



PEER REVIEW REPORT

ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF
PRACTICE AND FURTHER IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

GERMANY

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January 2022

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The German statistical system is decentralised, reflecting the country's federal structure. The main producers are the Federal Statistical Office and the 14 Statistical Offices of the Länder, which are designated as Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics. A further 16 'other' Other National Authorities are, to a large extent, independent bodies (as well as a few ministries).

Within public administration the Federal Statistical Office is an independent, superior federal authority in the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, which exercises administrative control over the Federal Statistical Office. Other federal ministries act in a specialist supervisory role regarding the statistics that are in their interest in order to ensure the correct conduct of statistical surveys in legal terms.

Statistical activity is largely regulated by the following legal acts: the Federal Statistics Act, last amended in 2016, the Federal Data Protection Act, the Law on the Use of Administrative Data and the Statistical Register Act. According to Article 1 of the Federal Statistics Act, the credibility of federal statistics builds upon the principles of neutrality, objectivity and professional independence.

Access to administrative data is enabled in the Federal Statistics Act, complemented by the recent (2020) Administrative Data Information Platform, which provides metadata, enabling the national statistics network to carry out systematic suitability checks on the use of administrative data

Overall, the principle of 'no statistics without a legal basis' applies – the majority of federal statistical surveys must have their own legal basis, and the Federal Statistical Office is actively involved in the preparation of the legal basis for a new statistical survey or in amending an existing one, taking account of the interests of the different stakeholders. In general, a very comprehensive set of legal acts determines all essential survey parameters. While there are benefits in statistical activity being rooted in law, there are some disadvantages too, namely a reduction in flexibility. Taken together, this range of statistical legislation might be considered as defining the activities of the German statistical system.

The legal mandate of the Federal Statistical Office covers the methodological and technical preparation and further development of federal statistics, as well as the production and dissemination of federal statistical results. This also includes giving advice to users, providing the scientific community with anonymised microdata (which is also a role of the Statistical Offices of the Länder) and supplying the results of integrated statistical systems (e.g. National Accounts).

The core processes of statistics production are performed by the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the 'other' Other National Authorities for about two thirds of federal statistics. The Statistical Offices of the Länder collect, process and disseminate data at federal and regional levels. For certain statistical topics, one Statistical Office of the Länder will lead on behalf of the whole statistical system. For about one third of federal statistics the Federal Statistical Office collects and processes data at central level. Reflecting this decentralised system, the coordination role of the Federal Statistical Office is one of its most important tasks. The role includes the methodological and technical preparation and further development of official statistics, quality assurance, data analysis and dissemination (based on a coordinated release calendar). Governance arrangements support the coordination role – a series of permanent committees such as the Conference of Heads of the Statistical Offices provide for strategic coordination, while the Steering Committee on Optimised Co-operation coordinates the statistical activities at management level, supported at working level by specialist committees and expert groups/working parties. User perspectives – including recommendations about future priorities for the statistical system – are provided by the statutory Statistical Advisory Committee.

Although the Federal Statistical Office does not have a clear legal mandate to coordinate common activities with the 'other' Other National Authorities, a series of Memoranda of Understanding provide the basis for effective partnership working. The use of data quality sheets to monitor quality across all

stages of the statistics production process and also output quality is a strength, complemented by the suite of standardised software solutions which can be applied by the Statistical Offices of the Länder for the implementation of the methods developed by the Federal Statistical Office.

The Federal Statistical Office has the ambition to act as a data steward in order to promote the quality standards associated with official statistics across the administrative environment of the government of Germany. While the German statistical system appears to be sufficiently resourced to meet the existing statistical demands placed upon it, new tasks would need additional resources (and suitable legal provision).

Overall, there is a good level of compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice (ES CoP) throughout the German statistical system. However, the peer review team identified eight compliance-relevant and fifteen improvement-related recommendations grouped under six main headings, listed below with their related recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Enhancing cooperation and coordination

The German statistical system is highly decentralised. The coordination role of the Federal Statistical Office appears well established as far as the Statistical Offices of the Länder are concerned. However, this coordination role should be reinforced regarding the Other National Authorities apart from the Statistical Offices of the Länder. National Guidelines to ensure quality in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics are needed, and the process of concluding Memoranda of Understanding could usefully be strengthened. Both activities would actively support the coordination role of the Federal Statistical Office with the 'other' Other National Authorities in the short term, as well as strengthening a key part of the coordination infrastructure in the future.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

1. *The Federal Statistical Office should formalise and publish National Guidelines to ensure quality in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics, applicable to all Other National Authorities. The implementation of these National Guidelines should be monitored and reviewed. The responsibility for ensuring compliance with the guidelines rests solely with the heads of the Other National Authorities. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.2)*

The Statistical Offices of the Länder and the 'other' Other National Authorities play very different roles in the German statistical system, have different perspectives and face different challenges. At the same time, they are all required to follow the standards of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The different parts of the German statistical system would be more likely to learn about how others engage with the European Statistics Code of Practice if the Federal Statistical Office developed a mechanism to facilitate such learning.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

2. *The Federal Statistical Office should consider establishing an overarching coordination mechanism to bring together the Statistical Offices of the Länder and 'other' Other National Authorities as a way of sharing experiences and insights about implementing the principles of the ES CoP to strengthen the German statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)*

The federal/state structure of German institutions is well established and, in official statistics, there are mechanisms to help it work effectively. The lead Länder initiative - whereby for statistical or horizontal topics one Land Statistical Office takes the lead in coordinating all activities and reporting back to the Federal Statistical Office – works effectively. Under a recent initiative, four Statistical Offices of the Länder were integrated into two: a small streamlining/simplification of the statistical system. Nevertheless, there is scope to improve matters further.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

3. *The Federal Statistical Office should consider further streamlining the German statistical system, building on the success of the lead Länder initiative and reviewing lessons learned from the integration of four Statistical Offices of the Länder into two. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 10.2 and 10.4)*

The coordination of the Statistical Offices of the Länder is articulated in law. For ‘other’ Other National Authorities, the Federal Statistical Office has signed Memoranda of Understanding to guarantee that European Statistics are developed, produced and disseminated according to the principles of the ES CoP. Those Memoranda of Understanding were signed before the new ES CoP principle 1bis on coordination and cooperation was developed. The practice and periodicity of revising the Memoranda of Understanding are currently handled differently by the Other National Authorities, and there are no regular processes.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

4. *The Federal Statistical Office should consider strengthening the role of the Memoranda of Understanding by:*

- a) Making clear which statistical datasets are provided to Eurostat and ensuring that a Memorandum of Understanding is signed with each Other National Authority. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)*
- b) Reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding template more regularly, taking Principle 1bis into account. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)*
- c) Holding regular discussions on compliance with the ES CoP (which should be part of the Memoranda of Understanding). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)*
- d) Including more detailed compliance requirements (national quality guidelines or other relevant handbooks). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.2)*
- e) Completing the publication of all Memoranda of Understanding (on the websites of the Federal Statistical Office and the Other National Authorities). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)*
- f) Committing to explore the potential of new data sources. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 2.4)*

II. Enhancing the legal and institutional environment

The principle of professional independence should be operationalised by improving the transparency of future appointments of the President of the Federal Statistics Office and clarifying the potential reasons for his/her dismissal. According to current procedures, the Federal Government makes proposals to the Federal President for the appointment of the President of the Federal Statistical Office. The proposals can be based on an open competition or a simple nomination, the latter having been the case for the last three Presidents of the Federal Statistical Office. The reasons for the dismissal of the President of the Federal Statistical Office are not publicly stated.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

5. *The Ministry of the Interior, on behalf of the Federal Government, should take steps to improve the transparency of future appointments of the President of the Federal Statistical Office, for example by advertising the post and the necessary qualifications and knowledge openly, and clarifying the potential reasons for his/her dismissal. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.8)*

The Federal Statistical Office does not publish a statistical work plan for the German statistical system as such: rather, its programme of work is largely made up of the surveys conducted on the basis of

specific survey legislation. This makes it hard for users to appreciate the range of work that the German statistical system is responsible for, or how effective it is.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

6. The Federal Statistical Office should improve the transparency of the operation of the German statistical system by publishing an accessible narrative work plan and introducing an appropriate approach to publicly reporting on progress against the plan. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.5)

The German statistical system is increasingly reliant on administrative data held by a range of ministries and agencies. However, statisticians are frequently unable to influence decisions about many aspects across the life cycle of such data. In practice, statisticians should have more opportunity to influence the design and development of administrative data systems used for statistical purposes.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

7. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to ensure the involvement of the statistical authorities from the beginning in the design, development and discontinuation of administrative records to make them more suitable for statistical purposes. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 2.2 and 9.4)

According to the ES CoP, the independence of National Statistical Institutes should be specified in law and assured for Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics. The professional independence of the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder is enshrined in legal provisions. The situation regarding the 'other' Other National Authorities apart from the Statistical Offices of the Länder is different. Recently, the legal basis of a number of Other National Authorities was reviewed and clarified regarding provisions relating to **professional** independence. It is not fully evident, however, that this holds for all 'other' Other National Authorities. Another important aspect is that the Federal Statistical Office does not have a clear legal mandate to coordinate common activities with the 'other' Other National Authorities.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

8. The Federal Statistical Office should:

- a) scrutinise the legal basis for all Other National Authorities (apart from the Statistical Offices of the Länder) and, if any problematic situation regarding professional independence is observed, a revision of the legal provision should be considered. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.1)**
- b) take steps to ensure that the coordination role for Other National Authorities apart from the Statistical Offices of the Länder is clearly articulated in law. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)**

By maintaining a high-quality business register, the Federal Statistical Office can make use of a very appropriate sampling frame for its business surveys. However, for social surveys and other household surveys, sampling frames are based on the last (2011) census and the annual update of the new buildings in the construction activity statistics. This constitutes a potential source for bias, as the sampling frames will be out-of-date and will not capture, for example, properties built since the previous annual update.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

9. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to achieve access to the national population register. This should include creating a legal basis for sustainable access to the register as a sampling

frame and as a data source for demographic statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.2 and 7.3)

The current legal situation empowers the Federal Statistical Office to produce a high volume of statistics and to determine the methods, which have to be applied by the Statistical Offices of the Länder. However, the fact that there can be no statistics without a legal basis, and the strict rules regarding data linking, limit the German statistical system's ability to react to emerging data needs in a flexible manner, which is of special importance in crisis situations (such as COVID-19).

