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'SNAPSHOT' - User manual for quick and reliable statistical assessments

A public domain good to build
performant statistical systems and
strengthen statistical cooperation

2023 edition


MANUALS AND
GUIDELINES



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'SNAPSHOT' - User manual for quick and reliable statistical assessments

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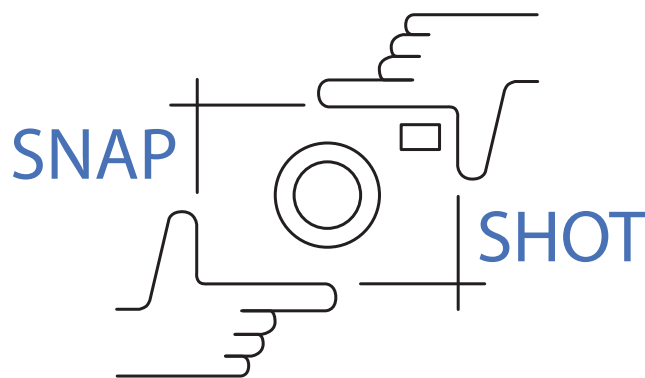


Table of contents

1. Welcome!	4
1.1. 'SNAPSHOT' and its value	4
1.2. Who needs the user manual? And why?	4
1.3. Content of the user manual	5
2. Why use 'SNAPSHOT'	6
2.1. Purpose of 'SNAPSHOT'	6
2.2. Target audience	6
3. 'SNAPSHOT' in brief	7
3.1. 'SNAPSHOT' architecture	7
3.2. 'SNAPSHOT' constituents	8
4. How to assess the overall NSS?	9
4.1. Module 1 constituents: The narrative	9
4.2. Module 1 constituents: The assessment	9
5. How to assess one statistical sector?	11
5.1. Module 2 constituents: The narrative	11
5.2. Module 2 constituents: The assessment	12
6. How to make it happen... make a plan	14
7. When to fill it in and whom to involve?	15
7.1. When	15
7.2. Who	16
8. How to read the results of 'SNAPSHOT'?	17
8.1. Summary	17
8.2. 'SNAPSHOT' usage	18
8.2.1. Identifying the needs for investment and improvement	18
8.2.2. Assessing quality of statistics	18
8.2.3. Designing a support programme	19
8.2.4. Advocating for statistics	19
8.2.5. Enriching the dialogue within and with the NSS	19
8.2.6. Comparing results over time and between countries	19
9. Other considerations	20

Acronyms

DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
ESS	European Statistical System
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NSDS	National Strategy for Statistical Development
NSI	National Statistical Institute/Office
NSS	National Statistical System
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
ROSC	Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes
SCI	Statistical Capacity Indicator
STEP	Statistical Evaluation and Progress tool
TASC	Tool for Assessing Statistical Capacity
TFP	Technical and Financial Partner
UNPFOS	United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
UNQAF	United Nations National Quality Assurance Framework
WB	World Bank

1. Welcome!

1.1. 'SNAPSHOT' and its value

'SNAPSHOT' is a user-friendly and innovative statistical tool developed by Eurostat that provides a concise assessment of the maturity of a statistical system and the quality of key indicators. DG INTPA kindly supported its latest edition.


The tool translates complex statistical quality frameworks into a clear and easy-to-understand assessment of the status and the development of key aspects of statistical systems. It can be used to analyse the whole National Statistical System or key statistical sectors.

'SNAPSHOT' is a public domain good available to anyone concerned with statistics, partner countries, development partners, academics and even the civil society.

'SNAPSHOT' was originally based on the European Statistical System (ESS) Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), adjusted to consider the context of statistics in other regions of the world. The new version of the tool covers other international frameworks, in particular the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNPFOS) and the United Nations National Quality Assurance Framework (UNQAF).


The tool assesses quality dimensions in statistics such as:

- the institutional environment of the National Statistical System
- the statistical outputs
- the statistical processes.




