morocco have expressed their interest to adhere.
- Whenever the Secretariat conducts more broad-based reviews of statistical systems as has been the case for Argentina¹² or Peru¹³, the Recommendation constitutes the key reference for the chapter on the institutional and legal framework.
- There is a strong link between adherence to the Recommendation and participation in CSSP meetings.¹⁴

16. Overall, the dissemination activities developed by Adherents and the OECD Secretariat under the auspices of the CSSP have been important in explaining the rationale and the value of the Recommendation to relevant producers of official statistics as well as to government officials (from Adherents and non-Adherents) and in increasing their understanding of the various dimensions of the Recommendation.

⁹ The Recommendation was adopted after the finalisation of the statistical accession review while being prepared over the same period.

¹⁰ The reviews on the compliance with the European Code of Practice for Official Statistics undergone in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania as part of the European Statistical System provided the basis for the CSSP to pronounce itself on their adherence to the Recommendation.

¹¹ A reference to the pre-adherence review process was included in the Recommendation by the Council in March 2019 [C(2019)28]. The detailed process, as agreed by the CSSP at its June 2018 meeting, is set out in [SDD/CSSP\(2018\)5](#).

¹² Argentina was the first non-Member to express its interest in 2016 to adhere to the Recommendation as a means to strengthen its statistical policy and national statistical system. A preliminary review was conducted to provide the basis for adherence; a full review including various statistical subject matters is expected to be completed by end 2019.

¹³ See <https://www.inei.gob.pe/media/ocde/English.pdf>.

¹⁴ Adherence to the Recommendation is one of the conditions for becoming an Associate in the CSSP as set out in the CSSP Global Relations Strategy [SDD/CSSP(2018)2] and [Participation Plan](#). Non-Member Adherents are listed in the CSSP Participation Plan as Invitees, thus allowing for attendance at Committee meetings on an *ad hoc* basis. It is also possible for the CSSP (and ultimately Council) to consider granting Participant status to non-Member Adherents to allow them to participate in all Committee meetings, in particular discussions related to the implementation and dissemination of the Recommendation.

17. It follows that the Secretariat and Adherents have already actively disseminated the Recommendation in various fora. Continuing to raise awareness of the Recommendation nationally and internationally is considered very important.

5. Summary of the implementation and conclusions

18. Five years after the adoption of the Recommendation, this Report highlights the main trends and developments across Adherents with respect to their implementation of its provisions. The Report underscores a selection of good practices and advanced statistical policy tools developed by Adherents, as well as challenges that they still face in the collection, production and dissemination of official statistics.

19. The peer review processes on the implementation of the Recommendation have proven to be the most accurate means to develop policy recommendations for strengthening the national statistical system.

20. Several key messages have surfaced from this process. These include:

- The Recommendation has clearly filled a niche in the international spectrum of statistical codes of practice by catering to the most developed statistical systems which allowed more specificity than UN-based instruments.
- Much progress has been made to implement the provisions of the Recommendation in Adherents.
- Particular attention to ensure consistency with the European Statistical Code of Practice and specific provisions for countries in the European Statistical System have avoided any duplication of tools and efforts. Indeed, assessments conducted under the European Statistical Code of Practice are considered a substitute for OECD assessments.
- The vast majority of non-European Union member states has chosen a self-assessment as the vehicle for reporting on their implementation. While this is the least demanding form of assessment, it also makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions on the degree of compliance with the Recommendation as the detail and depth of responses varies. A more elaborate peer review was undertaken for Mexico and considered helpful for the Mexican statistical system.
- There have also been a number of more specific cases around national statistical questions where the Recommendation proved to be very useful as a reference, such as discussions around the development and passage of a Statistics Bill in Canada, Argentina, Chile, Lithuania, and Costa Rica, or the development of amendments in Colombia.
- The Recommendation is now recognised as a key OECD standard for its Members and beyond, in particular in the context of the OECD accession processes and, within its short existence, has established itself as a reference for non-Members, as attested to by the steady number of requests for adherence.
- The CSSP considers that the relevance of the Recommendation is assured as it stands although some areas may be considered for further development in the future.

21. When it reviewed and approved the Report, the CSSP considered that no further revision of the Recommendation was warranted at this point. However, several areas of further actions have been identified including:

- Envisage updating of the Set of Good Statistical Practices in particular by reflecting the changes in the 2019 European Quality Assistance Framework. This update would provide an opportunity to remove duplications and redundancies and to include selected additional good practices as identified in the past five years.
- Encourage Adherents to continue to disseminate and promote the Recommendation, including by producing and sharing with the OECD Secretariat translations into their domestic language.
- Recognise that the peer review process is beneficial for both Adherents and the Organisation, encourage Adherents to undergo a peer review of their national statistical system against the Recommendation.
- Continue to monitor the implementation of the Recommendation and report back to the Council in five years. This first Report provides a baseline with which to continue to compare the implementation processes in various Adherents over the coming years and identify progress over time.
- Complement information on the implementation of the Recommendation on a continuous basis enabling the OECD Secretariat to further develop the online Toolkit, in cooperation with Adherents in order to provide detailed information on the practices in place, including in ESS member states. Developing this knowledge on the national statistical systems would facilitate the future monitoring process.

6. Proposed action

22. In the light of the preceding, the Secretary-General invites the Council to adopt the following draft conclusions:

THE COUNCIL

- a) noted document [C\(2020\)107](#), in particular the Report set out in its Annex, and agreed to its declassification;
- b) encourage Adherents to the Recommendation to continue their efforts to implement and disseminate the Recommendation, and to consider undergoing a peer review of their national statistical system against the Recommendation;
- c) welcome the possible update of the Set of Good Statistical Practices and efforts to complement information on the implementation Recommendation on a continuous basis;
- d) invited the Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy to report to the Council on the implementation, dissemination and continued relevance of the Recommendation in five years.

Annex A. Report on the Implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Good Statistical Practice

1. Background

1. On 23 November 2015, the Council adopted, on a proposal from the Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP), the OECD Recommendation on Good Statistical Practice [[OECD/LEGAL/0417](#)] (hereafter the “Recommendation”).
2. The Recommendation became immediately applicable to all OECD Member countries, but also open to non-Members’ adherence (referred together as the “Adherents”). The Recommendation was amended by the Council in 2019 to include a pre-adherence review process to assess the commitment of interested non-Members [[C\(2019\)28](#)]. To date, five non-Members have adhered to the Recommendation, i.e. Argentina, Croatia, Peru, Romania and Bulgaria. Several other non-Members,¹⁵ including Key Partners, have expressed a strong interest in adhering to the Recommendation.
3. The Recommendation is the first and only OECD legal instrument concerning statistics. It represents a key reference for assessing and benchmarking national statistical systems, and a detailed blueprint to establish a sound and credible national statistical system. It complements existing international standards, such as the United Nations (UN) Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics¹⁶ and the European statistics Code of Practice (revised edition 2017)¹⁷ and provides a key reference reflecting the fact that quality of statistics is fundamental for the quality of the OECD evidence based analytical work.
4. The Recommendation comprises twelve recommendations covering:
 - the institutional, legal and resource requirements for statistical systems;
 - the methods and quality of processes of statistical collection, production and dissemination;
 - coordination, cooperation, and statistical innovation.
5. For each recommendation, a Set of Good Statistical Practices¹⁸ has been compiled on the basis of then existing international and national guidelines and on OECD’s experience in accession reviews. This Set of Good Statistical Practices was approved by the CSSP on 31 July 2015 [[STD/CSSP\(2015\)4/REV1](#)] and does not form an integral part of the Recommendation. The good practices included are indicative and none of them in themselves are necessary or sufficient to consider a particular recommendation as fulfilled.

¹⁵ Letter of 26 June 2017 expressing Brazil’s interest; expression by South Africa of interest during the CSSP meeting in June 2018; discussions with Kazakhstan and Morocco in 2018.

¹⁶ Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>.

¹⁷ Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/european-statistics-code-of-practice>.

¹⁸ Available at: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/331/681516bc-1e97-4915-83e7-38211259ad41.pdf>.

6. In adopting the Recommendation, the Council instructed the CSSP to “*monitor the implementation of [the] Recommendation and to report [...] to the Council three years following its adoption and regularly thereafter*”. This reporting has been slightly delayed due to other priority work in the CSSP.

7. The main objective of the present Report is to provide Council with an update on the implementation and dissemination of the Recommendation, including an assessment of its usefulness against the purpose for which it has been designed. In particular the assessment should:

- focus on implementation of the specific recommendations in the Recommendation (e.g. not an abstract analysis of policy developments in the field);
- present overall and aggregate results for the whole Recommendation, rather than Adherent-by-Adherent; and,
- cover implementation of the provisions of the Recommendation, dissemination (by Adherents and the Secretariat).

8. The Report also analyses and explains the continued relevance of a Recommendation. Based on this assessment, the Report can propose any appropriate action moving forward, such as further work to improve implementation, with an indication of the actions envisaged and by whom; or revision of the Recommendation, with an indication of the areas concerned and a summary of the rationale for the possible changes.

2. Methodology

9. The Secretariat used several tools to collect extensive material since the adoption of the Recommendation by the Council, while avoiding unnecessary duplication and reducing the burden on respondents. This Report is mainly based on information on legal and institutional frameworks for official statistics as available in:

- self-assessment questionnaires on the implementation of the Recommendation (which is available on the online Toolkit¹⁹);
- OECD peer review report on the implementation of the Recommendation in Mexico;
- OECD statistical reviews (e.g. Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru);
- thorough examination of the statistical legislations in Adherents as well as investigation conducted by the Secretariat and material collected from international organisations (International Monetary Fund (IMF), Eurostat, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UN Statistics Division (UNSD), etc.); and,
- Information from the peer review reports on the compliance with the European Code of Practice and the Coordination Role of the National Statistical Institute released by Eurostat in 2015²⁰ is also used for analytical purposes. This material

¹⁹ <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/self-assessmenttools/>

²⁰ The 2015 round of peer reviews assessed the compliance of the ESS national statistical systems against the quality assurance framework based on the 2011 version of the Code, which has been revised in 2017.

was updated with publicly available information on the implementation of the recommendations set out by the reviews.

10. To complement these sources of information, a questionnaire (set out in Annex C) to gather missing information on the use and implementation of the Recommendation (hereafter the “2018 Survey”) was sent to Adherents in June 2018.

11. Finally, the degree of implementation of the Set of Good Statistical Practices also provides a good indication whether Adherent practices live up to the different recommendations. Some of these good practices were directly adopted from the 2011 European Statistics Code of Practice. Among the latter, several good practices have been selected to illustrate some challenges faced by Adherents in implementing the Recommendation.

2.1. Self-assessments and (peer) reviews

12. Since the Recommendation’s adoption, the Secretariat, under the auspices of the CSSP, has monitored the use and implementation of the Recommendation by the Adherents. There are three modalities for assessing the implementation of the Recommendation by the Adherents:

- A simple self-assessment by the country;
- An evidence-based self-assessment where implementation of the Recommendation and good practices are substantiated through documentation and referencing;

13. A peer review by the CSSP with the help of the Secretariat. A peer review only takes place at the request of the country concerned and is subject to receipt of a voluntary contribution to cover associated costs.

14. The peer reviews on implementation of the European Code of Practice for Official Statistics carried out by Eurostat in 2014-2015 in EU and EFTA countries that are members of the European Statistical System (ESS), and the resulting improvement actions, to be implemented by 2019, were considered as a substitute to these modalities.

15. Mexico was the first and only Adherent to request a peer review by the CSSP to assess its implementation of the Recommendation and suggest possible improvements to its national statistical system. Another objective was to identify good practices in Mexico that may be of interest to other Adherents. At its meeting in June 2018, the CSSP discussed the peer review report [[SDD/CSSP\(2018\)8](#)] which was subsequently made publicly available.²¹ The peer review concluded that the Mexican statistical system complies to a high degree with the Recommendation.

16. To date, nearly all non-European Adherents²² have completed a detailed standard self-assessment questionnaire organised around the twelve individual recommendations and the Set of Good Statistical Practices,²³ and provided information on the laws and regulations under which their national statistical system operates.

²¹ <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/>

²² At the time of drafting, self-assessment by the United States was still outstanding.

²³ <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/self-assessmenttools/>

17. These self-assessments provide useful indications on good practices in place and constitute reference information for all stakeholders as they are publicly available. At the same time, and by the very nature of self-assessments, they do not allow firm conclusions to be drawn on the degree of compliance with the Recommendation as the detail and depth of responses varies. For example, almost all Adherents report a national statistical law establishing a clear legal framework for the national statistical system. This is an important indication for the professional independence of producers of official statistics but in itself does not permit a firm judgement on professional independence. This requires further research for example on implementation decrees and the interplay with other practices in place. Another caveat here is that the results of self-assessments cannot easily be compared with the results of peer reviews.

18. Notwithstanding these limitations, it is possible to get a sense for the relative importance of individual recommendations by reviewing reference to them in Adherents' public debates and public acts. For instance, the recommendation on professional independence stands out as a reference when legitimate authority of the national statistics office needed to be re-established or when countries needed to point to international references when strengthening legal provisions on professional independence. Another recommendation of notable importance, in light of regular institutional debates in Adherent countries, is the one relating to the co-ordination function of the NSO.