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

10. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to introduce legal changes, which allow the creation of tailor-made data products based on linked data and ad-hoc surveys to be conducted quickly to produce indicators and figures related to suddenly emerging topics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 9.6 and 11.1)

Statistical surveys are defined in considerable detail in legislation, which limits their flexibility. Some surveys are based on relatively light touch legislation ("Ordinance"), which can be agreed and implemented more quickly than fully-fledged statistical legislation – providing the survey costs less than 2 million Euro, and that the duration of the survey is no more than three years. This approach provides useful flexibility, which would be beneficial if it could be applied more generally.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

11. The Federal Statistical Office should enhance the range of surveys which are based on Ordinances and, as part of this, take steps to enable such surveys to be conducted for more than the current time and cost limits. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 11.1)

The Statistical Offices of the Länder are initiating a project to re-evaluate the ways in which they work together, including how they cooperate and how they might take forward the lead Länder initiative. This project provides an opportunity to review whether it might be feasible for a Land Statistical Office to, for example, collect data on a particular topic for the whole country, and whether there might be other efficiencies to be gained or roles and responsibilities to be clarified.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

- 12. As part of this project, the Statistical Offices of the Länder might usefully consider:**
- a) extending the scope of the lead Länder concept to include the collection of data on particular topics across the whole of Germany. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 10.4)**
 - b) whether there would be efficiencies in centralising the production and publication of statistics and the dissemination of data. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 10.4)**
 - c) clarifying the role of the Statistical Offices of the Länder in relation to drafting national and Länder statistical laws. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1.1)**

III. Enhancing capacity and capability to increase resilience

Resources allocated by the Ministry of the Interior can be used to fund permanent/established posts; other ministries' resources can only be used for fixed-term contract staff. This can cause problems in managing modernisation projects to improve production work, including for European statistics, and it reduces the resilience of the German statistical system and its retention of expertise.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

13. *The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to ensure that resources allocated by all Ministries for statistical work can be used to fund permanent staff. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)*

The bodies of the German statistical system – the Federal Statistical Office, Statistical Offices of the Länder and the ‘other’ Other National Authorities – have strong ambitions for innovative programmes. However, it is not clear whether the necessary financial and technical resources are granted in full, while there are difficulties in recruiting sufficient IT experts, for whom recruitment is a challenge given better pay rates elsewhere. There appears to be a clash between the ‘standard pay rate’ approach in the German civil service and the realities of the demand for IT staff in the German economy.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

14. *The Ministry of the Interior, on behalf of the Federal Government, should seek to ensure that all statistical authorities (the Federal Statistical Office, Statistical Offices of the Länder and the ‘other’ Other National Authorities) are allocated the necessary human and financial resources to be able to take full advantage of possible improvements driven by the digital revolution and to realise quality improvements and efficiency gains by implementing corresponding modernisation projects. Additionally, the necessary resources should be available for research projects. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1 and 10.2)*

The Federal Statistical Office has considerable expertise in all relevant methodological topics, including sampling, editing and imputation, confidentiality and seasonal adjustment. However, the historical evolution of the organisational structure of the Federal Statistical Office means that the knowledge is spread over several departments, which reduces the scope for innovation and the sharing of best practice.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

15. *The Federal Statistical Office should consider measures that would allow a regular exchange of knowledge between the different methodological units (for instance, by organising regular meetings or by establishing an overarching methodological committee). (Improvement-related, ES CoP, Indicators 7.2 and 1.4)*

IV. Improving quality systems and processes

The Federal Statistical Office, together with the Other National Authorities, has designed quality mechanisms in the context of a decentralised statistical system. However, no quality policy for the German statistical system has been formalised and made available to the public. The policy should reflect the existing quality management system, possibly drawing on the common quality framework of the European Statistical System as inspiration. The policy should cover the whole German statistical system and be made available to the public.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

16. *Considering the quality building blocks already in place, as well as possible enhancements, the Federal Statistical Office should define and draft, in cooperation with the Other National Authorities (i.e. both the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the ‘other’ Other National Authorities), a quality policy that would summarise the elements already in place in a concise and integrated way. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 4.1)*

A key aspect of the ES CoP principle 4, Commitment to Quality, consists of a regular and thorough review of key statistical outputs, using external experts where appropriate. Quality is monitored in the Federal Statistical Office on a continuous basis by the staff in charge of production. However, there is

no mechanism in place for a regular review of key statistical outputs, using external experts where appropriate.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

17. The Federal Statistical Office should develop a formalised quality review mechanism, articulating its objectives, scope and approach. Such a quality review mechanism should be reflected in the (new) quality policy and national guidelines and be applicable across the German statistical system as a whole, including the Other National Authorities. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2, 4.3 and 4.4)

The Federal Statistical Office has developed an elaborate system of Quality Data Sheets to monitor the various process and product quality indicators and targets. However, the interactions between the quality data sheets and the European system of metadata and quality reporting (Single Integrated Metadata Structure) are not well established.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

18. The Federal Statistical Office should reflect on the Quality Data Sheets system and align it with the Single Integrated Metadata Structure standard to facilitate quality reporting at European and national levels, for the whole German statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 4.3)

V. Improving dissemination of statistical releases and data

Pre-release access to statistical releases is allowed from 2 pm the day before the following day's 8 am release of a set of statistics. Considering that statistical authorities have to ensure the production and dissemination of European statistics in an objective and transparent way, and that all users should be treated equitably, the peer review team sees a need to take measures to ensure compliance with the ES CoP by tightening the rules and arrangements for privileged pre-release access to statistical results. This will demonstrate transparently that the dissemination of European statistics is impartial.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

19. The Federal Statistical Office should ensure that the privileged pre-release access to outside users is justified more clearly, and is more limited in time and number. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 6.7)

The German statistical system has established Research Data Centres in order to provide the scientific community with microdata. There are certain procedures and conditions for granting access to researchers. However, the procedures are seen as cumbersome and slow, and even experienced users with long track records of safe use of data in the Centres have to start from scratch when applying for a new project.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

20. Considering the legal framework in place, the Federal Statistical Office should investigate the possibilities for expanding the use of the Research Data Centres, including allowing more convenient (suitable) remote access to microdata and for reducing the administrative burden to access microdata by simplifying the procedures for experienced users. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 15.2 and 15.4)

VI. Making the most of the evolving data landscape

The Federal Statistical Office is keen to improve the national data ecosystem and to take an important and proactive role in developing the national data strategy. This may entail a non-negligible risk for the respect of the professional independence of the Federal Statistical Office. Therefore, the new tasks, including acting as a national data steward, supporting the creation of a unified business identifier, assessing the quality of the registers and avoiding duplications of data collection by supporting the 'once-only principle' as much as possible, should be reflected in the relevant national legislation.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

21. *The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to ensure that the independence of the development, production and dissemination of official statistics is maintained by separating new (data steward) tasks from traditional statistical obligations, and that this is clearly reflected in law. The Ministry of the Interior should ensure that the Federal Statistical Office is provided with sufficient additional resources to be able to fulfil the additional tasks appropriately. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1.1 and 3.1)*

The Federal Statistical Office has established good initiatives to provide suitable dissemination channels for the users of official statistics. Besides the home page as the main platform for publishing results, the GENESIS database holds data on the topics covered by official statistics in Germany and is considered an important resource, both within the Federal Statistical Office and for external users. However, relatively non-expert users find it hard to work with.

The development of a fully-fledged metadata management system not only serves the purpose of providing users with adequate metadata but also constitutes a necessary condition for acting as a national data steward. While the Federal Statistical Office currently has a strong focus on developing a general data management system, the part related to a centralised metadata system does not appear to have the highest priority.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

22. *The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to improve the accessibility to statistical results, including the GENESIS database and corresponding metadata. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.4, 15.2 and 15.5)*

The Federal Statistical Office is currently involved in several projects to support the objective of being prepared for the challenges that arise in an evolving environment. These projects include the increased use of administrative data and sustainable access to new (privately held) data, the modernisation of the IT infrastructure accompanied by actively hiring qualified staff, as well as the increased promotion of modern dissemination channels and the dissemination of data in new formats (such as machine-readable open data files).

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

23. *The Federal Statistical Office should continue engaging with relevant stakeholders on new and innovative projects to increase innovation across the German statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.3)*

In the spirit of continuous improvement integral to the European Statistical System, the NSI will interpret the recommendations formulated in this report into improvement actions for implementation within the national statistical system (NSS).

2. INTRODUCTION

It is recognised that quality is one of the European Statistical System's (ESS) comparative advantages in a world experiencing a growing trend of instant information and new challenges, driven by exceptional circumstances or the continuous need for faster but quality-assured data. The European Statistics Code of Practice (ES CoP) is the cornerstone of the ESS common quality framework, and the ESS statistical authorities have committed themselves to adhere to it.

In this context, it is crucial for the ESS to be equipped with a review mechanism, the peer reviews, supporting with credible evidence this self-commitment to adhere to the ES CoP. The objective of this review mechanism is to enhance the integrity, professional independence and accountability of the ESS statistical authorities. The first round of peer reviews was carried out in 2006-2008, followed by a second round in 2013-2015.

In 2017, the ES CoP was reviewed and extended and now encompasses 16 principles. This revised version of the ES CoP triggered a third round of peer reviews, being carried out in the Member States of the European Union and of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and Eurostat from 2021 to mid-2023. This round of peer reviews aims at improving the quality and trust in European statistics by assessing the compliance of the ESS with the principles of the revised ES CoP. The peer reviews cover the ESS statistical authorities (Eurostat, the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and selected Other National Authorities (ONAs)) developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. The peer reviews will be followed by a period of annual monitoring of the implementation of the improvement actions developed by the NSIs to address the recommendations laid down in the peer review reports.

The third round of peer reviews has the following two objectives:

- To review the compliance/alignment of the ESS with the ES CoP, in order to demonstrate to the ESS and to external stakeholders that the ESS is a system based on the principles of the ES CoP;
- To help NSIs, ONAs and Eurostat in their further improvement and development by indicating future-oriented recommendations; at the same time, they should stimulate government authorities to support the implementation of these recommendations.

Each peer review is conducted by a team of four statistical experts (both from inside and outside the ESS). The peer review has four phases: completion of the Self-Assessment Questionnaires (SAQs) by a country; analysis of these SAQs by the peer review team; a country visit by the peer review team; and the preparation of the final report and ensuing recommendations by the peer review team. These recommendations are of two types:

- Compliance-relevant (ensuring compliance/alignment with the ES CoP);
- Improvement-related (less critical/technical supporting improvements).