Institutional Assessment

The SNAPSHOT tool can be used to assess the legal and institutional environment of a National Statistical System. SNAPSHOT includes a questionnaire to analyse the functioning of the National Statistical System as a whole, covering institutional, legal and organisational aspects.



Outputs Quality Assessment

SNAPSHOT also provides a rapid assessment of the National Statistical System in terms of the quality of its outputs. The tool includes questions on the main dimensions of quality for the outputs of the statistical system under assessment, at a national and sector levels.



Statistical Processes Assessment

The SNAPSHOT tool can also be used to assess the quality of statistical processes of National Statistical Systems.

The overall aim is to identify and to support sustainable improvements in national and sector statistics in partner countries, by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the statistical system. The 'SNAPSHOT' results are summarised in graphs that directly highlight the strength or weakness with respect to specific quality dimensions.

A newly revised version (June 2023) of 'SNAPSHOT', taking into account also diversity (including gender issues), is available in [English](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#) and [Spanish](#).

'SNAPSHOT' can be used on any computer with Microsoft Excel installed. It is suitable for statisticians and non-statisticians alike.

1.2. Who needs the user manual? And why?

This manual is specifically crafted for those of you who will be responsible for completing the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment questionnaire. Its purpose is to provide you with clear and comprehensive guidance to aid in understanding the assessment process and the process of filling out the tool. The manual explains the purpose of the assessment questions and elucidates how to use the guiding notes. The ultimate goal is to foster coherent and comparable assessments across multiple countries.

Those entrusted with the task of the tool completion may originate from the assessed National Statistical Institutes (NSIs). For instance, the NSI quality manager or anyone well-versed in the intricacies of NSI and National Statistical System (NSS) operations, alongside a firm grasp of quality management and review processes, could orchestrate the assessment procedure. Another option entails enlisting a consultant possessing a profound understanding of statistical organisations, of quality assessment frameworks and experience in NSS review and evaluation.

Furthermore, this manual is equally relevant for technical and financial partners, including entities like the European Union Delegation (EUD), who wants to initiate an assessment of an NSS. By adhering to the comprehensive instructions delineated within this manual, said partners will find themselves equipped with the requisite knowledge to guide either the NSI or the consultant through the assessment journey.

1.3. Content of the user manual

The manual is intentionally limited to 25 pages for ease and efficiency of use. In the upcoming chapter, you discover more about why 'SNAPSHOT' should be used and its target audience. Then, you gradually go into the tool, starting with an exploration of the 'SNAPSHOT' architecture and building blocks. Following that, you go into the finer details of these building blocks and learn how to conduct a 'SNAPHOT' assessment for a NSI, NSS or a specific statistical sector. In the final chapter, you explore the various potential uses of 'SNAPSHOT'.

This manual includes two video tutorials. The first tutorial guides you through the 'SNAPSHOT' building blocks, while the second one provides a step-by-step explanation of how to answer the assessment questions.



TIP

When downloading the file containing the manual and videos, please copy it to your computer and make sure to store all the materials in the same location. This is essential to ensure the links function properly.

2. Why use 'SNAPSHOT'

2.1. Purpose of 'SNAPSHOT'

Official statistics are widely used in the context of development cooperation. Such statistics may be directly provided by the EU's partner countries. It is therefore important for benchmarking and monitoring purposes to understand the quality of the official statistical data being used.