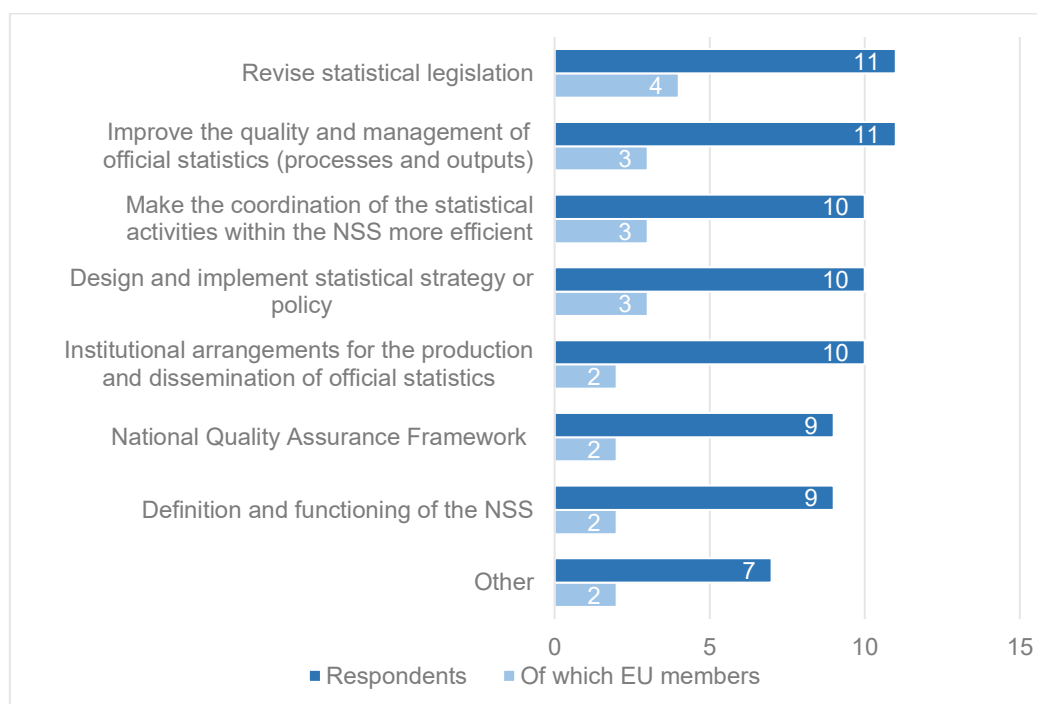
2.2. Results of the 2018 Survey on relevance and usefulness

19. From mid-June to end August 2018, the Secretariat conducted the 2018 Survey among the statistical authorities of Adherents to assess the relevance of the Recommendation, its use in guiding strategic decisions, and efforts made by Adherents to disseminate the instrument.

20. Twenty-six Adherents, of which twenty-two OECD Members (Australia, Canada, Chile, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, and the United States) and four non-Members (Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Peru) responded to the questionnaire [which is reproduced in Annex C].

21. The responses to the survey provide a clear indication that the Recommendation has gained international recognition as a relevant policy instrument. As shown in Figure 1, the Recommendation was considered particularly useful for the revisions of statistical legislations,²⁴ quality management of official statistics, design and implementation of statistical strategy or policy, efficiency of the coordination of statistical activities within the NSS, and institutional arrangements for the production and dissemination of official statistics. These results suggest that the Recommendation has succeeded in establishing itself as a benchmark for national statistical systems.

²⁴ Non-Adherent countries or regions also referred to the Recommendation in amending or producing their legislation on statistics. For example, the Decree on Flemish Official Statistics adopted in February 2016 is inspired by the Recommendation and other international standards.

Figure 1. Use of the Recommendation by Adherents by Topics

Source: Questionnaire for adherents on the use and implementation of the Recommendation (2018).

3. Process

22. The implementation of the Recommendation has been discussed at each of its annual meetings since the adoption in 2015, thereby illustrating the continuous engagement of the Committee in the implementation process of the Recommendation:

- At its 13th meeting on 25-26 April 2016, CSSP discussed and adopted an action plan for the implementation of the Recommendation [[STD/CSSP\(2016\)12](#)], including the development of an online toolkit to support its dissemination and implementation.
- At its 14th meeting on 21-22 June 2017, CSSP was informed on Adherent responses with regard to options for implementation (see above). In addition, CSSP discussed the statistical accession review of Costa Rica [[STD/CSSP/ACS\(2017\)1](#) and [STD/CSSP/ACS\(2017\)1/ANN1](#)] and Lithuania [[STD/CSSP/ACS\(2017\)2](#) and [STD/CSSP/ACS\(2017\)2/ANN1](#)], which include an assessment of their legal and institutional framework for official statistics against the Recommendation.
- At its 15th meeting on 20-21 June 2018, the peer review of the Mexican statistical system vis-à-vis the Recommendation [[STD/CSSP\(2018\)8](#)] was presented and discussed by the CSSP.
- At its 16th meeting on 24-25 June 2019, CSSP discussed the structure and key elements of the present Report, including the results of the 2018 survey [[SDD/CSSP\(2019\)7](#)].

23. Following a proposal by the CSSP to assess the commitment of interested non-Members, the Council approved on 13 March 2019 the revision of the Recommendation aimed at including a review process for non-Member adherence. On this occasion, the Council was also updated on the reporting process at its March 2019 meeting [[C\(2019\)28](#)].

24. The CSSP reviewed and approved the Report at its 17th meeting on 26 June 2020 [[SDD/CSSP\(2020\)10](#)]. The final version has been subsequently transmitted to the Council, which noted and declassified the Report on 21 September 2020 (TBC). A link to the Report will be included in the public webpage of the Recommendation on the [online Compendium of OECD legal instruments](#) as well as on the online toolkit on the Recommendation.

4. Dissemination

25. The Recommendation “invites Adherents and the Secretary-General to disseminate this Recommendation”. This has taken place in four ways:

- dedicated discussions in meetings of the CSSP and its subsidiary bodies;
- presentation of the Recommendation in international conferences, such as the European Conference on Quality in Official Statistics in 2016 and again in 2018²⁵;
- dissemination and promotion of the Recommendation by Adherents at the national and regional levels. For example, INEI Peru organised a conference on the OECD requirements in Latin America, which devoted considerable attention to the Recommendation. The Office of Director General for Policy Planning on Statistical Standards of Japan shared the Recommendation with the statistics departments of line ministries. Several national statistical organisations (e.g. Statistics Norway) disseminate the Recommendation through a link on their website.
- translation in non-official OECD languages: INEI Peru provided a translation of the Recommendation in Spanish, thus helping significantly to extend its dissemination in Latin American and Caribbean countries, and the Office of Director General for Policy Planning on Statistical Standards of Japan expressed his willingness to translate the Recommendation into Japanese. Making the Recommendation available in different languages contributes to its efficient dissemination and the Committee is thereby invited to inform the Secretariat of any translation.

26. At the request of the CSSP, the Secretariat developed an online toolkit to support the dissemination and implementation of the Recommendation and to ensure minimum consistency in reporting practices. The Toolkit comprises the following items:

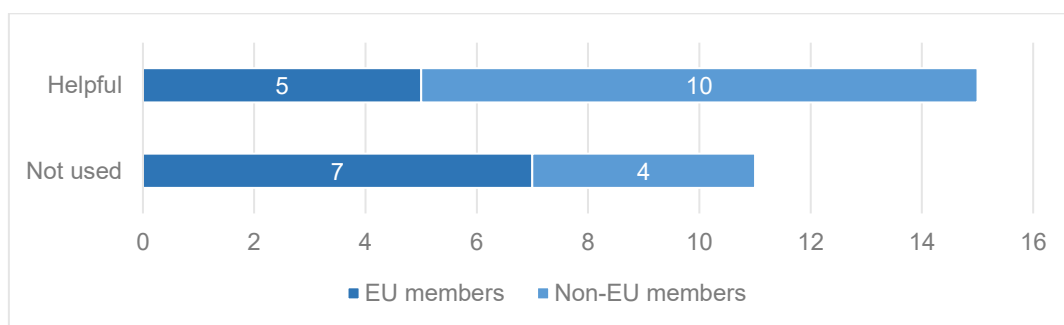
²⁵ These worldwide conferences bring together a wide range of statisticians from national statistics offices and international organisations involved in the design of quality management processes and policies: <http://q2016.ine.es/?lang=en> and <https://www.q2018.pl/>

- the self-assessment questionnaire²⁶ based on the twelve recommendations and Set of Good Statistical Practices;
- a webpage²⁷ to bring together country assessments, responses to the self-assessment questionnaires, and provide links to relevant information on national statistical legislation and international documentation (such as reviews conducted in the European Statistical System (ESS)). This webpage offers the possibility to disseminate country assessments to the public and to provide a convenient central location that can be referred to in future reports on implementation to the OECD Council;
- the text of the Recommendation with the Set of Good Statistical Practices, with the aim to better communicate on the Recommendation. It is available in English, French, and Spanish.²⁸

27. The Toolkit constitutes both a tool that promotes transparent information on statistical practices (all assessments are publicly accessible) and a tool for knowledge sharing: with the self-assessment questionnaire available online, concrete information is available on how, for instance, Adherents implement the Recommendation with regard to the co-ordination of their national statistical system. To remain relevant, the Toolkit requires ongoing updating, necessitating resources and co-operation with Adherents.

28. The structure of the Toolkit follows the Recommendation. As shown in Figure 2 below, the responses of the 2018 Survey indicate that fifteen Adherents, of which ten non-European Union member states, consider that the Toolkit is helpful. However, the responses also indicate that a significant number of European Union member states do not use the Toolkit. This is not entirely surprising given the strong institutional setting in the EU with its own and closely related European Code of Practice. Further efforts will nonetheless be useful to ensure dissemination of the Recommendation in European Union member states.

Figure 2. Use of the online Toolkit



Source: Questionnaire for adherents on the use and implementation of the Recommendation (2018).

²⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/self-assessmenttools/>

²⁷ <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/countryassessments/>

²⁸ https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/Brochure_Recommendation%20of%20the%20OECD%20Council%20on%20Good%20Statistical%20Practice%20March2019.pdf

29. The Recommendation has also been successfully disseminated to non-Adherents (leading ultimately to their adherence in a number of cases). In particular:

- It has proved to be very useful in assessing the national statistical system of the active accession candidate countries (Costa Rica and Lithuania, and to a lesser extent Colombia²⁹). Indeed, the adoption of the Recommendation had been largely triggered by the need for a legal instrument that could serve as a reference in accession reviews. The Report includes also the findings from these accession processes even though Colombia and Costa Rica were not yet Adherents at the time of its finalisation.
- Several non-Members, including Argentina, Bulgaria³⁰, Croatia, Peru, and Romania adhered to the Recommendation³¹ and this Report includes findings on its implementation in these Adherents. Other countries, including Brazil, South Africa, Kazakhstan, and Morocco have expressed their interest to adhere.
- Whenever the Secretariat conducts more broad-based reviews of statistical systems as has been the case for Argentina³² or Peru³³, the Recommendation constitutes the key reference for the chapter on the institutional and legal framework.
- There is a strong link between adherence to the Recommendation and participation in CSSP meetings.³⁴

30. Overall, the dissemination activities developed by Adherents and the OECD Secretariat under the auspices of the CSSP have been important in explaining the rationale and the value of the Recommendation to relevant producers of official statistics as well as to government officials (from Adherents and non-Adherents) and in increasing their understanding of the various dimensions of the Recommendation.

²⁹ The Recommendation was adopted after the finalisation of the statistical accession review while being prepared over the same period.

³⁰ The reviews on the compliance with the European Code of Practice for Official Statistics undergone in Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania as part of the European Statistical System provided the basis for the CSSP to pronounce itself on their adherence to the Recommendation.

³¹ A reference to the pre-adherence review process has been included in the Recommendation by the Council in March 2019 [C(2019)28]. The detailed process, as agreed by the CSSP at its June 2018 meeting is set out in [SDD/CSSP\(2018\)5](#).

³² Argentina was the first non-Member to express its interest in 2016 to adhere to the Recommendation as a means to strengthen its statistical policy and national statistical system. A preliminary review was conducted to provide the basis for adherence; a full review including various statistical subject matters is expected to be completed by end 2019.

³³ See <https://www.inei.gob.pe/media/ocde/English.pdf>.

³⁴ Adherence to the Recommendation is one of the conditions for becoming an Associate in the CSSP as set out in the CSSP Global Relations Strategy [SDD/CSSP(2018)2] and Participation Plan. Non-Member Adherents are listed in the CSSP Participation Plan as Invitees, thus allowing for attendance at Committee meetings on an *ad hoc* basis. It is also possible for the CSSP (and ultimately Council) to consider granting Participant status to non-Member Adherents to allow them to participate in all Committee meetings, in particular discussions related to the implementation and dissemination of the Recommendation.

5. Implementation

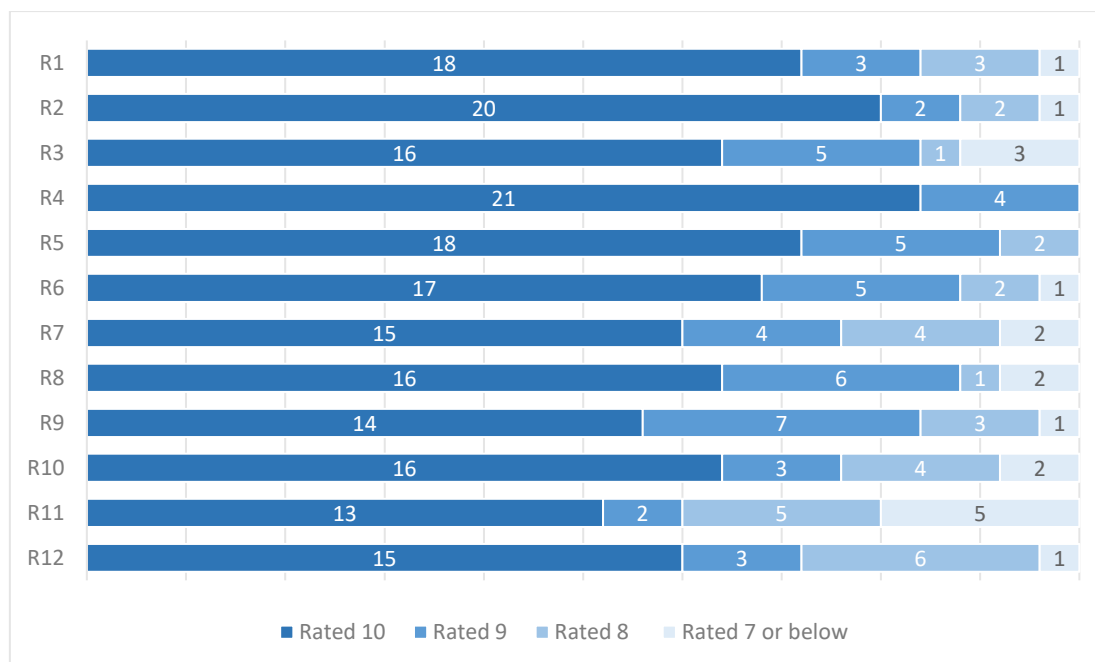
31. This section provides a description of the implementation by Adherents following the structure of the Recommendation. It highlights in particular the progress made and challenges met by Adherents.