A combination of an audit-like and a peer review approach is used when assessing the national statistical systems (NSS) in the countries to benefit from the positive aspects of both approaches. The audit-like approach requires the provision of documents as evidence, the ownership of the recommendations by the peer review expert team, and the right for the NSIs to express diverging views on the recommendations and to formulate the corresponding improvement actions. Whereas the peer review approach allows for common agreement within the ESS on the methodology, the objectives, scope and implementation arrangements, the focus on improvements and a peer learning process.

Although all principles of the ES CoP will be reviewed for all countries through the SAQ, the peer review experts are free to customize the country visit to concentrate on those principles where more clarification/explanation is needed. However, certain principles such as those concerning professional independence and coordination and cooperation, as well as principles including elements of modernisation, will be assessed during the peer review visit for every member of the ESS.

In addition to the common principles to be addressed for every member of the ESS, the peer review team also placed emphasis on the Adequacy of Resources, Impartiality and Objectivity, Cost Effectiveness and Relevance.

The Adequacy of Resources (ES CoP principle 3) was considered as highly important in this peer review because it was not evident that sufficient human and financial resources are granted for various key projects related to modernisation, quality improvements, taking a leading role in the national data ecosystem and ensuring the security and development of IT systems.

The peer review team also highlighted the fact that disseminating statistics objectively and impartially (ES CoP, principle 6) significantly influences trust in statistics. Therefore, impartiality that ensures explicitly equal access to statistical information by tightening the rules and arrangements for privileged pre-release access was a significant subject for discussions during this peer review.

As the demand for human and financial resources increases due to the growing needs of users of statistics and changing statistical processes in an era of digitalisation, the principle of Cost Effectiveness (ES CoP principle 10) was also treated as important during the visit.

Compliance with ES CoP principle 11 (Relevance) was a further issue discussed during the visit. The peer review team agreed that feasible measures, including enhancing the flexibility of legislation and encouraging innovations to meet emerging user needs (such as statistics on the COVID-19 situation), should be identified by the Federal Statistical Office.

Also, although the reports should not be used to compare one country to another, much effort has been made to ensure the harmonisation of the reports and the ensuing recommendations across the countries so that all countries are treated equitably.

The peer review of Eurostat was conducted by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

General structure of the German Statistical System

The National Statistical System (NSS) in Germany follows the country's federal structure. The main producers are the Federal Statistical Office DESTATIS (FSO) and the Statistical Offices of the Länder (SOLs). Sixteen Other National Authorities (ONAs), which are, to a large extent, independent bodies, also produce European statistics. Two ONAs are federal ministries (the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs produces health and safety and social protection statistics; the Federal Ministry of Education and Research produces statistics on education and lifelong learning, science, technology and innovation). The ONAs send data directly to Eurostat without including the FSO in the data transmission process.

Within public administration, the FSO is an independent, superior federal authority in the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, which exercises administrative control over the FSO. Other federal ministries act in a specialist supervisory role regarding the statistics that are in their interest in order to ensure the correct conduct of statistical surveys in legal terms.

The Statistical Advisory Committee (SAC) provides advice to the FSO on fundamental matters and represents various user groups (such as associations, trade unions and respondents). The members of the Committee are appointed by the President of the FSO on the proposal of the appropriate associations and institutions.

Main legal acts and underlying principles

Statistical activity is largely regulated by the following legal acts: the Federal Statistics Act, last amended in 2016, the Federal Data Protection Act, the Law on the Use of Administrative Data and the Statistical Register Act. According to Article 1 of the Federal Statistics Act, the credibility of federal statistics builds upon the principles of neutrality, objectivity and professional independence.

Following the German principle of legality, federal statistics are, as a rule, ordered by the legislator. The majority of federal statistical surveys must have their own legal basis. Compulsory response to the surveys is considered as interference in the fundamental right of 'informational self-determination' ('informationelle Selbstbestimmung') and requires clearly defined legal authorisation. The legal provisions concerning federal statistics must determine whether and to what extent a survey is to be conducted with or without an obligation on respondents to provide information. This means (with few exceptions) that a very comprehensive set of legal acts determines all essential survey parameters.

The FSO is actively involved in the preparations required to create a legal basis for a new statistical survey or to amend an existing one. It takes into account the interests of different stakeholders (e.g. users, respondents, holders of administrative data) in defining the most effective methods and procedures for compiling the required statistics and obtaining the necessary data.

The FSO's legal mandate covers the methodological and technical preparation and further development of federal statistics as well as the production and dissemination of federal statistical results. This includes also giving advice to users, providing the scientific community with anonymised microdata (which is also a role of the SOLs) and supplying the results of integrated statistical systems (e.g. National Accounts). Technical preparations are focused particularly on applying modern data processing technologies and setting common standards.

Appointment procedures for the head of the FSO

Concerning the appointment of the President of the FSO, the relevant provisions of the Federal Statistics Act are set out in Section 2(2). The President of the FSO is appointed by the Federal President

of Germany on the proposal of the Federal Government. He/she is the head of an independent, superior federal authority in the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

As is the case for all public servants, the selection of the President and the Vice-President of the FSO is based on qualifications, aptitude and professional performance (see Article 33 of the Basic Law). According to Article 33 of the Federal Career Regulation (Bundeslaufbahnverordnung), determinations of aptitude, qualifications and professional performance are generally made on the basis of current service evaluations. In order to verify the fulfilment of requirements for which the performance appraisals do not provide any information, aptitude-diagnostic instruments such as selection interviews may be used.

Statistical programme

While the FSO does not publish a work plan for the German statistical system, the publication "Your benefit. Our mission" informs about the FSO's tasks, goals, developments and innovations. The publication covers the FSO and its services for users, the challenges of the coming years and a programmatic outlook by illustrating the further development of the statistical programme on the basis of selected measures.

Resources

There are about 2,400 employees (as of December 2020) working for the FSO in Wiesbaden, Bonn and Berlin. In addition, approximately 4,700 people are employed by the SOLs. The estimated 2020 expenditure of the FSO is 156.8 million Euro, which amounts to nearly one third of the total expenditure of the FSO and the SOLs.

Data access

Under Section 18 (1) of the Federal Statistics Act (BStatG), the provisions of BStatG apply in principle to surveys ordered by directly applicable legal acts of the European Union. However, the mandate to collect data in Germany is essentially stipulated in the respective individual statistics act. As a result, there is no general statutory regulation in place providing a mandate for the statistical authorities to collect data for European statistics. Only in exceptional cases is a statutory regulation at the national level not required.

According to Section 5a of the Federal Statistics Act (BStatG), before ordering or amending federal statistics, the FSO is obliged to check whether public administration agencies already hold data that are qualitatively suitable for the compilation of the statistics. An Administrative Data Information Platform (VIP) was made available to the official statistics network at the beginning of 2020. It provides metadata information that enables the official statistics network to carry out systematic suitability tests for the use of administrative data in accordance with Section 5a BStatG. The FSO is also very keen to use new data sources. For instance, new partnerships with the private sector in the areas of mobile network data and loan agreements have been established, most notably during the publication of experimental statistics.

Relations with users/dissemination

The homepage of the FSO is the most important channel for disseminating statistical results, publications, press releases and multimedia products such as videos and podcasts. Various databases are available there (GENESIS-Online, a barometer of burdens, agreed earnings database). The FSO also uses various other digital communication channels, formats and platforms (e.g. its own Twitter, YouTube and Instagram channels, Figure of the Week, Brexit Monitor, Accident Atlas). A dedicated media library on the website contains videos and podcasts. Methods are discussed with all key user groups during the legislative process. They are also regularly discussed with users and scientists in the context of the Statistical Advisory Committee, expert committees, user conferences, user workshops and conferences.

Coordination of statistical activities within the German statistical system

Due to the decentralised structure of the German statistical system, the coordination role can be regarded as one of the most important tasks for the FSO, which is also articulated in Law. The coordination role relates to ensuring a uniform, due compilation of federal statistics by the Länder. However, the SOLs are administratively and financially independent of the Federation and formally not subject to directives from the FSO or the federal ministries. The core processes of statistics production are performed by the SOLs for about two thirds of federal statistics. The SOLs collect and process data and disseminate statistical information at federal and regional levels. For about one third of federal statistics (e.g. foreign trade statistics), the FSO collects and processes data and disseminates statistical information at the central level.

According to the agreement between the FSO and the SOLs, activities to be coordinated in the German system of statistical offices involve methodological and technical preparation and further development of official statistics, quality assurance, data analysis and dissemination. The main role in coordinating the methodology involves the heads of the statistical subject matter departments of the FSO. A central organisation unit in the FSO is also responsible for coordination activities. Permanent committees such as the Conference of Heads of the Statistical Offices, the Board of Heads of Departments on Specialised Statistics and the Meetings of Experts of the Statistical Offices carry out the coordination work between the FSO and the SOLs.

The Conference of Heads of the Statistical Offices, which comprises the heads of the SOLs and the FSO, discusses strategic topics, while the Board of Heads of Departments on Specialised Statistics and the Steering Committee on Optimised Co-operation coordinate the statistical activities at the management level. Additionally, 16 specialist committees and 32 expert groups and working parties are set up at the operative level.

The FSO does not have a clear legal mandate to coordinate common activities with the Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics (ONAs), other than the SOLs. Nevertheless, cooperation and coordination between the FSO, the SOLs and the ONAs are based on partnerships and practical arrangements, taking into account the constitutional framework of the German administration. The FSO cooperates with the ONAs by organising regular meetings and workshops on subject matter issues and new developments.

Other National Authorities participating in this peer review

Apart from the SOLs, two of the sixteen 'other' ONAs participated in the peer review:

Federal Employment Agency (BA)

The Federal Employment Agency (BA) comprises the head office in Nuremberg, 10 Regional Directorates, 156 Employment Agencies and approximately 600 branch offices. The division is organised into five regional statistics services, the information service and central units in Nuremberg. The BA compiles and publishes statistics on the labour market and social benefits for job seekers for all regions. These are compiled as departmental statistics under the technical supervision of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The BA contributes to European labour market statistics, social statistics and the national accounts.

Federal Office of Agriculture and Food (BLE)

The Federal Office of Agriculture and Food (BLE) is a federal authority and the central service provider within the scope of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). With branches in Bonn, Hamburg, Weimar and Munich, the BLE operates nationwide. Its focus is on tasks related to the implementation of measures aiming to strengthen sustainable agricultural, food, forestry and fishery industries along with rural development, and on the central provision of administrative and

information services for the scope of the BMEL and other departments. The BLE contributes to European agricultural statistics, the economic accounts for agriculture and fisheries statistics.