'SNAPSHOT' is aimed at:

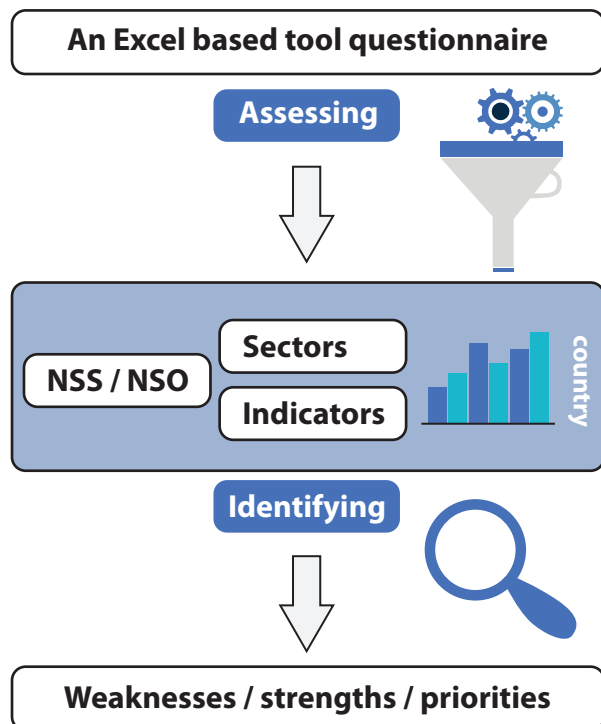
- 1. Facilitating the assessment of NSS thanks to a quickly produced, concise and easy-to-understand situation
- 2. Supporting improvements in the statistical systems of partner countries by assessing the quality of their official statistics and identifying strengths and weaknesses of the NSS as a whole
- 3. Supporting donors to identify where to focus the support, to design fitted support programmes and evaluate their impacts
- 4. Helping the NSS/NSI and their governing bodies to monitor the NSS development and performance
- 5. Serving as a first level assessment to a more in-depth NSS assessment

It provides quick and easy-to-understand assessments of NSS, hence the name 'SNAPSHOT'.

The assessment can cover the NSS as a whole or a specific statistical sector (e.g., agriculture statistics, environmental statistics, social statistics, etc). 'SNAPSHOT' facilitates the critical assessment of the capacity of a statistical system, including not only the NSI but also other statistical producers.



The 'SNAPSHOT' assessment serves as **an initial step in a process** rather than a standalone outcome. Its primary purpose is to **highlight the strengths and weaknesses** of an NSS, providing **insights that drive meaningful discussions** both at the national level and with donors.



2.2. Target audience

Do you need...

... a quick, straightforward and comparable assessment of the main strengths and weaknesses of an NSS?

... to be better informed on the degree of reliability of the statistics and the maturity of the NSS as a whole?

... insights to guide the dialogue between the national statistical authorities and development partners on the state of statistical development?

... engage in a policy dialogue with the country on how to support statistical system and identify where to focus the support?

... are you working...

... as statistics producers in a NSI or another producer organisation of a statistical system?

... in the statistical department of a regional organisation?

... in an EUD or for a Technical and Financial Partner (TFP)?

Then 'SNAPSHOT' is for you!



'SNAPSHOT' is not the only tool that can be used to assess NSS/NSI, producers of sector statistics and data quality. There are other statistical assessment tools developed

by Paris 21, the U.S. Census Bureau, the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc.

The advantages of 'SNAPSHOT' in comparison to other tools are that it gives you a quick, straightforward and comparable assessment of the main strengths and weaknesses of an NSS and of statistical outputs.

Welcome!