32. General information on the implementation of the Recommendation comes from the results of the 2018 survey, which asked the Adherents to rate the relevance of each component of the Recommendation, using a scale from 1 (“not relevant”) to 10 (“extremely relevant”). As shown in Figure 3, twenty respondents out of twenty-five³⁵ give the highest ranking to the recommendation on confidentiality (R4) and the recommendation on professional independence of the producers of official statistics (R2), while thirteen Adherents consider the recommendation on international cooperation (R11) as extremely useful.

³⁵ One of the twenty-six survey respondents did not answer the question on usefulness

Figure 3. Usefulness of individual recommendations

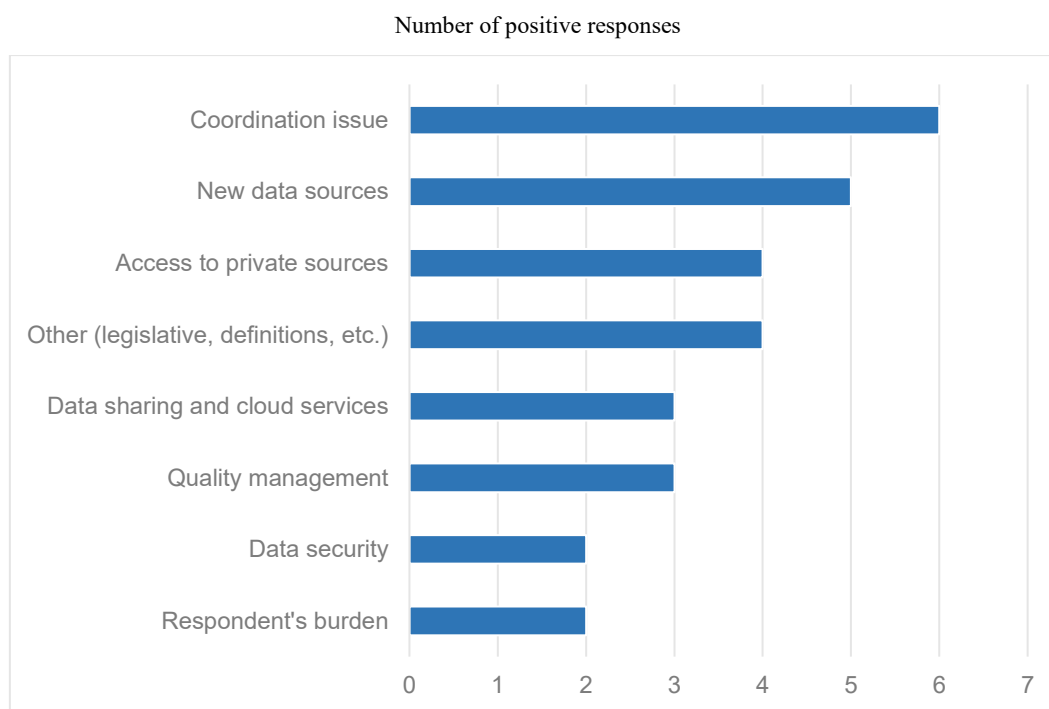
Number of ratings from 1-10 per recommendation



- R1. A clear legal and institutional framework
 R2. Professional independence;
 R3. Adequacy of resources;
 R4. Protection of privacy;
 R5. Right to access administrative sources;
 R6. Impartiality, objectivity and transparency;
 R7. Sound methodology and professional standards;
 R8. Quality of statistical outputs and processes;
 R9. User-friendly access and dissemination of data and metadata, and commitment to respond to major misinterpretations of data by users;
 R10. Co-ordination of statistical activities;
 R11. International co-operation;
 R12. Exploring new and alternative data sources and methods

Source: Questionnaire for adherents on the use and implementation of the Recommendation (2018).

33. In the 2018 Survey, Adherents were also consulted on possible missing areas in the Recommendation, as well as the domains that might deserve more attention and further development. Figure 4 below indicates that the main areas where the Recommendation could be improved are related to the new sources for official statistics, in particular privately held data, and the coordination of statistical activities in the national statistical systems. Indeed, experience with the assessment of national statistical systems confirms that the professional independence of producers of official statistics, access to administrative data, and coordination issues are recurrent and important issues.

Figure 4. Possible areas of further development of the Recommendation

Source: Questionnaire for adherents on the use and implementation of the Recommendation (2018).

5.1. Recommendation 1: Put in place a clear legal and institutional framework for official statistics

34. A well-functioning national system for statistics requires a stable and transparent legal basis. To this end, the Recommendation calls on Adherents to put in place a clear legal and institutional framework for official statistics which provides details on the organisation of the national statistical system as well as a clear mandate for institutions to collect data.

35. In most Adherents, the main legal documents related to the legal framework regulating the national statistics office and the national statistical system include a law on statistics and regulations and by-laws which are crucial for its effective implementation and enforcement. Regular updates of the legal framework are key to support statistical modernisation and to ensure its relevance over the future in an evolving environment. As shown in Table 1, almost all Adherents have a law on statistics that has been amended over recent years.

Table 1. Statistical legislation in Adherents

Adherent	Year of the Statistics Act's adoption	Last amendment	Comments
Argentina	1968	n.a.	On-going revision
Australia	1975	2017	
Austria	2000	2018	
Belgium	2006	n.a.;	
Bulgaria	1999	2018	
Canada	2017	n.a.	
Chile	1970	2018	On-going revision
Croatia	2013	n.a.	
Czech Republic	1995	2017	
Denmark	2000	2009	
Estonia	2010	2010	
Finland	2004	n.a.	
France	1951	2019	
Germany	2016	n.a.	
Greece	2010	2018	
Hungary	1993	n.a.	
Iceland	2017	n.a.	
Ireland	1993	n.a.	
Israel	1972	2016	
Italy	1989	n.a.	
Japan	2007	n.a.	
Korea	2003	2016	
Latvia	2015	n.a.	
Lithuania	1993	2018	
Luxembourg	2011	n.a.	
Mexico	2008	n.a.	
Netherlands	2003	n.a.	
Norway	2019	n.a.	Come gradually into force in 2020/2021
New Zealand	1975	n.a.	
Peru	1975	n.a.	
Poland	1995	2019	
Portugal	2008	2019	
Romania	2009	2010	

Slovak Republic	2001	n.a.	
Slovenia	2001	n.a.	
Spain	1989	n.a.	
Sweden	2001	n.a.	
Switzerland	1992	2016	
Turkey	2005	n.a.	
United Kingdom	2007	n.a.	
United States	1995		In the U.S. decentralized statistical system, authority for statistics is in the separate statutes for each agency. The Office of Management and Budget's statistical policy and coordination authority is in the Paperwork Reduction Act (1995).
Colombia	1993	2015	The 2015 National Development Plan includes several articles considered part of the statistical legislation.
Costa Rica	2019	n.a.	

Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat.

36. An examination of the statistical legislations shows a significant variance across Adherents. Some legislations are very comprehensive and prescriptive, such as in Mexico, while some others are very succinct and flexible in order to adapt to a large number of situations and to give more prominence to interpretation. In this context, identifying a model law easily adaptable to all the different national statistical systems, either decentralised or centralised, is difficult. Nevertheless, the implementation process of the Recommendation gave rise to an interpretation of some minimum requirements for a law on statistics: in addition to create and support a clear legal and institutional framework for official statistics providing details on the organisation of the national statistical system, legal status of the national statistics office and other institutions in the national statistical system, it emerges from the examination that the legislation should be sufficiently flexible, strongly protect professional independence and confidentiality, empower the national statistics office to ensure an efficient coordination of the statistical activities within the national statistical system, etc.

37. The implementation of this recommendation in Adherents is illustrated by some good practices, including the regulation by the legislation (law, regulations, etc.) of the statistical operations related to the population and housing census (size, coverage, frequency, obligation to respond/compulsory participation, data sources, entities involved in data collection, confidentiality, security, etc.). In particular, an explicit provision whereby a clear mandate is provided to the statistical agencies to select data sources and efficiently collect data and information for statistical purposes is identified as a good practice. To this end, the provisions should include an obligation to respond to statistical surveys. This practice is fairly widespread for households among Adherents, in particular for the population and housing or agricultural censuses, but could benefit from being extended to all the surveys in order to collect relevant information for the production of

official statistics. The design of efficient data collection processes, avoiding duplication, reducing costs and response burden is sometimes also dealt with in the statistical legislation and represents a good practice.

5.2. Recommendation 2: Ensure professional independence of national statistical authorities.

38. Professional independence is one of the most important principles associated with the collection of information for producing and disseminating official statistics. The value of official statistics largely depends on the perceived independence and autonomy of the producers as user confidence in official statistics relies on the ability of their producers to function without undue interference in its operations and the release of its outputs.

39. Professional standards and legislation protect statisticians against most threats to professional independence and make them less vulnerable to the influence of third parties. Applying international standards and sound scientific methods represents a significant comparative advantage of official statistics, in particular when new sources are increasingly part of the production of official statistics.

40. Suspected or actual breaches in the professional and technical independence of the national statistical authorities have been publicly debated in several Adherents prior to and after the adoption of the Recommendation (see Box 1). Since its adoption, the Recommendation has been used in several Adherents (Argentina, Canada, Costa Rica, Lithuania, and Mexico) to precisely identify issues at stake and assess the situation, provide recommendations for improvement, or identify good practices. During these reviews, a set of practices protecting statistical agencies against threats to professional independence of the producers of official statistics have been identified. These practices relate to:

- Explicit provisions in the statistical legislation
- Stature and contractual status of the head of statistical authorities
- Exclusive authority in deciding on statistical concepts and timing of releases
- Clear mandate for collecting data from other government agencies
- Autonomy in budget and human resources allocation
- Advance release calendar with fixed dates and time
- Interaction with users (including their participation in statistical councils)
- Position of the national statistics office within the governmental structure

Box 1. The Recommendation in support of new national legislation

Since its adoption, the Recommendation helped in modernising statistical legislations in several Adherents, in particular when statistical agencies faced situations where their technical and professional independence was contested. Although very different, the cases of Argentina and Canada provide examples.

Argentina is a case where professional independence of statisticians was not a reality during several years. Official statistics, statistical infrastructure, and the national statistics office institution suffered from political interference in methods and data, leading to a number of official statistics that were clearly inaccurate. A new government made important strides towards revamping Argentina's statistical system including by working towards a revised statistical legislation. This has also been a core recommendation of the OECD's Assessment on the Argentinian Statistical System and Key Official Statistics, itself based on the Recommendation.

Restoring credibility of official statistics and public confidence in official statistics after the professional independence of the producers has been compromised represents a major challenge. In such cases, the Recommendation calls for reinforcing the law in order to strengthen professional independence and to ensure that the statistical authorities have the exclusive authority to decide on statistical methods and dissemination. Explicit provisions that ensure that managerial staff and senior experts are recruited on professional considerations only, and that the statistical infrastructure is protected from any political intervention also reinforce professional independence. Passage of a strong statistics law in Argentina will be an important step towards fully institutionalising and signalling statistical independence.

Canada is a different example where the Recommendation provided useful support in the conception of new legislation that was passed following a nation-wide debate around census forms: in 2010, the Canadian government had decided that the long-form census completed every five years would no longer be mandatory, leading to the resignation of the Chief Statistician and a public debate about the quality of census data and statistical infrastructure. The OECD Secretariat was one of the bodies consulted by the national statistics office (STATCAN) about typical legal requirements and institutional practices in OECD countries around safeguarding the professional independence of the producers of official statistics. The OECD Secretariat used the Recommendation to assess the Canadian legislation and provided recommendations to STATCAN. OECD staff was also invited to a hearing by the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology at the House of Commons during the preparation of an amended law on statistics. The new law on statistics adopted in 2015 includes the main recommendations provided by the OECD Secretariat.

41. To complement existing international recommendations from the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, European Statistics Code of Practice, etc., this recommendation calls for its explicit inclusion in the statistical legislation but also for its implementation in practice, by ensuring that the scientific and technical independence of official statistics is protected from any outside influence. Independence and autonomy should be well established and supported by statistical legislations in a way that ensures impartiality and avoids any influence by third parties.