4. PROGRESS/ADVANCEMENT IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

Registers and administrative data

The addition of new register-related components to the business areas of the FSO represents good progress. These projects are part of the Federal Government's strategy to modernise the register landscape in Germany. The aim is to markedly reduce the burden on business, the economy and the administration by implementing the once-only principle.

Another milestone in the FSO's development is the process of moving towards a register-based census. Changing to a register-based census means that all the variables of the population census will be derived from registers and supplementary data sources in the future so that costs will be lower in the long run and the response burden on citizens will be reduced accordingly. Analyses will no longer depend on census cycles; they can be made at shorter intervals. The highest data protection standards, which can for instance be ensured by strict access limitations and state-of-the-art encryption techniques, are taken into account in this process.

Digitalisation and IT

Creating a Digital Agenda and setting up a digital department are further steps in the development process. As digitalisation has become a priority, the integration of new digital methods in official statistics is being ensured and the use of artificial intelligence (AI), for instance, in statistical production processes can be intensified. Investments in FSO's IT infrastructure enable the increased use of digital data, such as mobile network data, scanner data, satellite data or platform data, in official statistics. In this way, the relevance, timeliness and quality of official data are being further enhanced.

Quality

Introducing uniform quality standards in the FSO as a whole has been a focus over the past five years. This has included the compilation of quality reports and the integration of quality indicators into the statistical processing programmes. Progress has been permanently monitored and relevant information submitted to the Board of Heads of Departments of the official statistics network.

Various measures to document and improve data quality have been implemented, such as aligning the content of quality reports with requirements, implementing quality guidelines and using quality indicators in the 2022 population census based on quality data sheets.

Timeliness in statistics and experimental data

The process for calculating the gross domestic product (GDP) has been streamlined. GDP is now published after t+30 days. New digital data and methods have been integrated into the production of official statistics. In price statistics, such data will be included in the production of the consumer price index from 2023 onwards; in other fields this has resulted in experimental data up to now.

An important measure taken to improve timeliness and fill data gaps is the increased availability of experimental statistics (EXDAT). All relevant data are integrated and presented in a well-structured and clear manner on the FSO website. In addition, the scope of official statistics published sooner has been significantly broadened.

Dissemination and user focus

Increasing the flexibility of the FSO's publication concept has been another focus. Various measures have been taken to better serve new user needs. These include, for instance, the publication of context-related press releases, the simplification of data access through dashboards and the broader supply of information, including videos and podcasts, on social media. The existing standard publications have also been optimised by adding interactive applications instead of predefined tables.

Furthermore, the content of the Genesis-Online database has been translated into a user-friendly open data format and various application options have been added.

The newsroom set up by the FSO to inform users about topical issues promptly and in a flexible manner has helped increase the relevance of the statistics produced.

The newly-developed Dashboard Germany provides easy access to a wealth of important data related to COVID-19. The dashboard uses data from a range of different sources. Some are data from official statistics, i.e. data, which are collected and processed by the FSO and SOLs. However, Dashboard Germany also allows users to access data from other institutions, such as the Federal Employment Agency (BA), the German Airports Association (ADV), or the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)/ Credit Institution for Reconstruction.

5. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND FUTURE ORIENTATION

5.1 STRENGTHS OF THE NSI AND THE PARTICIPATING ONAs IN RELATION TO THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE

Well-harmonised system of federal statistics

Lead Länder principle (One Land Statistical Office acts as a mentor)

As a regionally decentralised statistical system must observe the principle of subsidiarity, the FSO developed a principle whereby, for statistical or horizontal topics, one Land Statistical Office (SOL) takes the lead in coordinating all activities and reporting back to the FSO. For example, the Hesse Statistical Office) coordinates and represents the positions of the SOLs on matters in relation to the European Statistical System towards the FSO, the Bavarian Statistical Office ensures the representation of the Bundesrat in the Council Working Party on Statistics, etc. The lead Länder principle ensures that federal statistics are produced according to uniform methods and duplication of efforts is avoided, and has more potential to improve output quality. (ES CoP indicator 1bis.1)

Ensuring a well-harmonised system of SOLs (input and output)

As a result of the various coordination mechanisms, the part of the German statistical system composed of the FSO and the SOLs is well harmonised, for both inputs and outputs. The harmonisation is ensured by coordinating the use of resources, using common methodology and modernising the IT infrastructure, and through investments in statistical offices. Several bodies support the work in this part of the German statistical system and have contributed to the establishment of networks such as a Working Group on the Standardisation of Processes, a Working Group on Information Technology, a Steering Committee on Optimised Cooperation (LA OPTIKO), and the Board of Heads of Departments on Specialised Statistics. As a result of lessons learned during COVID-19, some further measures were adopted to enhance coordination and harmonisation within this network. Within the FSO, a number of organisational units dealing with the coordination of relevant stakeholders have been set up. (ES CoP indicators 1bis.1, 7.1, 10.4)

Organising a coordinated release system

The release calendars of the FSO and the SOLs are well coordinated. This is essential for users as statistical information is simultaneously available at federal and Länder levels. The FSO and the SOLs collaborate closely in methodological, technical and scheduling terms. There are joint release policies for selected statistics/accounting systems/fields of work, release and marketing concepts, and a standard daily time for dissemination. For about 90% of datasets (as of 2021), there is a common Early Warning System for data delivery from the SOLs to the FSO. Publication periodicity and divergences from the announced release time, the measurement of punctuality and the evaluation of the results are discussed and analysed at different management meetings. Coordinated actions have been introduced in the German statistical system to improve timeliness, including responses to ad hoc situations (e.g. COVID-19). (ES CoP indicators 6.5, 13.2, 13.4)

The Statistical Advisory Committee (SAC)

The SAC acts pursuant to the Federal Statistics Act (BStatG), and is responsible for advising the FSO on fundamental statistical matters. Its 60 members represent the main interest groups of users, data providers and producers of statistics. Its recommendations are systemic and play a crucial role in the development of official statistics. For each area of statistics, the SAC has established specialist committees to discuss issues related to the scope, degree of detail and costs of subject matter areas. These discussions may lead to recommendations which the FSO and the SOLs consider, and their

implementation is reported on to the SAC. Furthermore, the SAC, also through its specialist committees, monitors the implementation of the official statistics programme and conducts external evaluations of statistical products. In the years to come, the SAC will focus on the infrastructure for register-based statistics/administrative data, the integrated register-based census and new digital data in official statistics. (ES CoP indicators 1bis.3, 4.4, 11.1)

Monitoring of statistical processes and identification of potential quality improvements

A platform on administrative data

The Administrative Data Information Platform (VIP) is an openly accessible database managed by the FSO. A platform holding relevant metadata on administrative data allows the FSO's statistics departments to quickly and efficiently search for administrative data sources as well as to carry out systematic suitability checks on the use of administrative data in accordance with Section 5a of the Federal Statistics Act (BStatG). The platform has been available within the network of statistical offices (the FSO and SOLs) since 2020, following the 'once-only principle'. These projects are part of the Federal Government's strategy to modernise the register landscape in Germany. (ES CoP indicators 2.2, 8.7)

A data quality sheet

The existing quality data sheets (QuiV), applied in the national statistics network, allow the monitoring of quality across all stages of the statistical production process as well as output quality and lead to the identification of potential improvements at the FSO and in the SOLs. Quality control is gradually being implemented in the various statistics, including for the 2022 population census data. Core aspects of the production processes are examined at expert meetings, and measures for improvements are discussed and defined as binding for implementation. (ES CoP indicators 4.2, 4.3)

Implementation of modern tools for statistical production and dissemination

Standardised programmes ("Verbundprogramme") in the German statistical system

Standardised software solutions to implement the methodology developed by the FSO are applied by the SOLs and lead to harmonisation within this part of the German statistical system (the FSO and SOLs), guaranteeing uniform standards and an efficient use of resources. The system of standardised programmes provides standard tools to implement procedural and methodological measures. Additionally, under the optimised procurement model one SOL creates software applications for all other SOLs. Standard tools are applicable for most GMAS (the German version of the Generic Statistics Business Process Model (GSBPM)) phases and are used at the FSO and in the SOLs. (ES CoP indicators 7.2, 10.4)

Modern communication and dissemination

The digital transformation of publications and search engine optimisation are already taking place. The FSO has been systematically backing and expanding future digital fields since 2020, and managing its resources accordingly. There is a wide variety of modern communication and dissemination channels, including various social media platforms. The objective is to reach a wide audience and increase the visibility of official statistics. Innovative tools and dissemination channels are developed and used to improve the relevance and increase the value of statistical products for users by disseminating more visually-accessible statistics and interactive formats (e.g. traffic accident atlas, hospital atlas, study pathway experimental statistics). The FSO and the SOLs also use social media: most of them currently post on Twitter, as well as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. More and more statistics are available through these channels using infographics and Instagram Stories. This positively affects the interest and perception of statistics and improves statistical literacy. (ES CoP indicators 11.1, 15.2)

Innovative Practices

Developing an interactive visual tool - Dashboard Germany

Developing interactive tools is extremely valuable for users. The development of 'Dashboard Germany' can be seen as a quick response to user needs for a user-friendly interactive visual tool related to relevant statistical topics. It uses various data sources to present timely statistics on the economy, finance and health, including COVID-19, and mobility issues. Dashboard Germany also allows users to access data from other institutions, such as the Federal Employment Agency (BA), the German Airports Association (ADV), or the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)/ Credit Institution for Reconstruction.

Positioning for a possible role as a data steward in the national data ecosystem

The FSO has the ambition to act as a data steward to promote quality standards of official statistics in the administrative environment of Germany. The development of a data stewardship approach, which has already begun with Dashboard Germany, will be continued. The Federal Government is considering the creation of a data transparency centre to hold the metadata of all publicly held and selected privately held data. The operation of the data transparency centre is organisationally attached to the FSO. This will give the FSO a key role in data stewardship and strengthen its position in the national data ecosystem.

Innovation and experimental statistics

The FSO has a solid commitment to modernisation and innovation. There is a high awareness of the possible potential of new data sources and new innovative methods. The FSO and SOLs have cross-sectional units that concentrate resources and investments in IT and are responsible for identifying and implementing innovation and modernisation measures.