3. 'SNAPSHOT' in brief

3.1. 'SNAPSHOT' architecture

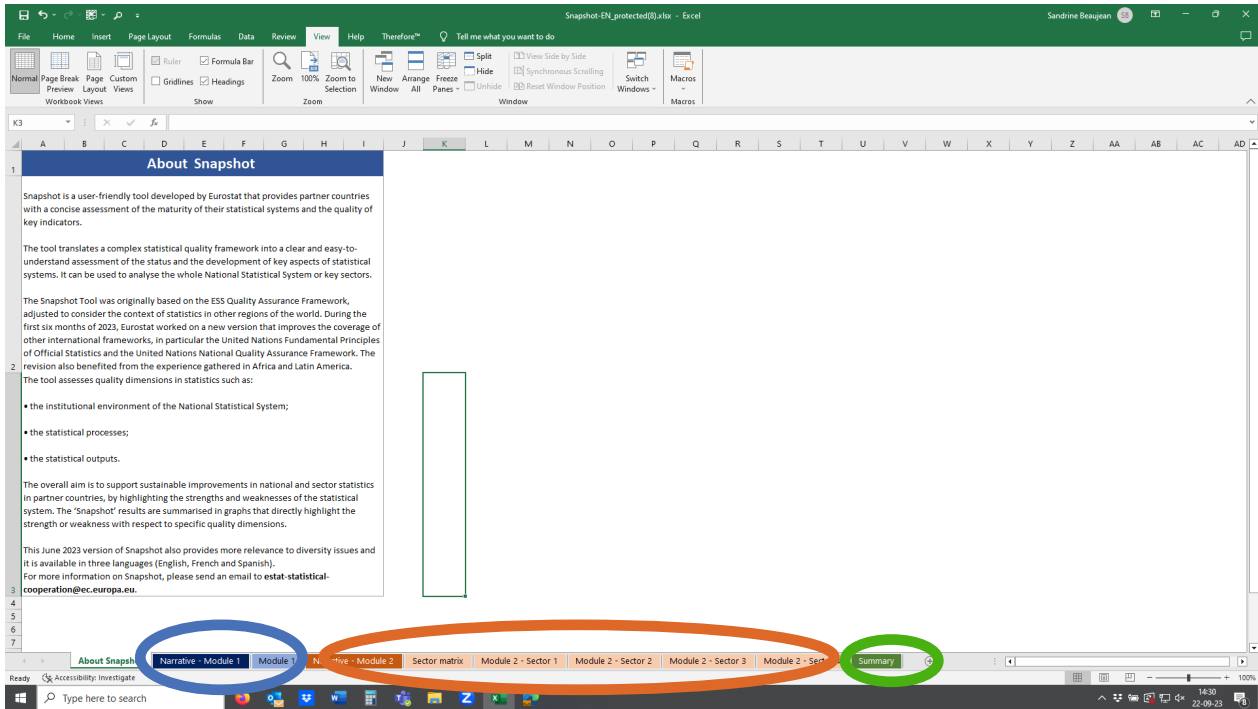
'SNAPSHOT' can be downloaded from Eurostat website.

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/international-statistical-cooperation-tools/capacity-building-tools/the-snapshot>

The screenshot shows the Eurostat website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links for 'Log in', 'English', and 'Search'. Below the search bar is a blue navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'Data', 'News', 'Publications', 'About us', 'Contact us', and 'Help'. The main content area is titled 'Home > International Statistical Cooperation tools > Capacity Building Tools > The Snapshot'. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COOPERATION TOOLS' and a list of tools including 'Overview', 'Capacity Building Tools', 'How to identify the right tool for you', 'THE SNAPSHOT', 'The Guide', 'Tools for National Accounts', 'Eurotrace', 'SDMX', and 'Training and e-learning'. The main content area has a 'SNAPSHOT' heading and a description: 'Snapshot is a user-friendly tool developed by Eurostat that provides partner countries with a concise assessment of the maturity of their statistical systems and the quality of key indicators. The tool translates a complex statistical quality framework into a clear and easy-to-understand assessment of the status and the development of key aspects of statistical systems. It can be used to analyse the whole National Statistical System or key sectors. The Snapshot Tool was originally based on the ESS Quality Assurance Framework, adjusted to consider the context of statistics in other regions of the world. During the first six months of 2023, Eurostat worked on a new version that improves the coverage of other international frameworks, in particular the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the United Nations National Quality Assurance Framework. The revision also benefited from the experience gathered in Africa and Latin America. The tool assesses quality dimensions in statistics such as: the institutional environment of the National Statistical System, the statistical processes, and the statistical outputs. The overall aim is to support sustainable improvements in national and sector statistics in partner countries, by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the statistical system. The 'Snapshot' results are summarised in graphs that directly highlight the strength or weakness with respect to specific quality dimensions. A newly revised version (June 2023) of Snapshot, taking into account also diversity (including gender issues), is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. A manual and a leaflet will follow soon.' On the right, there is a 'SEE ALSO' section with links to 'Snapshot leaflet (2014) (not updated)', 'European Statistics Code of Practices', 'African Charter on Statistics', 'Code of Good practices in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean', and 'Fundamental Principles of Official statistics'. A blue arrow points to the text about the revised version.