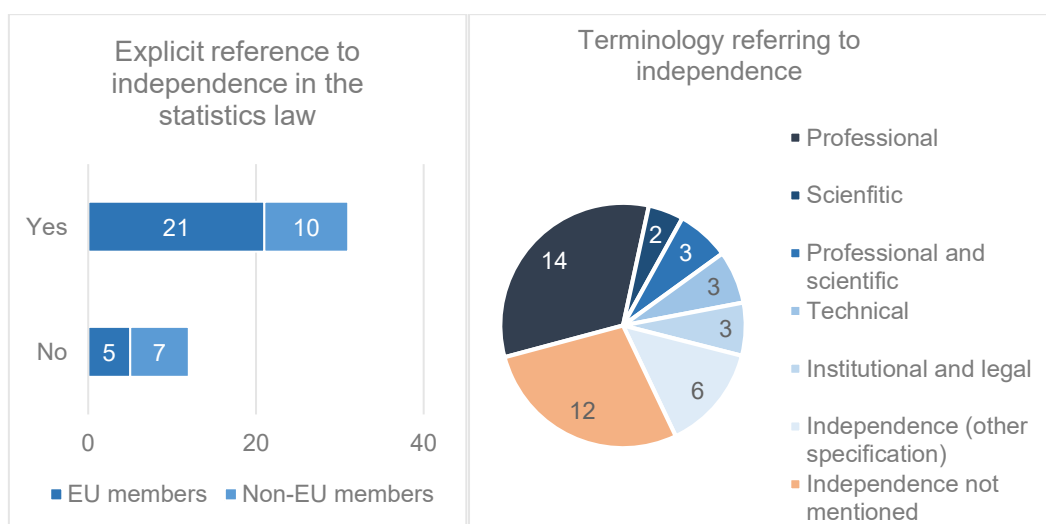
42. For example, government officials sometimes contested publicly the statistical methods used in the production of official statistics, or suggested alternative measurements, putting the statistical authorities in a difficult situation, in particular as regards public trust, possibly leading to the resignation of the Head of the statistical authority.

43. In the most recent cases, the Recommendation has proven its usefulness in identifying relevant situations and in providing recommendations for improvements, with the aim to:

- re-establish the legitimate authority of the national statistics office;
- assist the country in the process of revising its statistics legislation to strengthen the protection of the professional independence of the national statistical authorities;
- propose processes of quality assurance, often as part of an analysis of national statistical system and based on experience in other countries;
- restore user confidence/trust after an incident (e.g. the case of Argentina).

44. National statistics offices in most Adherents, or when appropriate, the head of these institutions, have an exclusive authority over the decisions regarding data collection, statistical methods implemented for data processing, and data dissemination, including timing of statistical releases. It is good practice to include an explicit provisions into statistical legislation. A review of the statistics laws shows that there is no explicit reference to the professional independence of the statistical authorities in the legislation of twelve adherent countries. Furthermore, the provisions, when available, take various forms or dimensions, as shown in Figure 5. In Adherents, independence is referred to in statistical legislations either as professional (14 Adherents), scientific (2 Adherents), professional and scientific (3 Adherents), technical (3 Adherents), institutional and legal (3 Adherents), or without any specification (6 Adherents).

Figure 5. Independence of statistical authorities in the statistics laws in Adherents



Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat.

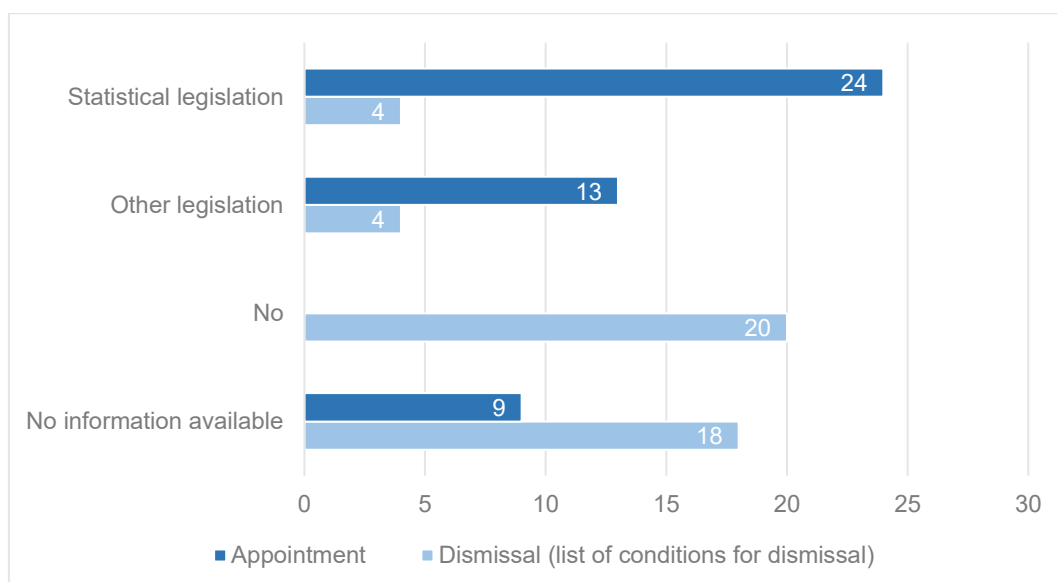
45. The Recommendation strengthens the importance of professional independence in principle by requiring explicit legal provisions, which is currently the case in only two statistical legislations in Adherents. In terms of good practice, providing an exclusive authority to the Head of national statistical authorities to decide on statistical methods and dissemination has been identified as an important arrangement for guaranteeing independence. However, other good practices included in the Set of Statistical Good Practices have also demonstrated a considerable utility to this end, as for example, providing the Head of national statistical authorities with full autonomy to allocate resources (recommendation 3 below).

46. A number of issues with regard to the professional independence of their statistical agencies have been identified when examining the statistical legislations in Adherents, including:

- Insufficiently explicit provision on professional independence in the law
- Non-transparent appointment/dismissal procedures of the Head of the national statistics office
- Limitations in the exclusive authority to decide on sources, methods, timing and content of the statistical releases
- Lack of financial independence

47. The procedures for appointment of the Head of the national statistics offices and the reasons for dismissal have a major importance in ensuring the professional independence of the producers of official statistics (see Box 2). As shown in Figure 6, while appointment is regulated by the statistical legislation in a significant number of Adherents, the reasons for dismissal remain largely outside of the scope of the law on statistics.

Figure 6. Procedures for appointment/dismissal of the Head of the national statistics offices



Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat.

Box 2. Appointment and dismissal of the national statistician

Appointment and dismissal procedures of the national statistician are fundamental to ensure the professional independence of national statistical authorities, which is why the Recommendation specifies certain requirements. First, to ensure that the appointment of the national statistician is based on professional competence only, the law on statistics should define appropriate criteria in relation to the required competences. For example, Lithuania's law on official statistics³⁶ adopted in 1993 (no. I-270) determines the professional requirements necessary to be appointed as director general of statistics Lithuania. According to article 6(2) a Master's qualification degree or an equivalent higher education qualification and at least five years of professional experience in the area of statistics, five years of management, and a three-year experience in the area of public administration are required. Secondly, the law on statistics should provide clear and detailed instructions for the appointment procedure of the national statistician. For instance, Article 13 of the Greek law No. 3832/2010 on statistics³⁷ specifies in detail how the president of ELSTAT is to be selected. This includes general conditions for an international open call or the formation of an independent selection committee composed of five experts.

The procedures for dismissal of the national statistician, including a list of conditions under which he can be dismissed, should be clearly set out in the law on statistics to ensure that they are independent from changes in government. For example, Article 73 of the Mexican statistical law (2008) specifies the reasons that range from physical illness to disseminating confidential information to unauthorized persons, for dismissing the Director of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI).³⁸ While it remains uncommon to find them in the statistical legislation in Adherents, the grounds for dismissal of the national statistician are sometimes provided by other national legislation.

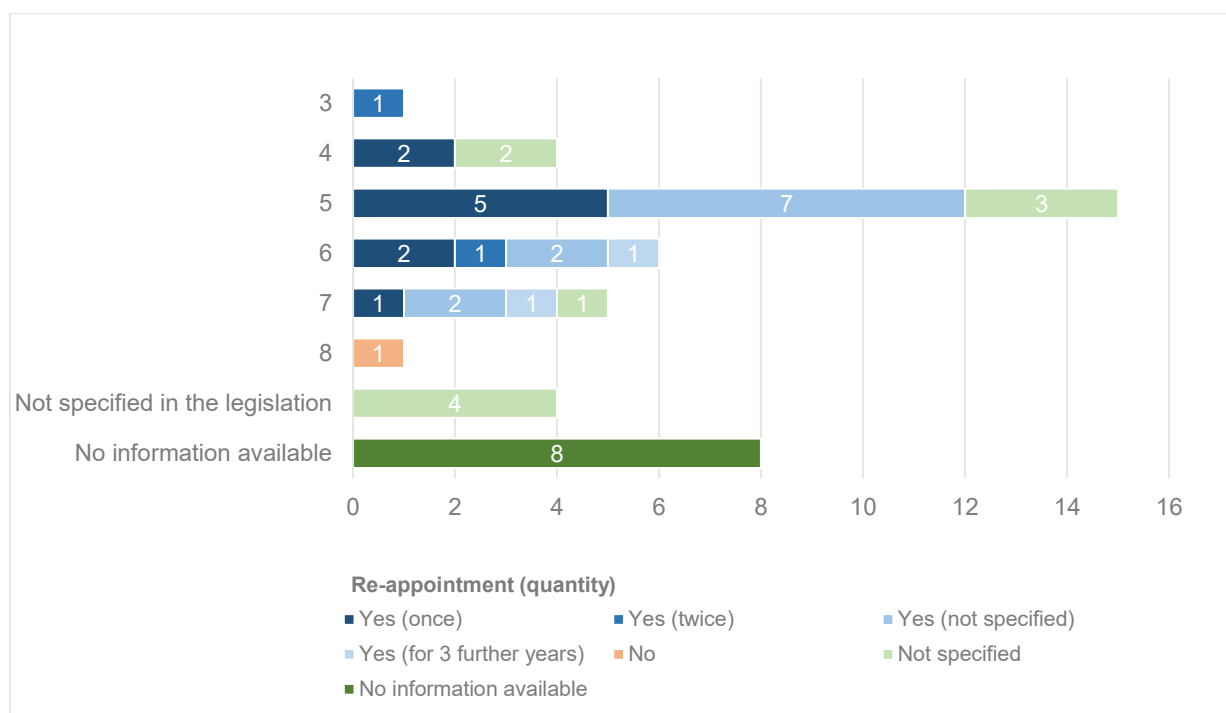
48. The length of the mandate of the Head of the national statistics office could also influence the professional independence of the producers of official statistics, as shown in the OECD reviews on the statistical system of some Adherents. The Recommendation and the Set of Good Statistical Practices do not provide any clear indication on the length of this mandate and its renewability. Since practices in place in the countries are heterogeneous (see Figure 7), there was no consensus at the time of developing the Recommendation on the need for the list of good practices to include a precise indication of the number years for such mandate. However, an interpretation has also emerged from the statistical reviews under which different durations for the mandate of the National Statistician and for the political authorities could reinforce the professional independence of the producers of official statistics.

³⁶ <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/2e265bf02ecd11e9a505bd13c24940e9?ifwid=tg6gx03lk>

³⁷ <https://www.statistics.gr/en/legal-framework>

³⁸ <https://www.snieg.mx/contenidos/espanol/normatividad/marcojuridico/LSNIEG.pdf>

Figure 7. Length of the mandate of the Head of the national statistics office in Adherents (years)



Source: self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat.

49. While almost all Adherents have set up national advisory boards or statistical councils, their functions, composition, organisation, and rules in the statistical system vary to a large extent. Efficient national statistics councils and advisory boards can be very helpful, in particular with a view to ensuring a more efficient coordination of the activities within the national statistical systems, advising on basic strategic decisions, protecting the producers of official statistics from controversies on methodologies and misinterpretations, advising on statistical methods for data production and on data dissemination, institutionalising user's involvement, and support planning of statistical activities. Advisory groups are sometimes composed of sub-groups for particular key subject matter areas. The size and the composition of the councils vary considerably between Adherents, ranging from six to forty-five members. Membership often reflects the main stakeholders in society, with representatives from the Parliament, trade unions, academics, business leaders, media, civil society, etc. The role of the members, procedures for appointment, and organisation of the meetings are critical and should be clearly defined by law in order to guarantee the professional independence of the producers of official statistics. In particular, representatives from government should not be given any particular rights to avoid any risk for the professional independence to the producers of official statistics. Few countries have created independent statistical authorities responsible for ensuring the implementation of a national code of practice and for overseeing the producers of official statistics.

5.3. Recommendation 3: Ensure adequacy of human financial and technical resources

50. In line with the UN Fundamental Principles and the European Statistics Code of Practice, the Recommendation calls on adequate human, financial and technical resources to be made available to the national statistical authorities for the collection, production and dissemination of official statistics. The producers of official statistics should have the necessary resources to fulfil their functions in accordance with the law, including meeting their commitment to quality, implementing professional standards, producing a minimum core set of data required nationally and internationally, implementing data collection tools (including the population and housing census), and production and dissemination procedures, and ensuring an efficient coordination of the activities within the national statistical system. To this end, a long term sustainable financing system for official statistics, based on annual and strategic multi-annual planning activities, is essential.

51. The OECD reviews identified several types of financing resources for the collection, production and dissemination of official statistics, including public finance (either from government or from central banks), bilateral and multi-lateral donors, private sources, public-private partnerships, financial instruments, and international funding.

52. While the government has often administrative responsibility for the production of official statistics, national statistics offices need a certain level of functional and budgetary autonomy, and legal personality, to be able to manage and allocate their human, financial, and technical resources, within the overall limits prescribed either by the government or by the Parliament, to which national statisticians are supposed to be accountable (e.g. through a report on statistical activities and budgetary execution), to acquire rights or contract obligations with third parties under its own independent responsibility, to identify needs in human and technical resources; or to plan and prioritise activities and statistical operations according to annual and multi-annual plans.

53. Official statistics should aim at ensuring that the topics they cover address the needs of all users, taking into account cost-efficiency in their production and dissemination. To this end, national statistics offices need to define priorities based on user consultations and planning activities. However, statistics are constantly evolving to meet new needs and measure new phenomena. Development and integration of new data sources into existing statistical collections require significant resources and specific expertise to align data with those from traditional sources. New projects need to be continuously monitored to ensure their quality during their implementation and guarantee that they provide benefits commensurate with the resources being invested.