The results of innovative projects are regularly published on a webpage for experimental statistics (EXDAT). The EXDAT statistics are predominantly designed to fill statistical information gaps and improve timeliness. New statistics are available in the EXDAT: an early indicator of turnover development based on monthly advance turnover tax returns, scanner data for analysing buying behaviour, mobility indicators, truck toll mileage index (updated daily during COVID-19 times; it is closely correlated with industrial production in the country and provides early indications of short-term economic trends), mortality data, etc. In addition, the FSO promotes and supports activities to integrate innovation and experimental statistics at the ESS level.

5.2 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Enhancing cooperation and coordination

The German statistical system is highly decentralised and disaggregated. The FSO is at the centre of the system, and works with a wide range of Other National Authorities¹ (ONAs). There are two 'types' of ONAs, broadly speaking:

- the 14 (16 until recently, when four were combined into two) Statistical Offices of the Länder (SOLs), which are responsible for data collection and dissemination in their own geographical areas, with several having national responsibilities; and
- national bodies with specific subject matter responsibilities, including the German Central Bank (Deutsche Bundesbank), the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and thirteen other agencies and institutes. In this report these 16 ONAs are referred to, for convenience, as 'other' ONAs.

1

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/13019146/13574152/List_other_national_statistical_authorities_12_10.pdf/44c18bbe-1fc9-b63b-09e8-6ec397505381?t=1634232161055 (see page 3)

A number of coordination and cooperation aspects are stipulated in the Federal Statistics Act. Section 3 (Tasks of the Federal Statistical Office) includes the following elements:

- to coordinate the uniform and timely creation of federal statistics by the states and to ensure the quality of the results of these statistics in cooperation with the SOLs,
- to compile federal statistics if and to the extent that this is stipulated in this or any other federal law, or if the states involved agree,
- to carry out special processing if the SOLs do not carry out this processing themselves,
- to organise the factual, temporal and spatial coordination of federal statistics and the statistics mentioned in Section 3(9) of the Federal Statistics Act,
- to manage the Federal Government's statistical information system and to participate in the coordination of special databases of other federal agencies; the same applies if the Federal Government is involved in corresponding projects outside the federal administration.

In terms of governance, the main coordination mechanisms are the Conference of Heads of the Statistical Offices (ALK), the Steering Committee on Optimised Cooperation (LA OPTIKO), the Board of Heads of Departments on Specialised Statistics (ALG FS), and working groups on topics including statistical quality and IT developments. These mechanisms allow for information sharing and the explanation of new methodologies developed by the FSO, as well as coordinating positions in relation to (for example) new European Statistics regulations.

During the peer review, the coordination role of the FSO appeared well established as far as the SOLs are concerned. However, this coordination role should be reinforced regarding ONAs other than the SOLs ('other' ONAs). In particular, although there are a number of documented approaches to quality management – quality sheets, a quality manual, a quality handbook – the peer review team felt that these should be coordinated, in the form of a set of National Guidelines.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R1. The Federal Statistical Office should formalise and publish National Guidelines to ensure quality in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics, applicable to all Other National Authorities. The implementation of these National Guidelines should be monitored and reviewed. The responsibility for ensuring compliance with the guidelines rests solely with the heads of the Other National Authorities. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.2)

The SOLs and the 'other' ONAs play very different roles in the German statistical system, have different perspectives and face different challenges. At the same time, they are all required to follow the standards of the ES CoP, and the FSO needs to ensure that best practices in one part of the statistical system are identified and shared across the system, as appropriate. This task is complicated by the decentralised and disaggregated structure of the German statistical system, and the legitimate but complex challenges placed by the Statistical Advisory Committee, such as making consistent use of digitalisation, the development of more intensive work and an improved research infrastructure to enhance statistical and research analysis. The different parts of the German statistical system would be more likely to learn about how others engage with the European Statistics Code of Practice and other challenges if the FSO developed a mechanism to facilitate such learning.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R2. The Federal Statistical Office should consider establishing an overarching coordination mechanism to bring together the Statistical Offices of the Länder and 'other' Other National Authorities as a way of sharing experiences and insights about implementing the principles of the ES CoP to strengthen the German statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)

The federal/state structure of German institutions is well established and, in official statistics, there are mechanisms to help it work effectively. For example, four of the smaller SOLs merged into two, partly because they lacked sufficient resource to implement new FSO methodologies and in any case already shared their IT systems. And under the lead Länder initiative established 15 years ago, the SOLs assume technical, methodological or organisational responsibility for a particular statistical issue or area. The table below sets out the lead Länder as of January 2022:

Lead topic	Land Statistical Office
Population / Elections	Bavarian Statistical Office
Households / Labour market	Hesse Statistical Office
Health / Social issues	Free State of Saxony Statistical Office
Justice	Statistical Office of Lower Saxony
Manufacturing / Energy / Building activity	Information and Technology North Rhine-Westphalia
Construction	Baden-Württemberg Statistical Office
Trade / Services	Saarland Statistical Office
Accommodation and food services / Tourism	Bavarian Statistical Office
Transport	Saxony-Anhalt Statistical Office
Environment	Baden-Württemberg Statistical Office
Agriculture	Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (Statistical Office North)
Education / Culture	Hesse Statistical Office
Prices	Bavarian Statistical Office
Earnings / Labour costs	Thuringia Statistical Office
Public finances / Public service personnel	Office for Statistics Berlin-Brandenburg
Tax statistics	Rhineland Palatinate Statistical Office

Nevertheless, there is scope to improve matters further, for example to increase the extent of specialisation and economies of scale. Modern data collection and ICT methods reduce the need for a statistical team to have in-depth 'local' knowledge of a geographical area, while the internet reduces the need to publish statistical information (for example, about a particular Land) on the websites of both the SOL and the FSO, because information about a particular Land can be readily linked to from the FSO's website. This also reduces duplication and the risk of different data appearing on different websites.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R3. The Federal Statistical Office should consider further streamlining the German statistical system, building on the success of the lead Länder initiative and reviewing lessons learned from the integration of four Statistical Offices of the Länder into two. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 10.2 and 10.4)

The FSO's coordination of the SOLs is anchored in law. For 'other' ONAs the FSO has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to guarantee that European Statistics are developed, produced and disseminated according to the principles of the ES CoP. In effect, the MoUs regulate the relationship with the FSO, setting out the relevant competences and principles and, for example, the details of data flows to the FSO.

The MoUs were signed before the new principle 1bis of the ES CoP on coordination and cooperation was developed. MoUs do not follow a standard structure, and the practice and periodicity of revising

the MoUs is currently handled differently by the ONAs. There are no regular and common processes for review.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R4. The Federal Statistical Office should consider strengthening the role of the Memoranda of Understanding by:

- a) Making clear which statistical datasets are provided to Eurostat and ensuring that a Memorandum of Understanding is signed with each Other National Authority. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)
- b) Reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding template more regularly, taking Principle 1bis into account. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)
- c) Holding regular discussions on compliance with the ES CoP (which should be part of the Memoranda of Understanding). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)
- d) Including more detailed compliance requirements (national quality guidelines or other relevant handbooks). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.2)
- e) Completing the publication of all Memoranda of Understanding (on the website of the Federal Statistical office and the Other National Authorities). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)
- f) Committing to explore the potential of new data sources. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 2.4)

5.2.2 Enhancing the legal and institutional environment

As stipulated in the ES CoP, institutional and organisational factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of a statistical authority developing, producing and disseminating European statistics. In this context, the professional independence of statistical authorities from other policy, regulatory or administrative departments and bodies ensures the credibility of European statistics. A key aspect relates to the authority of the heads of a National Statistical Institute, starting with the transparency of their recruitment process and the reasons for which their mandate can be terminated. According to the ES CoP, the latter should be specified in the legal framework. The procedures for appointment and dismissal of the President of the FSO follow the rules in place for civil servants at the federal level. More specifically, the Federal Government makes proposals to the Federal President for the President of the FSO. This proposal can be made either following the outcome of an open competition or by simple nomination. The appointment of the last three Presidents of the FSO followed the simple nomination procedure.

The peer review did not assess the professional competence of the President of the FSO, as this was not part of its mandate. However, and without questioning the professional competence of the President of the FSO, the process of simple nomination under the current procedure does not meet the expected standard of transparency. In addition, the reasons for the dismissal of the President of the FSO are neither publicly stated, nor specified in the legal framework, as stipulated in the ES CoP. Therefore, the principle of professional independence should be operationalised by improving the transparency of future appointments of the President of the FSO and clarifying the potential reasons for his/her dismissal.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R5. The Ministry of the Interior, on behalf of the Federal Government, should take steps to improve the transparency of future appointments of the President of the Federal Statistical Office, for example by advertising the post and the necessary qualifications and knowledge openly, and clarifying the potential reasons for his/her dismissal. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.8)

For statistical authorities, the preparation, publication and reporting on their statistical work programme contributes to their credibility by reinforcing their independence and accountability; a statistical work programme also provides useful information to stakeholders. Currently, the FSO's programme of work is largely made up of the surveys conducted on the basis of specific survey legislation. This makes it hard for users to appreciate the range of work that the German statistical system is responsible for, or how effective it is in fulfilling its mission.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R6. The Federal Statistical Office should improve the transparency of the operation of the German statistical system by publishing an accessible narrative work plan and introducing an appropriate approach to publicly reporting on progress against the plan. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.5)

Data sources used for producing official statistics have gradually evolved over time, from using traditional surveys to accessing administrative data and, more recently, using other data sources such as privately held data. A mix of those different sources is also used. In order to reduce the burden on respondents, enhance the quality of official statistics and explore potential new statistical products, the statistical system is increasingly reliant on administrative data held by a range of ministries and agencies. The usability of administrative data for producing official statistics depends on the way they are designed, generated and made accessible. Official statisticians can also provide their expertise when shaping administrative data-related processes. Currently, however, statisticians are frequently unable to influence decisions about the design, development and discontinuation of administrative data.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R7. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to ensure the involvement of the statistical authorities from the beginning in the design, development and discontinuation of administrative records to make them more suitable for statistical purposes. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 2.2 and 9.4)

According to the ES CoP, the independence of National Statistical Institutes should be specified in law and assured for other statistical authorities. The professional independence of the FSO and the SOLs is enshrined in the relevant legal provisions. The situation regarding 'other' ONAs is different. Recently, the legal basis of a number of 'other' ONAs was reviewed and clarified regarding provisions relating to professional independence. It is not fully evident however that this holds for all 'other' ONAs. Another important aspect is that the FSO does not have a clear legal mandate to coordinate common activities with the 'other' ONAs.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R8. The Federal Statistical Office should:

- a) scrutinise the legal basis for all Other National Authorities (apart from the Statistical Offices of the Länder) and, if any problematic situation regarding professional independence is observed, a revision of the legal provision should be considered. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.1)
- b) take steps to ensure that the coordination role for Other National Authorities apart from the Statistical Offices of the Länder is clearly articulated in law. (Compliance-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)

By maintaining a high-quality business register, the FSO can make use of a very appropriate sampling frame for its business surveys. However, for the sampling frames of social surveys and other household surveys, the FSO does not have access to the central population register available in Germany. For the

latter surveys, sampling frames are based on the last census (2011 round) and the annual update of new buildings in the construction activity statistics. This prevents the FSO from exploiting the benefits of access to these administrative data. When sampling frames are not up-to-date, this constitutes a potential source for bias when extrapolating survey results to entire populations.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R9. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to achieve access to the national population register. This should include creating a legal basis for sustainable access to the register as a sampling frame and as a data source for demographic statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.2 and 7.3)

The current legal situation empowers the FSO to produce a high volume of statistics and to determine the methods, which have to be applied by the SOLs. The FSO is perceived by key users as a service-oriented organisation deploying major efforts to satisfy their needs. However, the fact that there can be no statistics without a detailed legal basis, and the strict rules regarding data linking, limit the German statistical system's ability to react to emerging data needs in a flexible manner, which is of special importance in crisis situations (such as COVID-19).