'SNAPSHOT' is a simple excel file with a set of worksheets. Looking at the worksheets, three groups can be identified:

- **Module 1** has blue tabs with two worksheets to be used for the assessment of the NSS/NSI.
- **Module 2** has orange tabs with 12 worksheets to be used for the assessment of up to 10 statistical sectors.
- A single worksheet in the green tab **summarising** in a visual manner the outcome of the assessments of Modules 1 and 2.



To remember: Module 1 focuses on the assessment of the NSS as a whole. Module 2 focuses on the assessment of statistical sectors!

3.2. 'SNAPSHOT' constituents

To have a deeper understanding of the 'SNAPSHOT' constituents, let's watch this video!



4. How to assess the overall NSS?

4.1. Module 1 constituents: The narrative

The purpose of the narrative sheet is to gather important contextual information. This includes details about recent developments and ongoing statistical reforms in a country. This information is valuable because it complements and enhances the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment conducted. It will help contextualizing the picture that is given by 'SNAPSHOT' for the specific period under review.

The narrative sheet begins by **looking back** over the past two years and reporting on the most significant changes that have taken place within the NSI and/or the NSS.

After that, the narrative sheet prompts you to **look ahead** and report on the ongoing reforms and future developments.

The backward and forward looking can tackle issues like the role of official statistics in national policy design and monitoring, the evolution of the national statistical development strategy, changes in the legal framework, alterations in the organisation of the NSS, shifts in resources (including human resources, equipment, and budget), changes in commitment to statistics, and the relationship with users, etc.

Finally, you are requested to make a list of the support the NSI or NSS has received from TFP, to provide brief details on the purpose of the support, the primary activities planned and the duration of the support.

Lastly, the narrative sheet asks you to share some details about the assessment process itself. This includes who conducted the assessment, the timeline of when it was carried out and how the information was collected. It is also helpful to understand the motivation behind the assessment – whether it was initiated by the country, driven by a donor or initiated by the NSI itself.



Since the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment provides a snapshot of the system at a specific point in time, the narrative sheet helps us understand the broader trends and directions followed by statistics over time.

4.2. Module 1 constituents: The assessment

Module 1 assessment concerns the NSI and the NSS as a whole and tackles 5 themes:

1. The country strategy for statistics which focuses on 2 key questions

- 1.1 Statistical development as part of the national development policy
- 1.2 Status of the design and implementation of the NSDS

2. The organisation of the National statistical system which focuses on 2 key questions

- 2.1 The Statistical Law/Statistics Act and main principles for official statistics
- 2.2 Organisation and coordination of the NSS

3. The adequacy of resources which focuses on 3 key questions

- 3.1 Personnel
- 3.2 Equipment and infrastructure
- 3.3 Financing

4. The determinants of the data quality which focuses on 5 key questions

- 4.1 Quality commitment
- 4.2 Impartiality
- 4.3 Objectivity
- 4.4 Sound methodology
- 4.5 Accuracy and timeliness

5. The relations with users which focuses on 2 key questions

- 5.1 Relevance
- 5.2 Accessibility



Let's go deeper into each key questions and see the specific topics and issues that are addressed!