54. Financing some important statistical operations at the core of countries' statistical infrastructure, such as the Population and Housing Census, remains challenging in a significant number of Adherents. In most countries, government provides the largest part of the funding for the census, in most cases through a specific law, which means that financial resources are not included in the budget allocated to official statistics. However, undertaking this costly process at regular intervals and at least every ten years, as recommended by international standards in order to refresh the basis of detailed information used in the production of official statistics, is crucial. In order to count accurately the population and to provide data on the number and characteristics of the population, that are extensively used in the design of many policies and in the sampling frames used in a number of statistical surveys, the census needs to continue to grow and innovate in accordance with an efficient planning of all the operations and resources well in advance. Any delay in the allocation of financial and operational resources could

severely impact the quality of the census and official statistics. However, governments sometimes delay the process due to financial restrictions or political pressures. In contrast, the growing use of administrative data and population register in some Adherents have reduced the costs of the census.

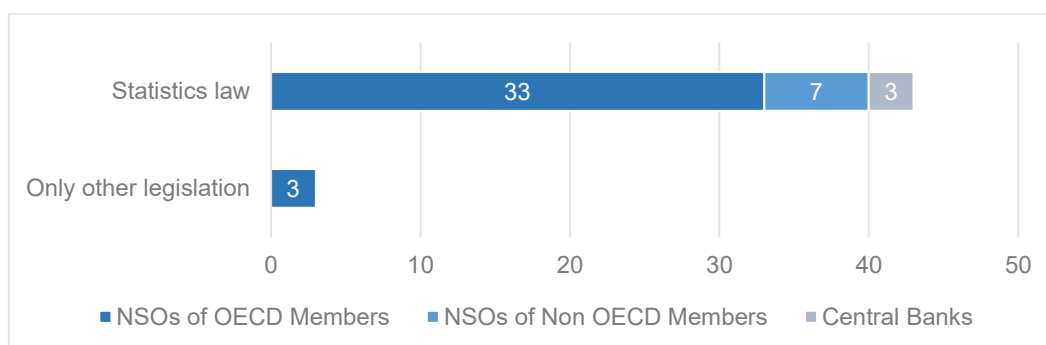
55. The Recommendation undoubtedly had an impact on the importance of financing the statistical operations within the national statistical systems. The resources made available for national statistics offices and other producers of official statistics over the short and long-term were extensively debated in the OECD reviews on the implementation of the Recommendation. Autonomy in budget allocation, planning activities, and long-term financial sustainability appeared key and particularly relevant elements identified by the Recommendation. During the statistical accession review of Costa Rica, the Recommendation allowed the reviewers to identify weaknesses in the sustainability of the long term financing of the statistical system, and to recommend legal improvements in this matter.

5.4. Recommendation 4: Protect the privacy of data providers

56. Producers of official statistics have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that individual information of a private nature that could infringe upon private life is protected. Managing the critical risks associated with the protection of personal information (data on individual persons or business entities) collected for statistical purposes, for example, potential disclosure without consent, unintended leaks, failures in security protection, etc. is widely recognised as essential in the context of the growing use of microdata and new data sources (e.g. social media) in the production and dissemination of official statistics.

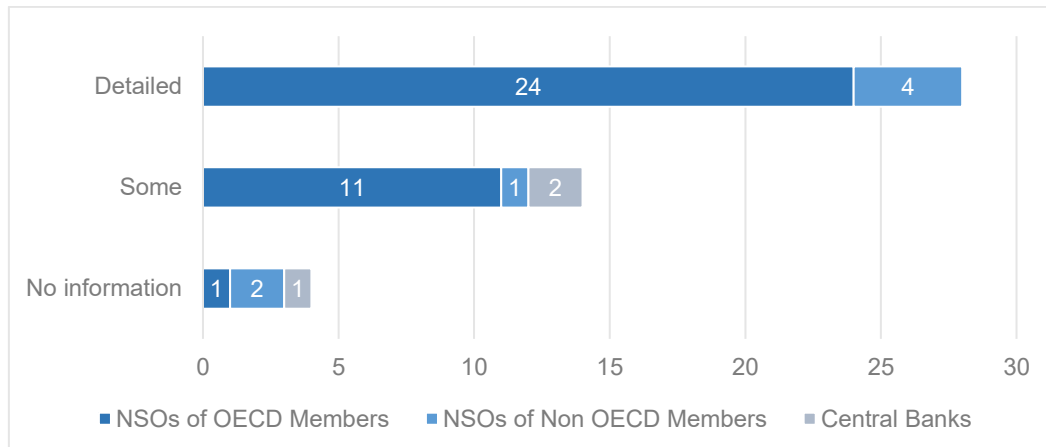
57. National statistics offices are in the front line of managing the consequences of any breach in confidentiality. For example, the loss of confidence in the capacity of the national statistics offices to protect personal information of data providers participating in statistical surveys could severely impact their participation and consequently the relevance of information collected. The level of awareness of these risks is high among the producers of official statistics and Adherents have developed a set of procedures and mechanisms most often in line with this recommendation, to efficiently safeguard confidentiality.

58. A fundamental element is to ensure that statistical confidentiality is guaranteed by law, as is the case in almost all the Adherents (see Figure 8). However, legal provisions governing the protection of personal information can be provided for by the law on statistics (e.g. in Canada, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, etc.), by other legislation (e.g. privacy act) or regulation (e.g. Denmark, etc.), or by several legal instruments.

Figure 8. Statistical confidentiality guaranteed by law

Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat.

59. Principles on statistical confidentiality in the legal instruments support institutional and organisational arrangements as well as technical mechanisms to regulate collection, use and storage of personal information by the producers of official statistics. Those include the development of internal guidelines and training activities; publication of specific regulations such as dissemination policies (see Box 3) that includes provisions to protect personal private information (see Figure 9); penalties in case of accidental or deliberate breach or disclosure without consent; confidentiality commitment signed by staff; technical provisions ensuring a secured infrastructure for data collection and storage; etc.

Figure 9. Publicly available information about confidentiality policy in English³⁹

Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat.

³⁹ Detailed: refers to information about statistical confidentiality policy that is publicly available. It sets out principles and commitments focused on the protection of data used for statistical purposes. This includes information about measures on the protection of statistical confidentiality throughout the statistical processes.

Some: refers to information about statistical confidentiality policy that is publicly available. It sets out principles and commitments focused on the protection of data used for statistical purposes. No information on how statistical confidentiality is achieved throughout the statistical process.

60. Internal regulations developed by the national statistics offices can also extend the duty of confidentiality to officials from other public bodies within or outside the national statistical system, as well as to national and international consultants and advisers. Confidentiality clauses can also be included in the agreements with the holders of administrative data. These agreements explain which officials of those bodies will have access to relevant information shared by the national statistics office, and demonstrate the capacity of the national statistics office to implement appropriate mechanisms for safeguarding personal information and protect it from accidental or deliberate disclosure.

Box 3. Public Information on Confidentiality Policy in New Zealand and Estonia

Confidentiality is guaranteed when personal information cannot be identified and accessed by unauthorised persons. While protecting the privacy of personal information is a fundamental responsibility of national statistics offices, informing the public on the measures in place is crucial to maintain the trust of survey respondents. To this end, national statistics offices often develop, disseminate and provide information on their confidentiality policies. Information that is made available is more or less comprehensive and with different focal points across Adherents.

Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ) provides on its website⁴⁰ extensive information on the principles, laws and ethics that govern data confidentiality. Important concepts are introduced, such as the degrees of identification in data and a detailed description of several illustrative statistical methods to keep data confidential, including adding random noise to data outputs, aggregation, limited access, suppression or their combination. References to the Data Safety Toolkit from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner Stats NZ also informs about the procedures in place in case of a breach or disclosure. Moreover, Stats NZ provides information about their review of confidentiality methods and describes the methods and rules researchers must use to anonymise statistical outputs based on microdata.

Statistics Estonia's (SE) website section on data protection requirements (privacy policy) focusses on the process of collecting and using personal data.⁴¹ SE provides information about the type of data obtained from individuals and outlines the different sources of personal information; some personal rights of data providers, such as the right to lodge a privacy complaint or to request data collected by SE; and about SE's reactions in case of disclosure without consent.

61. Security of IT infrastructure for collecting and storing data also plays an important role in the protection of personal information. Technological and physical provisions (network access control, firewalls, penetration tests of applications for collecting and using data, encrypted databases, safe data centres, etc.) reflect IT developments and the increasing automation and digitalisation of information. Efficient IT framework in terms of security should ensure that existing protections are maintained, and updated where necessary. To this end, IT infrastructure should be subject to regular tests and assessments in order to identify any potential risk.

⁴⁰ [https://www.data.govt.nz/manage-data/privacy-and-security/understanding-data-confidentiality/data-confidentiality-principles-and-methods-report/" \ "why-needed"](https://www.data.govt.nz/manage-data/privacy-and-security/understanding-data-confidentiality/data-confidentiality-principles-and-methods-report/)

⁴¹ <https://www.stat.ee/privacy-policy>

5.5. Recommendation 5: Ensure the right to access administrative sources to produce official statistics

62. Administrative data are becoming an increasingly important source for the production of official statistics. Using administrative data sources enables national statistics offices to complement survey data while at the same time reducing response burden and data collection costs (see Box 4). However, accessing administrative sources remains a major issue in some Adherents while some others developed extensive statistical programmes based on administrative data, including micro-data. The capacity to access and use administrative sources for statistical purposes varies extensively across Adherents, depending on the country and the agency.

Box 4. Access and Use of Administrative Data in Korea and Norway

In Korea, several legal instruments empower Statistics Korea to access and use administrative sources for the production of official statistics, including the Statistics Act (Article 24 & 24-2), the Framework Act on National Taxes (Article 81-3), and the Personal Information Protection Act (Article 58). In 2018, Statistics Korea used 197 sets of administrative data to produce official statistics, of which 140 data sets replaced survey data and 57 datasets were collected in order to verify or supplement existing statistical data. The first fully register-based Korean population and housing census was conducted in 2016. Besides reducing response burden, it was estimated that the use of administrative data saved around 114.5 billion Won (approx. 89 million Euros) up to 2018. Linking data from various sources was especially encouraged in the context of Mid-term Strategy of Using Administrative Data for the Advancement of National Statistics.

Co-operation with owners of administrative data is facilitated through a Council of Integrated Management of Administrative Data, which convenes at least twice a year. The council consists in approximately 50 members organised in three sub-committees and aims at improving the quality of administrative data. To this end, several quality reports ensure the quality of administrative data and Statistics Korea developed a manual for the use of administrative data, including recommended practices for their reporting and presentation.

Statistics Korea also enhanced its cooperation with the National Tax Service (NTS) with the aim to develop regular data transmission based on a mapping table between the NTS's Classification of Business and Statistics in Korea's Industry.

Statistics Norway is legally allowed to access and use administrative data from 88 national administrative sources and registers for statistical and research purposes (1989 Statistics Act⁴², no. 54, §2-2, §3-2 (1)). In Norway, the Population census is fully register-based since 2011. The implementation of the law on statistics requires an active co-operation, through specific agreements, between Statistics Norway and the owners of administrative data. This co-operation enables Statistics Norway to propose changes in the collection of administrative data in order to ensure that the data can be efficiently used for statistical purposes, including through technological tools developed for their collection, as well as

⁴² https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/countryassessments/Self-assessment_KOR.pdf
<https://www.ssb.no/en/omssb/lover-og-prinsipper/statistikkloven>

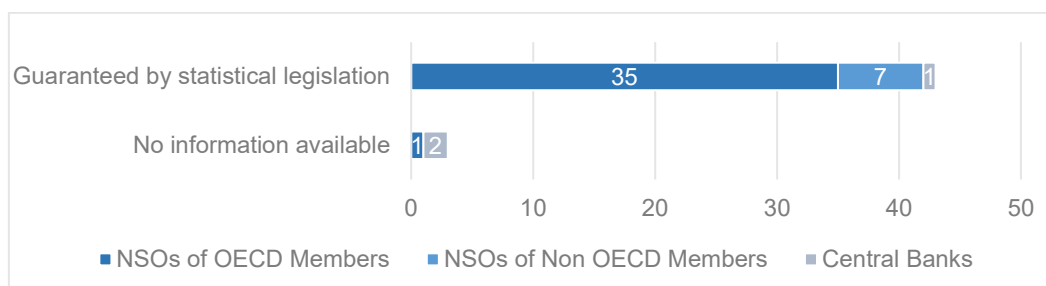
in the quality management of administrative information (identification of inconsistencies, data sharing, etc.)⁴³.

A new statistics act adopted by the Parliament in June 2019⁴⁴ will gradually enter into force up to January 2021. While the right to access administrative data is no longer explicit, Chapter 3 provides the legal basis for data collection and processing. The new law offers the opportunity to explore new sources of data held by other parties beyond the scope of administrative data, including private sources.

63. This recommendation seeks to foster access and use of administrative data for the production of official statistics, and to strengthen the necessary cooperation on quality between owners/holders of administrative sources and producers of official statistics. To this end, the Recommendation calls on the Adherents to guarantee full access to administrative sources for statistical purpose. Such access should be guaranteed by legal provisions and implemented in practice, in most cases through agreements between the producers of official statistics and the owners of administrative data. Moreover, efficiency in accessing and using administrative data in the statistical production process should be based on a strong cooperation between owners/holders of administrative data and producers of official statistics (see Box 4). These relationships allow exchanges of knowledge and expertise on data sharing, design of administrative data, and potential confidentiality concerns when accessing administrative microdata (see recommendation 4). However, there is still room for improvements in this area in a number of Adherents, as shown in several assessments of the statistical systems based on the Recommendation.