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R10. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to introduce legal changes, which allow the creation of tailor-made data products based on linked data and ad-hoc surveys to be conducted quickly to produce indicators and figures related to suddenly emerging topics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 9.6 and 11.1)

Statistical surveys are defined in considerable detail in legislation, which limits their flexibility. Some surveys are based on relatively light touch legislation ("Ordinance"), which can be agreed and implemented more quickly than fully-fledged statistical legislation – providing the survey costs less than 2 million Euro, and that the duration of the survey is a maximum of three years. This legal framework in place may prevent the FSO from considering and anticipating users' emerging needs and priorities in an agile manner.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R11. The Federal Statistical Office should enhance the range of surveys which are based on Ordinances and, as part of this, take steps to enable such surveys to be conducted for more than the current time and cost limits. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 11.1)

Within the network of the FSO and the SOLs, the principle of "lead Länder" applies, whereby the statistical offices of individual Länder are given technical, methodological and organisational responsibility (the lead) for various statistical clusters, areas and sub-processes. This specialisation makes the work of the SOLs even more effective. It seems however that – in this set-up – the SOLs are mainly responsible for the production of statistics relating to their own territory.

In preparing the opinions of the Bundesrat, the SOLs coordinate their positions on regulations in a joint opinion-forming process, relying on the expertise available in individual SOLs on specific topics. However, the role of SOLs in drafting national and Länder statistical legislation does not seem to be specifically defined.

The SOLs are initiating a project to re-evaluate the ways in which they work together, including how they cooperate and how they might take forward the lead Länder initiative. This project will provide a unique opportunity to systematically revisit the assignment of the leading roles between the Statistical Offices of the Länder, with a view to further enhancing, where possible, the effectiveness and efficiency of the German statistical system as a whole. In addition, during the peer review visit, it

seemed that the role of the Statistical Offices of the Länder in the preparatory process for national and Länder statistical legislation was not specifically defined.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R12. As part of this project, the Statistical Offices of the Länder might usefully consider:

- a) extending the scope of the lead Länder concept to include the collection of data on particular topics across the whole of Germany. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 10.4)
- b) whether there would be efficiencies in centralising the production and publication of statistics and the dissemination of data. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 10.4)
- c) clarifying the role of the Statistical Offices of the Länder in relation to drafting national and Länder statistical laws. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1.1)

5.2.3 Enhancing capacity and capability to increase resilience

Each statistical survey requires legislation, and each piece of statistical legislation includes an estimate of the budget (specifically, staffing) required. For project work, the resourcing/staffing position is more complicated. Resources allocated by the Ministry of the Interior can be used to fund permanent/established posts, but other ministries' resources can only be used for fixed-term contract staff to work on projects relevant for those ministries. While the provision of additional resources for projects focusing on methodological developments, for example, is laudable, the constraint in the use of these resources can cause problems in managing modernisation projects to improve production work, including for European statistics, and it reduces the resilience of the statistical system and its retention of expertise.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R13. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to ensure that resources allocated by all Ministries for statistical work can be used to fund permanent staff. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

Notwithstanding a degree of inflexibility imposed by the statistical legislation budget-setting process, the overall level of resources required to meet European statistics requirements appears to be appropriate. However:

- While the FSO can recruit and retain subject matter specialists and data scientists satisfactorily, the situation is more difficult as regards IT specialists, for whom recruitment is a challenge given better pay rates elsewhere. There appears to be a clash between the 'standard pay rate' approach in the German civil service and the realities of the demand for IT staff in the German economy;
- There are strong ambitions for innovative programmes by the authorities belonging to the German statistical system. Such innovations, for example related to digitalisation and the production of accessible short-term indicators (such as in the context of Dashboard Germany), might improve data quality and potentially reduce statistical production costs in the future. But it is not clear whether the necessary financial and technical resources are granted in full. In a similar vein, there are increasing demands on Research Data Centres, including to extend their remit, and to meet such demands additional resourcing will be required.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R14. The Ministry of the Interior, on behalf of the Federal Government, should seek to ensure that all statistical authorities (the Federal Statistical Office, Statistical Offices of the Länder and the

‘other’ Other National Authorities) are allocated the necessary human and financial resources to be able to take full advantage of possible improvements driven by the digital revolution and to realise quality improvements and efficiency gains by implementing corresponding modernisation projects. Additionally, the necessary resources should be available for research projects. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1 and 10.2)

The FSO has considerable expertise in all relevant methodological topics, including sampling, editing and imputation, confidentiality and seasonal adjustment. However, the historical evolution of the FSO means that the knowledge is spread over several departments. For example, two units are responsible for sampling households and sampling businesses, and another two for the analysis and publication of data from these types of survey. Another unit is responsible for seasonal adjustment, while editing and imputation are the responsibility of a unit called ‘Artificial Intelligence’. It appears that methodologists work effectively with the German Central Bank and with the SOLs (in order to improve the implementation of the FSO’s methodologies) as well as with research institutes. However, it would be beneficial for stimulating innovation and sharing best practice, if the FSO’s methodologists would join forces and share knowledge as far as possible, e.g. through formalised meetings and a coordinating methodology committee.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R15. The Federal Statistical Office should consider measures that would allow a regular exchange of knowledge between the different methodological units (for instance by organising regular meetings or by establishing an overarching methodological committee). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 7.2 and 1.4)

5.2.4 Improving quality systems and processes

The Federal Statistical Office has designed quality mechanisms in the context of a decentralised statistical system. However, no quality policy for the German statistical system has been formalised and made available to the public. The policy should reflect the existing quality management system, possibly drawing on the common quality framework of the ESS as inspiration. The policy should cover the whole German statistical system and be made available to the public.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R16. Considering the quality building blocks already in place, as well as possible enhancements, the Federal Statistical Office should define and draft, in cooperation with the Other National Authorities (i.e. both the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the ‘other’ Other National Authorities), a quality policy that would summarise the elements already in place in a concise and integrated way. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 4.1)

A key aspect of the ES CoP principle 4, Commitment to Quality, consists of a regular and thorough review of key statistical outputs, using external experts where appropriate. Quality is monitored in the FSO on a continuous basis by the staff in charge of production. However, there is no mechanism in place for a regular review of key statistical outputs, using external experts where appropriate.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R17. The Federal Statistical Office should develop a formalised quality review mechanism, articulating its objectives, scope and approach. Such a quality review mechanism should be reflected in the (new) quality policy and national guidelines and be applicable across the German Statistical System as a whole, including Other National Authorities. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2, 4.3 and 4.4)

The FSO has developed an elaborate system of Quality Data Sheets to monitor the various process and product quality indicators and targets. However, the interactions between the quality data sheets and the European system of metadata and quality reporting (Single Integrated Metadata Structure) are not well established.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R18. The Federal Statistical Office should reflect on the Quality Data Sheets system and align it with the Single Integrated Metadata Structure standard to facilitate quality reporting at European and national levels, for the whole German statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 4.3)

5.2.5 Improving dissemination of statistical releases and data

The FSO's publication policy has fundamentally changed in the last few years. As part of a transformation process, the FSO has set up infrastructure in new, future-oriented digital domains and a comprehensive media monitoring system to measure the range and control performance. At the same time, print and PDF publications such as the Statistical Yearbook have been discontinued.

Dissemination is also a main issue within the FSO's modernisation agenda and there are several concrete measures underway or already realised, such as:

- setting up a newsroom and publication of event-related press releases,
- expanding communication via Social Media, especially Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn,
- improving data literacy via webinars,
- disseminating data via online press conferences,
- increasing audio-visual communication with videos and podcasts,
- launching special topic pages on the website.

With regard to the compliance of dissemination activities with the principles related to the institutional environment, the principles of neutrality, objectivity and professional independence of federal statistics are laid down in Section 1(2) of the Federal Statistics Act (BStatG) and, in conjunction with Section 18 BStatG, also apply to European statistics. Federal and European statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in accordance with the stated principles by the FSO, in consultation with the SOLs.

There are various guidelines and policies in place to ensure compliance with important dissemination principles, including:

- Guidelines and templates for preparing releases,
- Guidelines for press releases,
- Revision policy.

Currently, the FSO provides privileged pre-release access to specific users. All users enjoying pre-release access are listed on the FSO's website along with the statistical releases concerned. However, there is no clear statement on the justification for pre-releases, the number of pre-releases is high and pre-release access is allowed from 2 pm the day before the following day's 8 am release, which is a wide time gap. Taking into account the fact that statistical authorities have to ensure the production and dissemination of European statistics in an objective and transparent way, and that all users should be treated equitably in order to be fully compliant with the ES CoP, the peer review team sees a need to increase transparency in the justification of privileged pre-release access and to consider a possible reduction in the number and timing of instances.

To comply with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R19. The Federal Statistical Office should ensure that the privileged pre-release access to outside users is justified more clearly, and is more limited in time and number. (Compliance-related: ES CoP, Indicator 6.7)

Collaboration with the scientific community has a long tradition in the German statistical system. For important methodological questions regarding key projects, scientists of high reputation are engaged to advise the FSO. There is also collaboration with universities in various projects which are mainly fostered by the "Institute for Research and Development", being part of the FSO.