Under Theme 1: Country strategy for statistics, you find:

1. A first key question that relates to how statistics contribute to the national development policies. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:
 - How often statistics are used in our national policies.
 - Whether statistical development is taken into account in the national development policy.
 - If the NSI organizes events to promote statistics.
 - Whether the international partners are consulted on statistical matters.
2. A second key question that relates to the status of a national statistical strategy. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:
 - If such a strategy exists.
 - The quality degree of the preparatory work.
 - If the strategy is supported by a work programme.
 - If the strategy is regularly monitored.
 - How the mechanisms of the stakeholders' coordination operate.

Under Theme 2: Organisation of the National statistical system, you find:

1. A first key question that relates to the legal framework for statistics and how the main principles for official statistics are embedded into the legal framework. This question is divided into six detailed questions that help understand:
 - If the law/act is compliant with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.
 - If the principle of professional independence is both in law and applied.
 - If the mandate to collect information is in the law.
 - If the obligation to reply is in the law.
 - If confidentiality is guaranteed both in the law and in practice.
 - How the access to microdata access organised.
2. A second key question that relates to the organisation and the coordination of the NSS. This question is divided into eight detailed questions that help understand:
 - How the division of responsibilities is organised
 - If the statistical activities are coordinated.
 - If there is an entity that promotes the standards and norms.
 - If the NSI has access to the data produced by others.
 - The degree of impartiality at the Head level.
 - If the NSI is consulted by other producers at key moments.

- If the NSI consults the other producers at key moments.
- The degree of openness of the NSS coordination body to non-government actors

Under Theme 3: Adequacy of resources, you find:

1. A first key question that relates to the volume and qualification of the NSI's personnel. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:
 - If the education background is appropriate and well balanced between genders.
 - If a human resources management policy exists and is functional.
 - If a training plan exists and is implemented.
 - If the NSI's trainings are open to others.
2. A second key question that relates to the adequacy of the NSI's equipment. This question is divided into three detailed questions that help understand:
 - To what extent the staff is equipped with the relevant IT equipment.
 - To what extent the staff has a permanent and secured internet connection.
 - If there is an adequate IT policy.
3. A third key question that relates to the adequacy of the NSI's financing. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:
 - The share of the NSI budget financed by the government.
 - If the necessary resources are available and mobilised in time.
 - The share of the budget actually spent.
 - If the cost of producing statistics is estimated.

Under Theme 4: Determinants of the data quality, you find:

1. A first key question that relates to the quality commitment. This question is divided into six detailed questions that help understand:
 - If the statistical processes are monitoring.
 - If there is documentation available to support the statistical processes
 - Who is responsible of the quality monitoring
 - If the statistical processes are tested before implementation
 - If the data are checked with other sources and over time.
 - What kind of metadata are available to users.

2. A second key question that relates to the impartiality. This question is divided into three detailed questions that help understand:

- If objectivity is a central value for the NSI/NSS.
- How errors in published data are recorded.
- What is the revision policy in case of methodological changes.
- What are the provisions ensuring that data sources and statistical techniques are selected by statistical considerations.

3. A third key question that relates to the objectivity. This question is divided into three detailed questions that help understand:

- How the information on the methods and procedures is made public.
- If a release calendar is published in advance.
- How the NSI ensures objectivity in the content of statistical releases and public events.

4. A fourth key question that relates to the sound methodology. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:

- If the NSI staff participate on research on statistical issues.
- If the burden on respondents is considered for each survey.
- To what extend the classification systems is aligned to international standards.
- How the data and statistical results are archived.

5. A fifth key question that relates to the accuracy and timeliness. This question is divided into two detailed questions that help understand:

- If the data sources are an adequate basis.
- To what extend the data periodicity and timeliness follow a dissemination plan.

Under Theme 5: Relations with users, you find:

1. A first key question that relates to the data relevance. This question is divided into two detailed questions that help understand:

- How the users are consulted about their statistical needs.
- How emerging needs and lower priorities are identified.