64. Almost all the statistical legislations or other national legislation in Adherents grant the producers of official statistics, in particular the national statistics offices, with the legal right to access administrative data, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Access to administrative data for statistical purpose



Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat

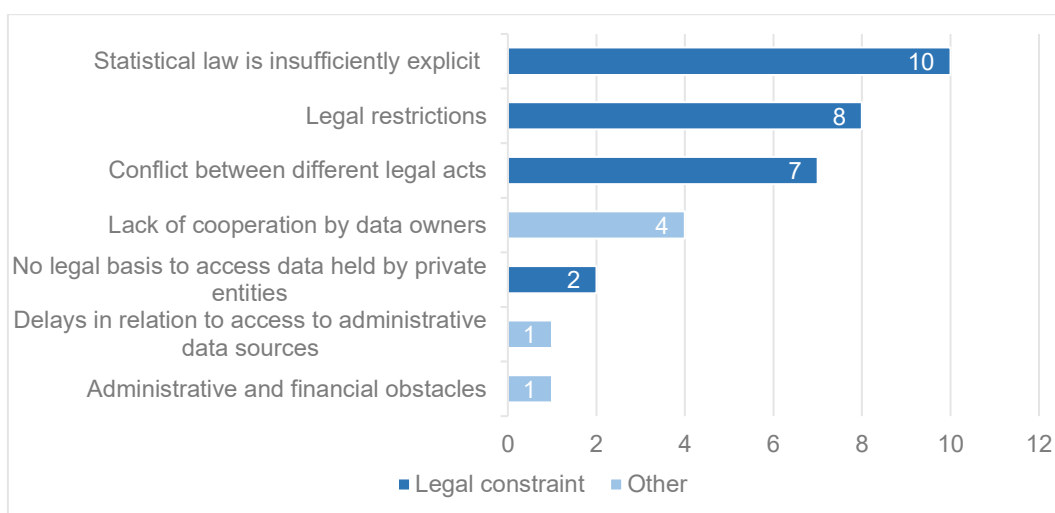
65. However, implementing these provisions remains particularly challenging and there is little evidence available on the uptake and success in their implementation in practice. Several types of issues limiting the capacity to access administrative data have been identified, including legal provisions that are not (or insufficiently) explicit, conflicts between different legal acts and regulations, legal restrictions, or lack of cooperation between the owners/holders of administrative data and the producers of official statistics

⁴³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4372828/2015-NO-report/af3d2c25-11e8-405a-9fc7-6e7e1af91b63>

⁴⁴ https://www.ssb.no/en/omssb/lover-og-prinsipper/statistikkloven/_attachment/402255?_ts=16e1cc7f200

(including national statistics offices and other entities of the national statistical system), as shown in Figure 11. The most frequently occurring reasons identified for limiting access are legal and include insufficiently explicit laws, legal restrictions (e.g. constraints to access tax records even when access to administrative data is generally allowed), and inconsistencies between laws.

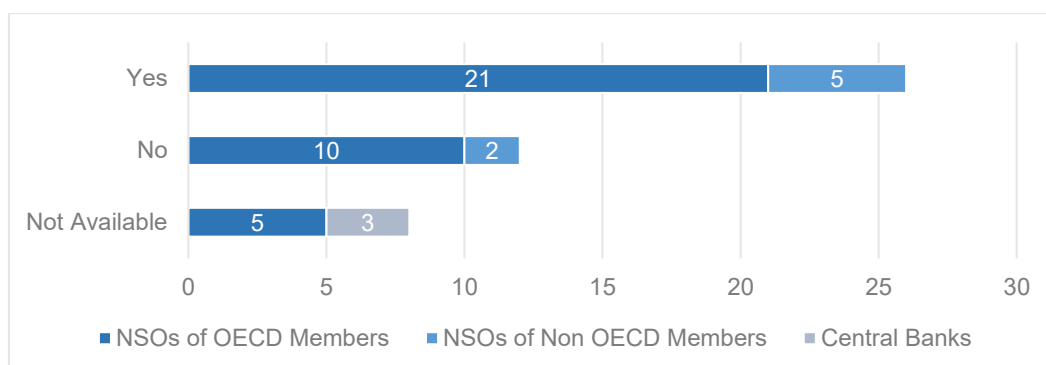
Figure 11. Issues with regard to access to administrative data



Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat

66. A significant number of Adherents report that the co-operation between statistical authorities and owners of administrative data could be largely improved, as shown in Figure 12, with further improvements in communication, methodologies, procedures for quality and design, etc. Such improvements could significantly contribute to enhance the use of administrative data in the production of official statistics. However, the need to reinforce the legislation in order to improve the efficiency in the access and use of administrative data is most frequently argued by Adherents. In this regard, the legislation should enable specific agreements between statistical authorities and owners of administrative records to cooperate on the design and quality of administrative data and to inform statistical authorities on changes in administrative records.

Figure 12. Improving the co-operation between the holders of administrative information and the producers of official statistics



Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat

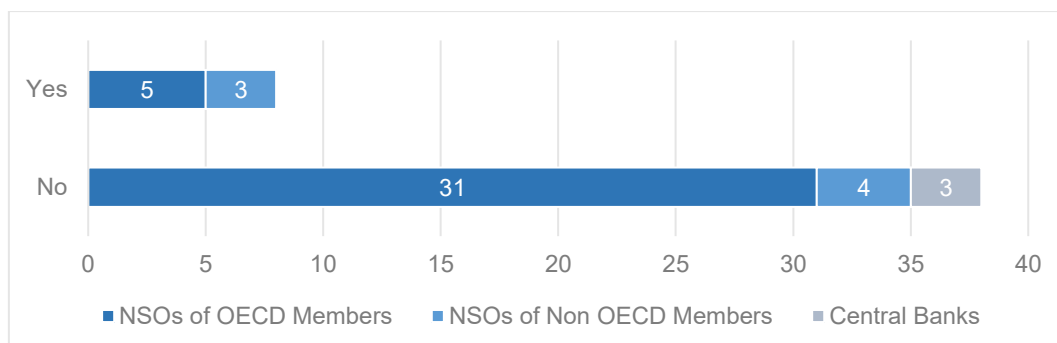
5.6. Recommendation 6: Ensure the impartiality, objectivity and transparency of official statistics.

67. A high proportion of national statistical systems in Adherents ensure that official statistics are produced and disseminated according to the principles of impartiality, objectivity and transparency. Impartiality means that the production and dissemination of official statistics are based on scientific considerations and objective basis, conditions to ensure trust and credibility of users in official statistics. Two indicators are recognised as relevant to measuring transparency and the perception of impartiality and independence of the producers of official statistics: first, standard release time and advance release calendars providing 12-month-ahead notice of the precise release dates. Second, procedures in place to ensure the equal access of all users to statistical release at the same time.

68. While almost all the national statistics offices and central banks in Adherents maintain and disseminate advance release calendars with fixed and unchanged release dates (see Figure 13), their format varies extensively, as shown in Figure 14. Nevertheless, significant progress has been made over the last few years, in particular with regard to their user-friendly access and use (see Box 5). The Recommendation identified the rolling 12-month-ahead release calendar, where the release dates become gradually available, as a good practice, although less common. It provides clear indications on autonomy and professional independence to users.

Figure 13. Availability of 12-month-ahead advance release calendars in Adherents

(as available in September 2019)

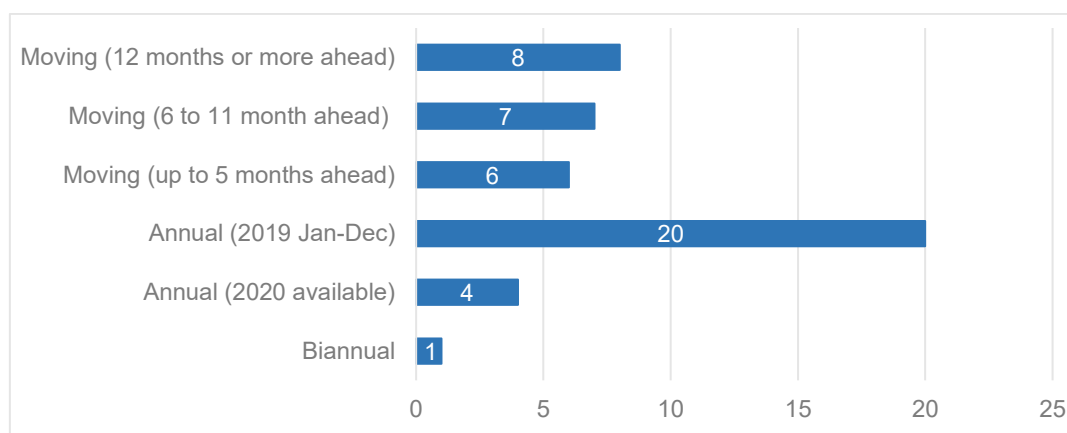


Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat

69. The most common practice among Adherents⁴⁵ nowadays is to provide users with an annual calendar with release dates from January to December, as shown in Figure 14. The IMF advance release calendar, which requires dates for the current month and at least for the following three months to be provided, is also widely used as a reference by the producers of official statistics.

Figure 14. Advance release calendars in Adherents take several forms

(as available in September 2019)



Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat

70. Most of these advance release calendars cover statistics produced by a specific producer only, typically the national statistics office. A good practice identified among Adherents consists in publishing a common advance release calendar for all the official statistics produced within the national statistical system. Sometimes made available on a common portal for official statistics, these calendars contribute to strengthening the coordination role of the national statistics office over the national statistical system (see Box 5).

⁴⁵ Links to release calendars are available at: <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/good-practice-toolkit/goodpractices/>

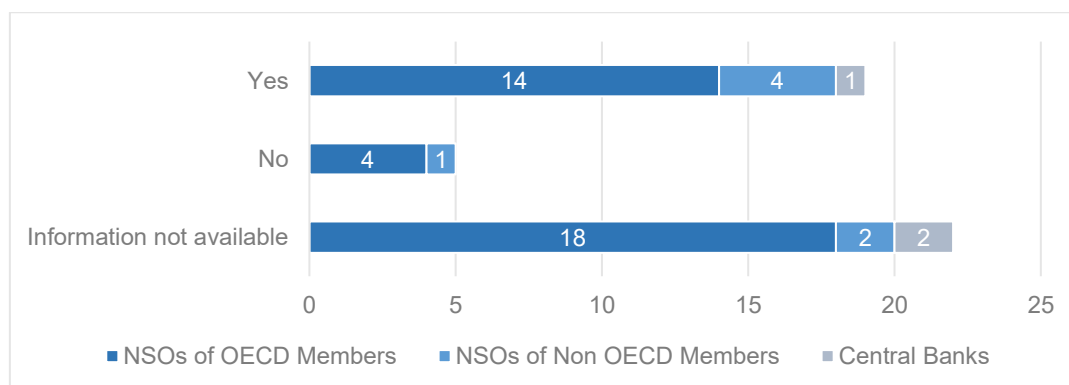
Box 5. Twelve-months-ahead release calendars

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) of Ireland redesigned its online advance release calendar to make it more user-friendly, as recommended by the ESS Peer Review Report in 2015.⁴⁶ Precise release dates are now provided twelve months in advance, and users are able to access and download data directly from the calendar by selecting statistical release by theme, title or time range.⁴⁷ Any divergence from the dissemination time schedule is announced in advance, and information on major revisions is also made available to users. In the UK, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides users with the option to switch the selection between upcoming and published releases.⁴⁸

In Lithuania, a common portal for all official statistics produced in the national statistical system provides their release dates in advance even if until now it is not always twelve months ahead. Such a portal is positively recognised both for improving accessibility by users and for the coordination of the national statistical system.⁴⁹

71. Pre-release access is a widespread practice among Adherents, as shown in Figure 15. Nonetheless, several Adherents (see Box 6) abolished the practice of providing key users, including key government officials, with pre-release access to official statistics over the last few years. This decision aims at strengthening perceived impartiality and promoting equal access to official statistics for all users at the same time, in accordance with the principles of national and European codes of practice. Such changes are also intended to avoid the risk of market-sensitive data leaks following suspicions that financial markets might be trading on statistical information before it has been released officially.

Figure 15. Pre-release access in Adherents



Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat

⁴⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4372828/2015-IE-report/f21339d7-ad8d-44fe-9781-1a454861f242>

⁴⁷ <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/releasecalendar/>

⁴⁸ <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/kalendariai?expanded=true>

⁴⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releasecalendar?view=upcoming>

Box 6. Pre-release access

National statistics offices sometimes allow privileged pre-release access for selected stakeholders (e.g. Australia, Canada, France, the United States) to give them time to prepare informed responses and commentaries. The Recommendation calls for transparency, i.e. their publication and control, when such privileged access exists. For transparency purposes, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) made available its pre-release access policy on its website.⁵⁰ Official statistics are released at a standard time (11.30 am - Canberra time) in accordance with the advance release calendar. A list of statistical products subject to privileged pre-access release is established by the ABS based on the distinction between market sensitive and non-market sensitive statistics. Pre-release access to market sensitive data by authorised government officials (the list is not public) is possible in the morning of the release day under embargo when interpretation of the release is likely to be complex and require analysis in advance to support informed commentaries and/or when the government officials are likely to be asked to provide public comment on the release. Access by selected government officials takes place in a secured room managed by ABS staff, with attendees being required to sign security undertakings and to comply with the conditions established by the ABS (e.g. communicating any information from the statistical releases outside the room until after the embargo is lifted is prohibited). In some exceptional circumstances, access to other key statistics may be given for ad hoc meetings for other key statistical releases. A few media (list available online) have also access to non-market sensitive data ten minutes prior to their public release.