The provision of microdata for scientific purposes is stated in the Federal Statistics Act Section 3(3) as follows:

(3) it shall provide individual data for scientific purposes in accordance with this Act or any other legal provision; the responsibility of the Länder also to perform this duty shall remain unaffected.

Consequently, Research Data Centres were established in order to provide the scientific community with microdata. There are certain procedures and conditions for granting access to researchers.

Representatives of the scientific community explained during the peer review visit that the data that can be obtained from the centres are highly valuable. However, there is criticism about the limitations of linking data due to legal restrictions. The procedures for getting access are perceived as cumbersome and slow, and even experienced users with long track records of safe use of data in the centres have to start from scratch when applying for a new project. Additionally, users outside the scientific community would appreciate a widened access to microdata.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R20. Considering the legal framework in place, the Federal Statistical Office should investigate the possibilities for expanding the use of the Research Data Centres, including allowing more convenient (suitable) remote access to microdata and for reducing the administrative burden to access microdata by simplifying the procedures for experienced users. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 15.2 and 15.4)

5.2.6 Making the most of the evolving data landscape

Currently, the production of official statistics in the German statistical system is mainly based on the use of administrative data and surveys.

There is a high awareness in the FSO regarding the possibilities of the use of new data sources in an evolving data landscape. The expansion of the range of statistics to include non-official data (new digital data, data from enterprises) is seen as an opportunity to make official statistics more relevant. There is a constructive and fruitful climate in the cooperation between the FSO and SOLs and the data provided by the private sector. There are various initiatives to encourage the use of new data sources:

- establishing new partnerships with the private sector (for example, in the areas of mobile network data and loan agreements),
- creating a motivating and encouraging environment for the subject matter departments to investigate new methods and explore new data sources,
- implementing a website for experimental statistics.

The ambitions in the use of new data sources are embedded in a Digital Agenda, which constitutes a modernisation programme to ensure the optimal integration of new digital methods in official statistics and an intensive use of new data sources and innovative methods in statistical production processes. Within the agenda several objectives play a central role, such as:

- Improving data exchange within public administration and with private sector actors
- more effective integration of administrative data
- opening up new data sources and improving efficiency and data quality

- implementing uniform statistical, organisational and technical standards for data management
- rapid use of state-of-the-art analysis methods, data linking and machine learning processes
- meeting growing requirements in terms of data protection and IT security
- web-based applications with a high degree of visualisation and individualisation.

Besides the use of new data sources on the input side, the FSO also sees an opportunity to strive for responsibility in the national data ecosystem and to take an important and proactive role in developing the national data strategy. As part of the PRISMA (process-supporting integrated statistics data management platform) project, the FSO will develop a data management system based on an integrated approach that follows the rules and standards of binding data governance. The ambition to create a modernised register landscape is one example of how such standards can contribute not only to the quality improvement of statistical products but also support the simplification and efficiency of processes in public administrations. However, while acknowledging the efforts of the FSO in this direction, the peer review team identified a non-negligible risk that the independence of the FSO may not be fully respected. Therefore, the new tasks - including acting as a national data steward, supporting the creation of a unified business identifier, assessing the quality of the registers and avoiding duplications of data collection by supporting the 'once-only principle' as much as possible - should be reflected in national legislation.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R21. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to ensure that the independence of the development, production and dissemination of official statistics is maintained by separating new (data steward) tasks from traditional statistical obligations, and that this is clearly reflected in law. The Ministry of the Interior should ensure that the Federal Statistical Office is provided with sufficient additional resources to be able to fulfil the additional tasks appropriately. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1.1 and 3.1)

The peer review team also sees a link between the modernisation initiatives and the potential positive effects for the accessibility of statistical results. Increased knowledge and capacities could be used to stimulate improvements of this important principle of the ES CoP.

In light of the foregoing, the development of a fully-fledged metadata management system serves the purpose of providing users with adequate metadata and also constitutes a necessary condition for acting as a national data steward. While the FSO currently has a strong focus on developing a general data management system, the part related to a centralised metadata system is not of the highest priority.

Among the various dissemination channels, the GENESIS-online database is an important resource for key users. It covers a wide variety of statistical topics and provides users with possibilities to specify data presentations according to their needs. During the peer review visit, engaged users confirmed the relevance of the database when using statistical data from the FSO. However, relatively non-expert users find it hard to work with.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R22. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to improve the accessibility to statistical results, including the GENESIS database and corresponding metadata. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.4, 15.2 and 15.5)

The FSO is currently involved in several projects to support the objective of being prepared for challenges that arise in an evolving environment. These projects include the increased use of administrative data and sustainable access to new (privately held) data, the modernisation of the IT infrastructure accompanied by actively hiring qualified staff, as well as the increased promotion of modern dissemination channels and the dissemination of data in new formats (such as machine-readable open data files). During the visit the peer review team experienced high consent and interest from all external stakeholders and a willingness to be proactively involved in all the activities.

To improve beyond compliance with the ES CoP, the peer review team recommends:

R23. The Federal Statistical Office should continue engaging with relevant stakeholders on new and innovative projects to increase innovation across the German statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.3)

5.3 VIEWS OF THE NSI, AS THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF THE NSS AND THE PEER REVIEW, ON THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS WHERE THEY DIVERGE FROM PEER REVIEW EXPERTS' ASSESSMENT

R5. The Ministry of the Interior, on behalf of the Federal Government, should take steps to improve the transparency of future appointments of the President of the Federal Statistical Office, for example by advertising the post and the necessary qualifications and knowledge openly, and clarifying the potential reasons for his/her dismissal. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.8)

The procedures for appointing the President of the Federal Statistical Office, the Heads of the Statistical Offices of the Länder and the statistical heads of Other National Authorities are based on the relevant provisions in terms of law relating to public officials, of collective bargaining law and of labour law at the federal and Land levels. In this context, the provisions of Article 5a of the revised version of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 are met and implemented within the scope of subsidiarity.

R7. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to ensure the involvement of the statistical authorities from the beginning in the design, development and discontinuation of administrative records to make them more suitable for statistical purposes. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 2.2 and 9.4)

The Administrative Data Information Platform (VIP) enables the FSO to get an overview of the metadata structures of data-holding administrative agencies and to approach the latter in order to achieve better usability of the data for statistics. The administrative authorities which were requested to provide data for the purpose of establishing the information platform for administrative data are legally required to inform the FSO of changes in the metadata of the administrative data they hold. In addition, the Federal Ministry of the Interior makes all draft legislation of statistical relevance available to the FSO so that the FSO can get involved early on in the establishment of administrative registers. In this respect, the recommendation has basically been implemented. When the next amendments are made to the Federal Statistics Act (BStatG), however, it will be necessary to consider whether improvements in this area are required and legally possible.

R8. The Federal Statistical Office should:

- a) scrutinise the legal basis for all Other National Authorities (apart from the Statistical Offices of the Länder) and, if any problematic situation regarding professional independence is observed, a revision of the legal provision should be considered. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.1)**

The respective Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) lays down that the cooperation is based on compliance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the European Statistics Code of Practice, and with international and European recommendations on quality assurance in official statistics.

R9. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to achieve access to the national population register. This should include creating a legal basis for sustainable access to the register as a sampling frame and as a data source for demographic statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.2 and 7.3)

In the medium term, the register-based census is intended to provide a robust survey population for household surveys. Therefore, there are no plans to create additional legal rules for the use of existing population registers.

R10. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to introduce legal changes, which allow the creation of tailor-made data products based on linked data and ad-hoc surveys to be conducted quickly to produce indicators and figures related to suddenly emerging topics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 9.6 and 11.1)

In accordance with the Federal Statistics Act (Section 13 a), data may be linked for a considerable number of statistics. Furthermore, Section 7 of BStatG allows ad hoc surveys to be carried out to cover short-term data requirements. Therefore, in our opinion, there is no immediate need for action. When the next amendments are made to the Federal Statistics Act, however, it will be necessary to consider whether improvements in this area are required and legally possible.

R12. As part of this project the Statistical Offices of the Länder might usefully consider:

- a) extending the scope of the lead Länder concept to include the collection of data on particular topics across the whole of Germany. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 10.4)
- b) whether there would be efficiencies in centralising the production and publication of statistics and the dissemination of data. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 10.4)
- c) clarifying the role of the Statistical Offices of the Länder in relation to drafting national and Länder statistical laws. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1.1)

Recommendations 12a) and 12b) will be taken into account in the implementation of Recommendation 3 since these aspects are also part of the evaluation, unless they have already been implemented (e.g. central production and data management). With regard to Recommendation 12c), it should be noted that the role of the Länder in the national legislative process is clearly defined.

R13. The Federal Statistical Office should take steps to ensure that resources allocated by all Ministries for statistical work can be used to fund permanent staff. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

The FSO is required to comply with the provisions of the Budget Act which is adopted by the German Bundestag. The non-personnel section of the budget laid down in the Budget Act specifies the purposes for which the FSO may use its spending authorisations, and the personnel section sets out the number of permanent posts at the FSO. Consequently, the FSO cannot arbitrarily decide on the use of its funds or increase the number of its permanent staff.

R14. The Ministry of the Interior, on behalf of the Federal Government, should ensure that all statistical authorities (the Federal Statistical Office, Statistical Offices of the Länder and the 'other' Other National Authorities) are allocated the necessary human and financial resources to be able to take full advantage of possible improvements driven by the digital revolution and to realise quality improvements and efficiency gains by implementing corresponding modernisation projects. Additionally, the necessary resources should be available for research projects. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1 and, 10.2)

The FSO is working on numerous projects concerning digitalisation, quality improvements and more efficient statistical processes. The Federal Ministry of the Interior supports these projects and seeks to ensure that the required funding is made available. However, decisions on the budget and,

consequently, on the resources available to the FSO and other authorities are taken by Parliament, not by the Federal Ministry of the Interior. Furthermore, neither the Federal Government nor the Federal Ministry of the Interior have any influence on the resources available to the Statistical Offices of the Länder.