2. A second key question that relates to the data accessibility. This question is divided into five detailed questions that help understand:

- To what extend the usability and the accessibility of the NSI website is regularly tested.
- If data are accessible in a transparent and non-discriminatory way.
- If there are tools imbedded in the website to build tables, graphs or maps.
- How statistics are presented.
- How assistance support services to users are organised.



This extensive list of specific topics and issues offers a comprehensive overview of the assessment's scope provided by 'SNAPSHOT' – Module 1.

5. How to assess one statistical sector?

5.1. Module 2 constituents: The narrative

The purpose of the narrative sheet is to gather important contextual information. This includes details about the most recent statistical operations carried out in the sector, the main data and indicators available and future plans to improve data availability and reliability. This information is valuable because it complements and enhances the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment conducted. It will help contextualising the picture that is given by 'SNAPSHOT' Module 2 for the specific period under review.

The narrative sheet begins by listing the most **recent statistical operations**. For example: population and agricultural census, Demographic and Health Survey, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, etc. Some more example can be found in the Sector matrix, column 'Sources'. Possibly, information on the frequency, the coverage, the access to results would be useful.

After that, the narrative sheet prompts you to look into the **future plans** for increasing data coverage or improving data reliability in the sector. It is advised to look at the planning documents of the key producers of sector statistics and to check the most recent NSDS.

Then information on the **regular statistics products** of the sector is requested. For example: agricultural

production statistics, population projections, health personnel statistics, structural business statistics, etc. Some more example can be found in the Sector matrix, column 'Main related indicators'. Possibly, these indicators could be subject to the 'SNAPSHOT' quality assessment at the level of Indicators – Part 2 of Module 2 assessment questionnaire

Lastly, the narrative sheet asks you to share some details about the assessment process itself. This includes who conducted the assessment, the timeline of when it was carried out and how the information was collected. It is also helpful to understand the motivation behind the assessment – whether it was initiated by the country, driven by a donor or initiated by the NSI itself.



For each statistical sector you intend to assess, you should have a dedicated narrative sheet.

5.2. Module 2 constituents: The assessment

Module 2 assessment focuses on specific statistical sectors. The 'SNAPSHOT' configuration allows for the assessment of up to 10 statistical sectors.

Module 2 has two parts: Part 1 - Assessment at Sector/Ministry level and Part 2 - Quality assessment at the level of Indicators.

Module 2 Part 1 tackles 5 themes:

1. The legal, institutional and strategic framework at the level of the sector which focuses on 2 key questions
 - Legal and institutional framework supporting the production of the sector Statistics
 - Integration and coherence with the strategic framework
2. The adequacy of resources at sector level which focuses on 3 key questions
 - Personnel
 - Equipment and infrastructure
 - Financing
3. The determinants of the data quality at sector level which focuses on 4 key questions
 - Quality commitment
 - Objectivity
 - Methodology and appropriate statistical procedures
 - Accuracy and reliability

4. The relations with users at the sector level which focuses on 3 key questions

- Relevance
- Accessibility
- Serviceability

Module 2 Part 2 assesses the quality of indicators through seven straightforward questions.



Let's go deeper into each key questions and see the specific topics and issues that are addressed!

Under Theme 1: Legal, institutional and strategic framework at the level of the sector (both the NSI and the sector Ministry), you find:

1. A first key question that relates to how the **legal and institutional framework supports the production of sector statistics**. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:
 - The framework of the production of statistics in the sector.
 - To what extent the sector actors can access to relevant information that exist for the sector.
 - How the coordination between the producers of sector statistics is organised.
 - If the organisation of statistical work is in line with the legal or institutional framework.
 - Statistical development as part of the national development policy
 - Status of the design and implementation of the NSDS
2. A second key question that relates to the coherence of the strategic frameworks. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:
 - To what extent the production of the sector statistics is addressed in the NSDS.
 - If the development of sector statistics is included in the Sector Development Strategies.
 - How the work programme regarding the production and dissemination of sector statistics is designed.
 - How the development of sector statistics is monitored.