In July 2017, the 24-hour pre-release access to government officials was abolished in the UK, following a rich public debate.⁵¹ However, exceptional pre-release access remains possible in very specific circumstances that are published on the ONS website.⁵² National statistics offices in Denmark, Finland, Slovenia and Turkey also ended pre-release access. The Turkish law on statistics (no. 5429, article 12) adopted in 2005 explicitly states that statistical information compiled by the national statistics office cannot be provided to any person or authority before it is made publicly available.⁵³

In 2017, the American Statistical Association also expressed worries after the President of the United States announced that the monthly US jobs report would be a rosy one 69 minutes before its public release, writing that: “Advance indications about such data can create artificial market disruptions ... We urge the president to review the directive requiring the executive branch to refrain from commenting on federal data until one hour after it is released publicly”.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/Policy+on+Pre-Release+Access+to+ABS+Statistics+and+Publications>

⁵¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/64157/4372828/2015-UK-report/d44f7d3f-64c1-4450-8a37-bfad8542607>

⁵² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/prereleaseaccess>

⁵³ <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/UstMenu/yonetmelikler/StatisticsLawOfTurkey.pdf>

⁵⁴

https://www.amstat.org/ASA/News/ASA_Speaks_Out_on_Trumps_Tweet_Ahead_of_Monthly_BLS_Jobs_Report.aspx

5.7. Recommendation 7: Employ sound methodology to commit to professional standards used in the production of official statistics

72. This recommendation calls for the implementation of a sound methodology and commitment to professional standards. It has proven particularly important in the context of the statistical assessments conducted by the OECD, as the quality of statistics produced and disseminated by the OECD depends to a great degree on the quality of national statistics collected and the quality of internal processes for collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of data and metadata.

73. This recommendation requires that the statistical legislation endows national statistics offices with the responsibility of ensuring that appropriate methods (e.g. handbooks, guidelines), tools (e.g. plans, revision policy), and procedures (e.g. expert consultations) are in place for the production and dissemination of official statistics. While in most Adherents the law on statistics requires that the national statistics office establishes methodological principles and defines and disseminates methodologies, this exercise demonstrates that various practical measures are in place to ensure adherence to international norms and standards and application of statistical procedures and methods, including:

- A Chief methodologist position (e.g. in Australia and New Zealand) to ensure that the methods used throughout the statistical process and that underpin statistical products and outputs are harmonised and based on sound methodologies.
- Methodological development plans to guide and organise future methodological development. These plans sometimes include methodology risk management (Australia).
- Methodology committees and advisory committees with external experts are set up to organise and review the methodologies and technical standards used in the production and dissemination of official statistics, and to endorse methodological development plans.
- Systematic tests of new statistical methods using real data and simulations are undertaken before implementation. In some Adherents, they are subject to review by the methodology advisory committees or by external peer review processes (e.g. by international organisations in Mexico).
- A regular evaluation process of statistical methods and samples in order to assess the extent and direction of the impact of change as statistical surveys, collection methods, and supporting systems evolve.
- Explicit revision policies (including revision of sources, methods, dissemination procedures, etc.) that are made publicly available.
- Internal and external documentation including detailed information on sources, survey design, sample selection and estimation using well-established design-based or model-assisted methods is made available (e.g. Australia).
- Human resource policies designed to ensure a continuous improvement of quality (e.g. employment of graduates in the relevant academic disciplines).
- An increasing number of Adherents are implementing or considering the possibility to develop certification processes to ensure that adequate methods and practices are in place in the production and dissemination of official

statistics. Such processes are for example in place in the United Kingdom and in Colombia.

5.8. Recommendation 8: Commit to the quality of statistical outputs and processes.

74. The importance of quality in official statistics and the need to improve quality of processes and outputs continuously are widely recognised by Adherents and have been further emphasised by the adoption of the Recommendation in 2015. Quality in official statistics involves methodologies for collecting, processing and disseminating statistical information but also efficient management systems and business process models. A wide range of various quality management systems and frameworks⁵⁵ are implemented in almost all Adherents. To this end, they have endorsed a set of principles and developed various processes ensuring their efficient and effective implementation in practice and thus guaranteeing a high-quality of statistical products and services for users. Taking into account these different situations, the recommendation covers various quality management approaches.

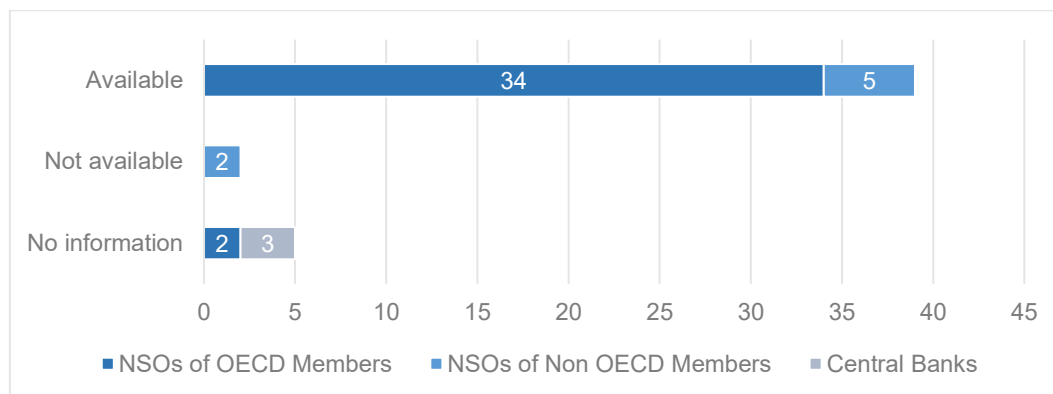
75. The Recommendation calls for an efficient quality management system, that could include the following elements:

- The inclusion of a commitment on quality in the statistical legislation to ensure that the producers of official statistics continually assess and improve the quality of statistical processes and outputs. At that time, a limited number of Adherents have already included such provision in their law on statistics.
- Definition of statistical quality determined by the national statistics office and widely disseminated through guidelines, reports, etc.
- A set of principles and procedures gathered in quality management and quality assurance frameworks, and related planning activities, policies, procedures required to ensure that quality is being maintained and enhanced continuously. Inclusion of risk management in these activities is recommended.
- An efficient quality management system, designing tools and detailed guidelines, quality indicators, and any other tools required to ensure that the statistical policy is implemented and that statistical processes and outputs are produced in accordance with the quality management and assurance frameworks.
- Involvement of users, through consultations on relevance and quality, user satisfaction (see Figure 16), and participation in advisory committees, is essential to ensure that statistics remain relevant to their needs and to provide the national statistics offices with input to decisions about planning and quality management.

⁵⁵ Statistical agencies have implemented quality management frameworks since the mid 1980's to achieve their mission to provide high-quality official statistics and to ensure confidence of users. These frameworks are based on broadly similar principles, definitions, and outputs, processes and institutional quality dimensions, but the tools used for their efficient and effective implementation vary, including the Total Quality Management (TQM), standardisation and certification of statistical processes by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), Six Sigma, Lean and Lean Six Sigma, Balanced Scorecard, etc.

- Certification of statistical processes and labelling products. While implemented in a limited number of Adherents, these practices are becoming increasingly important.

Figure 16. User satisfaction surveys in Adherents

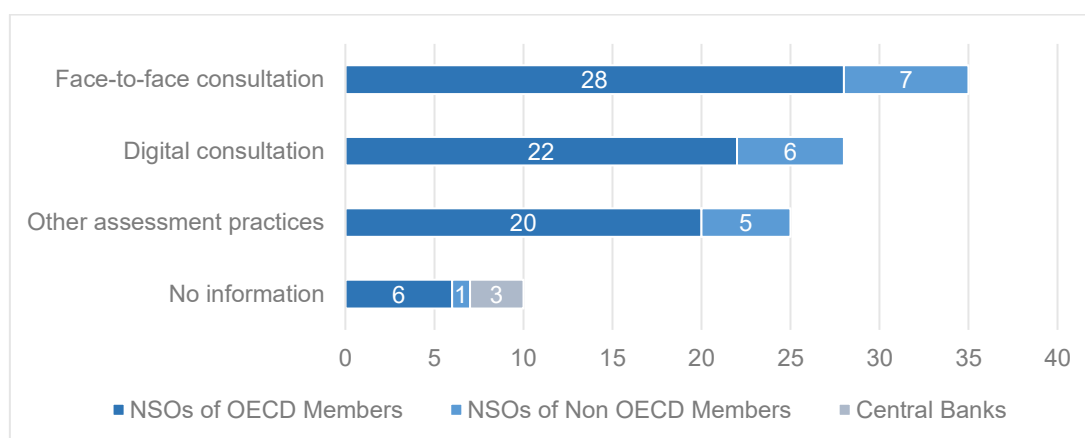


Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat

76. Moreover, improving quality of statistical outputs and processes should not be restricted to the activities of the national statistics office but should be spread over the whole national statistical system (e.g. Costa Rica).

77. Assessment of user needs take various forms, as shown in Figure 17, whereby many Adherents perform several practices.

78. The notion of quality in official statistics evolves continuously over the years. New challenges arise notably in connection with the use of new sources and news statistical methodologies, but also with the emergence of new institutional actors contributing in the production of official statistics.

Figure 17. Assessment of user needs⁵⁶

Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat.

5.9. Recommendation 9: Ensure user-friendly data access and dissemination.

79. This recommendation calls on Adherents to ensure user-friendly access and dissemination so that statistics are presented clearly with supporting metadata and guidance in order to avoid misuse and misinterpretation of data by users. To this end, promoting statistical literacy (good practice 9.13) and developing educational material is increasingly essential to avoid misuse of official statistics and to improve education to ensure an appropriate interpretation of official statistics, in particular in a context of growing mistrust in official information (see Box 7). Active measures in promoting statistical literacy can take different forms (as shown in Figure 18), depending on the various communities of users covered (general public, students, scholars, professionals, including academics, media, businesses, public administration, governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, etc.). With very different levels of engagement NSOs have developed various tools including:

- Educational material (user friendly explanatory material provided by NSOs on their website and in their publications, teaching material, leaflets, etc.);
- Co-operation with universities (lectures, visits of the NSO, statistical competitions, internship or thesis cooperation, etc.);
- Co-operation with schools (lectures, visits of the NSO, statistical competitions, cooperation with teachers, etc.);

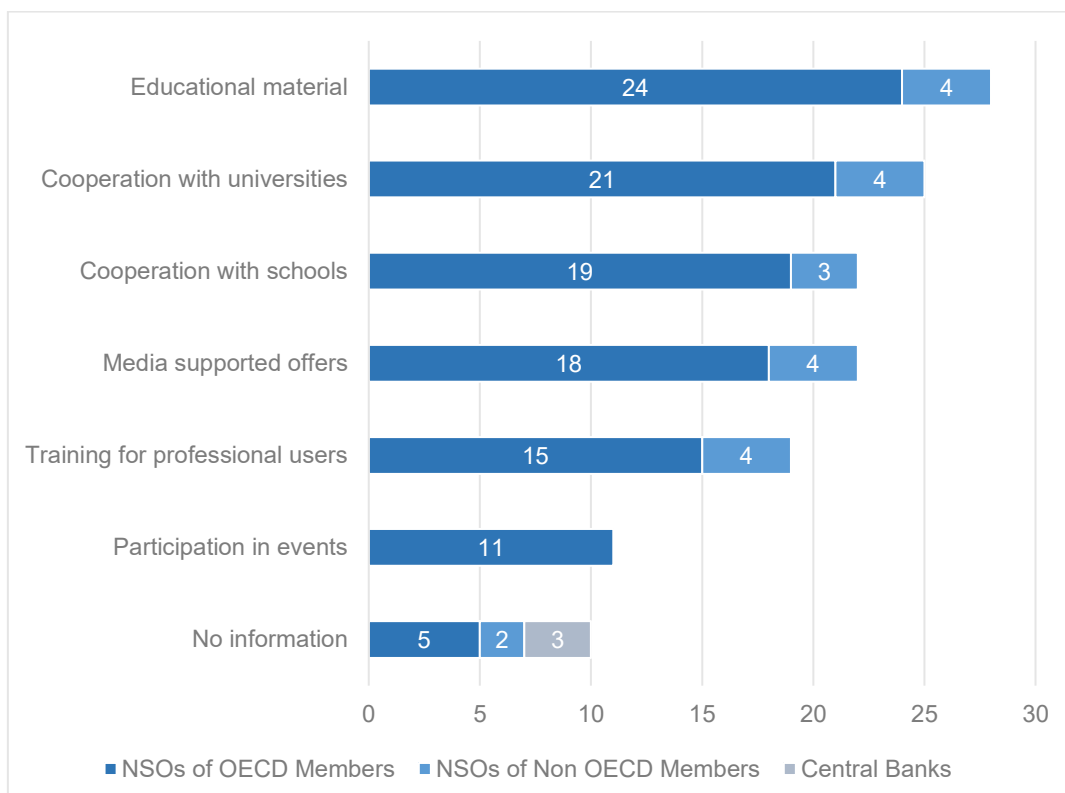
⁵⁶ Face-to-face consultations include meetings with users (e.g. user conferences, user fora, user panels, user council); involvement of users in advisory bodies (e.g. thematic advisory groups, consultative committees, specialist committees, working groups, technical sub-committees); interviews; bi-lateral coordination of statistical actions with regular customers; feedback from user training seminars, etc.

Digital consultation covers surveys (e.g. user need surveys, marketing surveys, questionnaires); possibility for users to give feedback on user needs online; user consultation to submit proposals via mail, etc.

Other assessment practices include web traffic analysis; analysis of social networks and data services; feedback from other institutions in the national statistical system; user request analysis; customer relationship management system; user profile analysis; testing user behaviour at research laboratory.

- Media supported offers (open e-learning, webinars, online lectures, digital conferences, tutorials, learning applications, etc.);
- Training for professionals (trainings, workshops, seminars, conferences, presentations, etc.): and,
- Participation in events (conferences and seminars, book fairs, career event days, etc.).

Figure 18. Statistical literacy provided by NSOs



Source: Self-assessment questionnaires and independent research by the OECD Secretariat:

80. Adherents most frequently provided significant efforts to promote statistical literacy (Figure 18), in particular through the development of educational material, cooperation with academics and schools, relationships with media, and trainings for professionals such as academia, businesses, governments, international organisations, media, NGOs, or public administration.