ANNEX A – AGENDA OF THE VISIT

Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 1 - Monday, 13th December 2021		
09.00-09.45	Preparatory meeting with the national coordination desk and, possibly, other national participants in the visit	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - German Peer Review Coordinator (NPRC) & Head of Quality - National Coordination Desk.
09.45-10.00	Welcome and introduction to the programme, adopting the agenda and organisational matters	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - President, - Vice-President, - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality. <u>Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community:</u> - Head of Section – Statistics <u>Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik (Bavarian State Office for Statistics):</u> - President, <u>Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg (State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg):</u> - President, <u>Statistisches Amt für Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein (Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein):</u> - Director.
10.00-11.00	Presentation of the National Statistical System	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - President - Vice-President; - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality - Head of Section - National Coordination; - Head of Section - European and International Coordination

		<u>Bavarian State Office for Statistics:</u> - President, <u>State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg:</u> - President, <u>Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:</u> - Director.
11.00-11.15	Coffee break	
11.15-12.45	Coordination and cooperation (ES CoP principle 1bis)	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality.
12.45-13.45	Lunch	
13.45-15.15	Professional independence and the Law on Official Statistics and related legislation (ES CoP principles 1, 2, 5 and 6)	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Division - Legal Affairs, Compliance - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality - Head of Division - External Communication - Officer - Statistical Law
15.15-15.30	Coffee break	
15.30-17.00	Programming, planning and resources (ES CoP principles 1, 3, 9 and 10)	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Vice-President - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality <u>Bavarian State Office for Statistics:</u> - President, <u>State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg:</u> - President, <u>Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:</u> - Director.

17.00-18.00	Peer review expert team discussion	
Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 2-Tuesday, 14th December 2021		
09.00-10.15	Quality (organisational structure, tools, monitoring) (ES CoP principles 4 and 11 to 15)	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, <u>Bavarian State Office for Statistics:</u> - Head of Quality; <u>Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:</u> - <u>Head of Quality.</u>
10.30-12.00	Dissemination and confidentiality (ES CoP principles 5, 6 and 15)	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Vice-President, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Division - Institute for Research and Development in Federal Statistics, Research Data Centre, - Head of Division - External Communication, - Head of Section - Research Data Centre, Methods of Data Analysis, - Head of Section - Statistical Confidentiality, - Head of Section - Communication Strategy, Social Media and Corporate Communication, - Data Protection Commissioner, - Officer - Statistical Law. <u>Bavarian State Office for Statistics:</u> - President, <u>State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg:</u> - President, <u>Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:</u> - Director.

12.00-13.00	Lunch	
13.00-14.45	Methodology, data collection, data processing and administrative data (ES CoP principles 2, 7 and 8)	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - Head of Department - Businesses, Earning, Transport, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - Fundamental Questions of Better Regulation, - Head of Division - Register Census.
14.45-15.45	Progress and plans for the future	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - President, - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Division - Digital Management, IT-Coordination, - Head of Division - Register Census <u>Bavarian State Office for Statistics:</u> - President, <u>State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg:</u> - President, <u>Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:</u> - Director.
15.45-16.00	Coffee break	
16.00-17.00	Meeting with junior staff <u>only</u> (staff with 2-5 years' experience in the NSI)	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Internal Services, Facilities Management, - Programme of Federal Statistics, - Household Consumption Expenditure, - System of Business Statistics, - Population Register,

		- Foreign Trade - Quality, Disseminations, - Finance of Public Services, - Service Centre for Equivalent Living Conditions in Germany.
17.00-18.00	Peer review expert team discussion	
Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 3 - Wednesday, 15th December 2021		
09.00-10.30	Meeting with other national authorities: SOLs (ONA) producing European statistics	<u>Peer Review Team</u> <u>All</u> <u>Bavarian State Office for Statistics:</u> - President, <u>State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg:</u> - President, <u>Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:</u> - Director. <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - President, - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - European and International Coordination.
10.30-10.45	Coffee break	
10.45-11.45	Continuation: Meeting with other national authorities: SOLs	<u>Peer Review Team</u> <u>All</u> <u>Bavarian State Office for Statistics:</u> - President, <u>State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg:</u> - President, <u>Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:</u> - Director. <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication,

		- German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - European and International Coordination.
11.45-12.45	Lunch	
12.45-13.45	Meeting with one other national authority (ONA) producing European statistics: Federal Office of Agriculture and Food	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Office of Agriculture and Food:</u> - Head of Division - Federal Information Service for Agriculture, - Member of Section - Agricultural Statistics, - Member of Section - Agricultural Statistics, - Member of Section - Agricultural Statistics. <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - European and International Coordination.
13.45-15.15	Meeting with other national authorities (ONA) producing European statistics: Federal Employment Agency;	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Employment Agency:</u> - Head of Division – Statistics, - Deputy Head of Division – Statistics, <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - European and International Coordination.
15.15-15.30	Coffee break	
15.30-16.45	Meeting with ESGAB-like body: Statistical Advisory Committee	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Statistical Advisory Committee:</u> - Chairman, - Deputy-Chairman

		<u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - National Coordination.
16.45-17.45	Peer review expert team discussion	
Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 4 - Thursday, 16th December 202		
09.00-10.30	Meeting with main data providers	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Data providers:</u> - Officer - Federation of German Employers' Association, - Head of Department - German Association of Energy and Water Industries, - Head of Section - German Federation of Skilled Crafts, - Officer - Federal Office for Freight Transport, <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Businesses, Earning, Transport - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality.
10.30-10.45	Coffee break	
10.45-11.45	Meeting with main users – business associations and federations and trade unions, as well as representatives of a committee of users	<u>Peer Review Team</u> <u>All</u> <u>Main users:</u> - Officer - Federation of German Employers' Association, - Head of Department - German Association of Energy and Water Industries, - Head of Section - German Federation of Skilled Crafts, - Head of Section - German Trade Union Association. <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u>

		- Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - Head of Department - Businesses, Earning, Transport, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - National Coordination.
11.45-12.45	Meeting with providers of new data sources	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Providers of new data sources:</u> - Officer - Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy, - Co-Founder - Teralytics AG, <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Division - Institute for Research and Development in Federal Statistics, Research Data Centre, - Head of Division - Short-term Economic Activity.
12.45-3.45	Lunch	
13.45-15.00	Meeting with main users – Ministries and other public / private institutions (including the National Central Bank as a user)	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Ministries and other public/private institutions:</u> - Head of Section - Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, - Head of Division - Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, - Deputy Director General Statistics - Deutsche Bundesbank (NCB), <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - National Coordination, - Head of Section - European and International Coordination,

15.00-15.45	Meeting with main users – Media	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Media:</u> - Data Journalist - Stuttgarter Zeitung, - Economics Journalist – Redaktions Netzwerk Deutschland. <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Division - External Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality.
16.00-17.00	Meeting with main users – Scientific community	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Scientific community:</u> - Chairman of the German Statistical Society (DStatG); University of Trier, - Director of the IFO Centre for Macroeconomics and Surveys. <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Division - Institute for Research and Development in Federal Statistics, Research Data Centre.
16.00-17.00	Meeting with main users – Scientific community	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Scientific community:</u> - Chairman of the German Statistical Society (DStatG); University of Trier, - Director of the IFO Centre for Macroeconomics and Surveys. <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Division - Institute for Research and Development in Federal Statistics, Research Data Centre.

17.00-18.00	Peer review expert team discussion	
Timing	Topic	Participants
Day 5 – Friday, 17th December 2021		
09.00-10.30	Peer review expert team discussion	
10.30-10.45	Coffee break	
10.45-12.45	Clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Section - European and International Coordination.
12.45-13.45	Lunch	
13.45-15.45	Meeting with the senior management of the NSI: conclusions and recommendations	<u>Peer Review Team</u> All <u>Governmental stakeholder:</u> - Head of Section - Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community. <u>Federal Statistical Office:</u> - President, - Vice-President, - Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication, - Head of Division - Legal Affairs, Compliance, - German PR-Coordinator & Head of Quality, - Head of Division - Digital Management, IT-Coordination, - Head of Section - European and International Coordination.

		<u>Bavarian State Office for Statistics:</u> - President, <u>State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg:</u> - President, <u>Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:</u> - Director. <u>Federal Office of Agriculture and Food:</u> - Head of Department - Federal Information Centre for Agriculture, Rural Development, Testing Service, - Head of Division - Federal Information Service for Agriculture, - Member of Section - Agricultural Statistics. <u>Federal Employment Agency:</u> - Head of Division – Statistics, - Deputy Head of Division – Statistics.
15.45-16.15	Preparation of the report: task sharing	<u>Peer Review Team</u>

ANNEX B – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Federal Statistical Office:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Head of Department - Strategy and Planning, International Relations, Research and Communication
4. German Peer Review Coordinator & Head of Quality
5. Head of Section - European and International Coordination
6. Head of Section - National Coordination
7. Head of Division - Legal Affairs, Compliance
8. Head of Division - External Communication
9. Officer - Statistical Law
10. Officer - Quality Assurance Methods
11. Head of Division - Institute for Research and Development in Federal Statistics, Research Data Centre
12. Head of Section - Research Data Centre, Methods of Data Analysis
13. Head of Section - Statistical Confidentiality
14. Data Protection Commissioner
15. Head of Department Businesses, Earning, Transport
16. Head of Section - Fundamental Questions of Better Regulation
17. Head of Division - Register Census
18. Head of Division - Digital Management, IT- Coordination

NCB, Deutsche Bundesbank:

19. Deputy Director General Statistics

Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community:

20. Head of Section Statistics

Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy:

21. Head of Division Macroeconomic development, analysis and projections

Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik (Bavarian State Office for Statistics):

22. President
23. Head of Quality

Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg (State Statistical Office of Baden-Württemberg):

24. President

Statistisches Amt für Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein (Statistical Office for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein):

25. Director
26. Head of Quality

Federal Office of Agriculture and Food:

27. Head of Division - Federal Information Service for Agriculture
28. Member of Section - Agricultural Statistics
29. Member of Section - Agricultural Statistics

30. Member of Section - Agricultural Statistics

Federal Employment Agency:

31. Head of Division - Statistics

32. Deputy Head of Division - Statistics

Statistical Advisory Committee:

33. Chairman

34. Deputy-Chairman

Data providers:

35. Officer - Federation of German Employers' Association

36. Head of Department - German Association of Energy and Water Industries

37. Head of Section - German Federation of Skilled Crafts

38. Officer - Federal Office for Freight Transport

Providers of the new data sources:

39. Officer - Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy

40. Co-Founder - Teralytics AG

Main users:

41. Officer - Federation of German Employers' Association

42. Head of Department - German Association of Energy and Water Industries

43. Head of Section - German Federation of Skilled Crafts

44. Head of Section - German Trade Union Association

45. Head of Division - Short-term Economic Activity

Media:

46. Data Journalist - Stuttgarter Zeitung

47. Economics Journalist - RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschl

Scientific community:

48. Chairman of the German Statistical Society (DStatG) - University of Trier

49. Director of the Ifo Centre for Macroeconomics and Surveys