Box 7. Statistical literacy in Finland

Official statistics disseminated by national statistics offices can be misused, or used inappropriately, in many different ways. To prevent the erroneous interpretation and misuse of official statistics, national statistics offices developed specific procedures, including guidelines for the presentation of data and metadata, and increasingly promoted statistical literacy through the development of specific products and services (e.g. e-learning) for users. Statistical literacy refers to the ability of users to understand statistical concepts; to analyse, interpret and evaluate statistical information; to communicate statistical information and understanding; and to be aware of different data forms,⁵⁷ but also to critically evaluate statistics. Statistics Finland has a long experience in a variety of statistical literacy products and activities that were examined in the context of the Eurostat's DIGICOM project⁵⁸:

- Educational material (e.g. statistical yearbook for children, periodical and blog⁵⁹)
- Cooperation with universities (e.g. statistical literacy competitions)
- Cooperation with schools (e.g. teacher trainings)
- Media supported offers (e.g. YouTube channel⁶⁰, e-courses⁶¹, up-to-date information on key social indicators⁶², Facebook service⁶³)
- Training for professional users (e.g. customer training courses⁶⁴)
- Participation in events (e.g. exhibitions, fairs for municipalities or education, visits of statistics Finland by media representatives or members of the parliament)
- Active involvement in the International Statistical Literacy Project⁶⁵

With this broad range of products and activities, Statistics Finland does not only target professionals (media, academia, businesses, public administration, governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations) and frequent users but also promotes statistical literacy to a wide range of users (including students, scholars, and general public) and the strengthening of cooperation with users in general.

⁵⁷ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/1500.0chapter52010>

⁵⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/system/files/digicom_inventory_complete.pdf

⁵⁹ <https://www.stat.fi/tietotrendit/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-7i2PII1N0yedcqFDpwdA/featured>

⁶¹ https://www.stat.fi/tup/index_en.html

⁶² <https://findikaattori.fi/en/>

⁶³ <https://www.facebook.com/Tilastotohtori/>

⁶⁴ https://www.stat.fi/tup/koulutus/index_en.html

⁶⁵ <https://iase-web.org/islp/>

5.10. Recommendation 10: Establish responsibilities for coordination of statistical activities within the national statistical system.

81. The national statistical system often reflects the administrative structure of the country and the degree of its centralisation impacts the capacity of the country to fully and easily implement the Recommendation.

82. Statistical systems are said to be centralised when all, or most, of the products of the national statistical system are processed and disseminated by a central organisation. A good example is Australia where the Australian Bureau of Statistics produces almost all of the official statistics. The Bureau is an independent agency and has been given full authority by the Government to determine what should be produced and in what manner. Conversely, national statistical systems are said to be decentralised when official statistics are produced by many different producers including the national statistics office, the Central Bank, Ministries and Agencies according which have responsibility for a specific sector – such as health statistics being produced by the Health Ministry. A striking example of a decentralised system is the United States of America where some thirteen statistical agencies are embedded in departments and where the Office of Management and Budgets takes on coordination and statistical policy roles.

83. Decentralisation can take different forms depending on whether the production of official statistics is decentralised by subject as in the case of institutional decentralisation (for example in Korea, Chile and Belgium), or by geographical area (for example in Mexico and Argentina where official statistics are produced at the federal, state, and local level). Most national systems lie between these two extremes and the degree of decentralisation has important implications on the various tools and methods implemented to ensure an efficient coordination within a national statistical system, as a growing number of actors and complex institutional connections/nexus require a higher degree of coordination within a system.

84. The implementation of appropriate tools enabling an efficient coordination of the statistical activities within the national statistical system is fundamental. To this aim, the recommendation suggests a non-exhaustive selection of indicative good practices, including the development of national statistics plans, coordinated dissemination of official statistics (e.g. Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, etc.), common quality management system for the whole national statistical system based on National Codes of Practice, procedures for certifying official statistics, establishment of steering committees for coordinating the national statistical systems, etc. National statistics offices are also encouraged to assist the producers of official statistics with the implementation of international standards (statistical methods, international classifications, SDMX, etc.).

85. In considering the tools required to ensure an efficient coordination of the statistical activities within the national statistical system, a number of questions arise: how far the national statistical system is centralised or decentralised and what are the characteristics of the centralisation (geographical, administrative, etc.), as most of the national statistical systems are neither fully decentralised nor fully centralised but in between? What are the activities requiring a coordination? What are the mechanisms and processes in place to coordinate statistical activities? Are soft (agreements, statistical programmes, assistance, guidelines) or strong (certification, instructions, etc.) instruments required to ensure an efficient coordination? Is the coordination institutional role legally assigned to the national statistics office? Etc. These questions were debated at length with the national statistical authorities during the OECD reviews of the national statistical systems, reflecting the

importance of the Recommendation in this area as well as its flexibility and adaptability to provide appropriate recommendations for improvement in each specific national situation.

5.11. Recommendation 11: Commit to international cooperation

86. This recommendation calls for a commitment of the national statistical authorities to participate in international co-operation and to provide the necessary high-quality statistics required by the OECD for its statistical and analytical databases and publications.

87. In general, national statistics offices in Adherents developed extensive statistical cooperation programmes covering bi-lateral cooperation, regional cooperation, and involvement in numerous international fora (United Nations Statistical Commission, IMF, Bank for International Settlements (BIS), World Trade Organisation (WTO), etc.). In most cases, international co-ordination relies on written co-operation agreements, while sometimes the legal framework also supports it to ensure oversight of international cooperation on data and data transmission to international organisations.

88. Bilateral and multilateral co-operation embrace a wide range of areas, including statistical capacity development, processes, organisation, dissemination, innovation, modernisation of the national statistical system, co-ordination, integration of data sources, statistical planning, etc. It is observed that international engagement raises the profile of the country in the global statistical community, in particular when a country chairs international statistical bodies. Nevertheless, the inclusion of this engagement in a strategic plan is recommended, as well as the development of appropriate procedures to gauge its effectiveness to avoid risks of spreading effort too thinly over too many activities and becoming entangled in complex international dialogues. Moreover, processes that would ensure that the participation of the entities within the national statistical system is coordinated should be developed under the authority of the national statistics office.

89. International cooperation also includes the development of modern statistical and IT tools (such as SDMX) for the regular transmission of data and metadata to international organisations and data exchange between various national government administrations. In some Adherents, specific provisions in the legal framework support co-ordination of international data requests by ensuring oversight of international co-operation on data, and empower the national statistics office with the role to coordinate the implementation of efficient processes for the transmission of data and metadata to international organisations. While not explicitly included in the Set of Good Statistical Practice, such provisions fully comply with the Recommendation.

90. Providing access to microdata for research purposes is now common in many statistical agencies in Adherents, in accordance with various procedures in place (remote access, licensing, secured environment, etc.). However, providing access to microdata for international organisations is more difficult, while essential for their statistical work. There is a significant difference between delivering microdata to a third party and providing access to microdata. The producers of official statistics in most Adherents would only provide microdata to a third party if they are explicitly allowed or obliged by law. In this context, this recommendation aims at strengthening international cooperation in microdata exchange to support improvement in this area. To this end, the statistical reviews based on the Recommendation identified several barriers to be overcome, including legal issues, technical infrastructure safeguarding security and confidentiality, and missing international standards, and some good practices in place to facilitate access by third parties, as for

example making international cooperation on microdata part of the statistical planning at the national level.

91. As regards quality, statistical processes at international level are often derived from best practices developed at national level. Thus, there is clear inter-dependence between the statistical methodologies implemented at the national level and the quality of statistical analysis produced by the OECD. In this context the Recommendation has proven to be useful in strengthening the cooperation on quality of statistics between the Organisation and Adherents.

5.12. Recommendation 12: Encourage exploring new innovative methods as well as new and alternative data sources as inputs for official statistics.

92. In general terms, the implementation of innovative methods and new and alternative data sources as inputs for official statistics by the Adherents is still in its early stages, even if the statistical authorities in Adherents are conscious of the issues and challenges at stake. At the time of the adoption of the Recommendation, they were forward looking but significant progress have been made since then and the need to consider how statistical legislation can support statistical modernisation is increasingly important for official statistics to ensure that they continue to be relevant in the future. As of today, major current projects consist in developing IT and human capacities for integrating new sources and methods into the production of official statistics. For example, the potential of scanner data, mobile phone data, credit card data, smart electricity meters (see Box 8), etc. has been explored by national statistics offices. These projects include the development of an appropriate IT infrastructure to ensure that the quality of statistics is maintained when new sources of input are introduced into the production of official statistics.

Box 8. Smart electricity meters as new data source in Estonia

National statistics offices increasingly explore innovative statistical products and methods based on alternative data sources. In this context, the use of privately held data contributed to lessen response burden and to reduce costs for public administrations in several pilot projects.⁶⁶ For instance, the pilot smart meters developed by Statistics Estonia for an ESS project on the distant measures of electricity consumption at a high frequency.

Statistics Estonia conducted one of the first studies to evaluate the feasibility of using smart meter data for the production of official statistics. In 2016, Statistics Estonia (jointly with Statistics Denmark) was the only European statistical authority to receive data from smart meters.⁶⁷ A centralised data hub supports the technical transmission of information. Linking smart meters to dwellings, households, and businesses from relevant register data allowed Statistics Estonia to produce accurate and regular monthly and spatially disaggregated electricity consumption statistics. Accuracy was improved, for example through the identification of empty dwellings. Estonia's experience relies on a legal framework allowing access to private data and on full coverage roll-out plans for smart meters. Furthermore, the construction of an adequate data hub for data and metadata and constant co-operation with data providers were essential to efficiently use smart electricity meters to produce consumption statistics. Other Adherents, including Sweden, Norway and Finland recently started to develop electricity data hub's and to increasingly share experience in order to further develop the smart meters for the production of official statistics.⁶⁸ Such approaches could fundamentally change the production process of official statistics and require the rethinking of the relationships with the public in that respect.

93. One particular challenge is on the access and use of private sources. While the recommendation calls for research on new sources including in the private sector, this should be supported by law. In that respect, it is an important dimension of the modernisation of the legal and institutional framework for official statistics and some recent laws on statistics (e.g. Norway) give rights to the producers of official statistics to access private sources.

6. Conclusion and next steps

94. Five years after the adoption of the Recommendation, this Report highlights the main trends and developments across Adherents with respect to their implementation of its provisions. The Report underscores a selection of good practices and advanced statistical policy tools developed by Adherents, as well as challenges that they still face in the collection, production and dissemination of official statistics.

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<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/7330775/8463599/ESS+Position+Paper+on+Access+to+privately+held+data+final+-+Nov+2017.pdf/6ef6398f-6580-4731-86ab-9d9d015d15ae>

⁶⁷

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/system/files/essnet_pilot_smart_meters_p.pdf

⁶⁸

<https://nsm2019.fi/papers-and-presentations.html> (Electricity data hub - a new source in statistics)

95. The Secretariat and Adherents have actively disseminated the Recommendation in various fora. Continuing to raise awareness of the Recommendation nationally and internationally is considered very important.

96. The peer review process on the implementation of the Recommendation has proven to be the most accurate means to develop recommendations for strengthening the national statistical system.

97. Several key messages have surfaced from this process. These include:

- The Recommendation has clearly filled a niche in the international spectrum of statistical codes of practice by catering to the most developed statistical systems which allowed more specificity than UN-based instruments.
- Much progress has been made to implement the provisions of the Recommendation in Adherents.
- A particular attention to ensure consistency with the European Statistical Code of Practice and specific provisions for countries in the European Statistical System have avoided any duplication of tools and efforts. Indeed, assessments conducted under the European Statistical Code of Practice are considered a substitute for OECD assessments.
- The vast majority of non-European Union member states chose a self-assessment as the vehicle for reporting on their implementation. While this is the least demanding form of assessment, it also makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions on the degree of compliance with the Recommendation as the detail and depth of responses varies. A more elaborate peer review was undertaken for Mexico and considered helpful for the Mexican statistical system.
- There have also been a number of more specific cases around national statistical questions where the Recommendation proved to be very useful as a reference, such as discussions around the development and passage of a Statistics Bill in Canada, Argentina, Chile, Lithuania, and Costa Rica, or the development of amendments in Colombia.
- The Recommendation is now recognised as a key standard in OECD accession processes and, within its short existence, has established itself as a reference for non-Members, witness the steady requests for adherence.
- The CSSP considers that the relevance of the Recommendation is assured as it stands although some areas may be considered for further development in the future.

98. While the Committee considers that no further revision of the Recommendation would seem warranted at this point, several areas for further action have been identified, including:

- Envisage updating the Set of Good Statistical Practices, in particular by reflecting changes in the 2019 European Quality Assurance Framework (see Annex D). Duplications and redundancies could also be removed and the CSSP could take this opportunity to include a few additional good practices, e.g. as regards: planning activities; budgetary autonomy of the national statistics office (including autonomy in allocation of human, financial, and technical resources); length of the mandate of the national statistician; access to private data; promotion of statistical literacy to avoid misuse or inappropriate use of

official statistics; obligation to holders/owners of administrative data to inform national statistics offices about changes in data and methodologies, etc.

- Encourage Adherents to optimise the dissemination and promotion of the Recommendation, including by producing and sharing with the OECD Secretariat translations in their domestic language.
- Recognise that the peer review process is beneficial for both Adherents and the Organisation, encourage Adherents to undergo a peer review of their national statistical system against the Recommendation and require the OECD Secretariat to disseminate detailed information on the procedure for these peer reviews.
- Continue to monitor the implementation of the Recommendation and report back to the Council in five years. This first Report provides a baseline with which to continue to compare the implementation processes in various Adherents over the coming years and identify progress over time.
- Complement information on the implementation of the Recommendation on a continuous basis enabling the OECD Secretariat to further develop the online Toolkit, in cooperation with Adherents in order to provide detailed information on the practices in place, including in ESS member states. Developing this knowledge on the national statistical systems would facilitate the future monitoring process.