Under Theme 2: Adequacy of resources at sector level (both the NSI and the sector Ministry), you find:

1. A first key question that relates **to the volume and qualification of the personnel**. This question is divided into two detailed questions that help understand:
 - If the number and qualification of the staff match the workload.
 - If a training plan exists and is implemented.
2. A second key question that relates to the **adequacy of the equipment**. This question is divided into two detailed questions that help understand:
 - To what extent the IT resources are adequate.
 - If the physical infrastructure is adequate.
3. A third key question that relates to the **adequacy of the financing**. This question is divided into two detailed questions that help understand:
 - To what extent the funding is sufficient to carry out the planned sector statistical activities.
 - How the donor coordination mechanisms operate.

Under Theme 3: Determinants of the data quality at sector level, you find:

1. A first key question that relates **to the quality commitment**. This question is divided into three detailed questions that help understand:
 - How the sector data validation is done.
 - To what extent inconsistencies in time series or with neighbouring countries regularly are checked.
 - If the staff can rely on internal handbooks / guidelines / recommendations.
2. A second key question that relates to the **impartiality and objectivity**. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:
 - How the separation of the statistical functions from the administrative ones is ensured.
 - How information on the methods and procedures are published.
 - If statistics are published according to a release calendar.
 - If there is an equal access to all external users.
3. A third key question that relates to the **methodology and appropriate statistical procedures**. This question is divided into four detailed questions that help understand:
 - The use of international definitions and methods.

- How the data exchanges between the relevant producers are organised.
- To what extent the NSI is consulted before a new questionnaire or a modification in an information system at the level of another sector statistics producer.
- How the standard concepts, definitions and classifications are promoted throughout the production chain of the sector statistics.

4. A fourth key question that relates to the **accuracy and reliability**. This question is divided into six detailed questions that help understand:

- The way the reasons for diverging official estimates released for the same indicator by different producers are explained.
- Whether the sector statistics are published within reasonable time and timely.
- How the NSI is involved in the preparation and the implementation of main sector surveys.
- The relevance of the main surveys calendar given the sector development monitoring needs.
- If the sector registers cover the relevant units and if they are regularly updated.
- If the quality controls and checks on the administrative data are satisfactory.

Under Theme 4: Relations with users at sector level, you find:

1. A first key question that relates **to the relevance**. This question is divided into three detailed questions that help understand:
 - How users are consulted about their needs.
 - How their satisfaction is assessed.
 - To what extent users are represented in the national user Council or committee, if it exists.
2. A second key question that relates to the **accessibility**. This question is divided into two detailed questions that help understand:
 - To what extent the statistical outputs are available via the internet and match the international recommendations in terms of their dissemination.
 - If statistical tables are accompanied by an explanation.
3. A third key question that relates to the **serviceability**. This question is divided into two detailed questions that help understand:
 - The quality of the support service to users.
 - If long series exist for the key indicators.

Module 2 Part 2 aims at assessment the quality of indicators through 7 questions focusing on the following aspects:

- The degree of harmonisation and the availability of one national estimate for the indicator.
- The alignment of the definition, methodology and sources with the international recommendations.
- The recalculation of estimates in case of methodological changes.
- The length of the time series.
- The alignment of the production frequency with the international recommendations and users' needs.
- The timeliness of the indicator considering the needs of the users.
- The accessibility of the indicator.

6. How to make it happen... make a plan

Step 1 – Make plan: You will start by deciding on the **scope of the assessment**. Do you need an overall assessment? A sector assessment? For which sectors? For which indicators?

Then you will have to decide on the **timing of the assessment**. When do you need it to finalised? How long will it last?

Finally, you will have to decide on the **assessment approach**. Will it be carried out as an NSI internal exercise or with the support of an external expert? You will also have to estimate the volume of resources that you need and have.



To estimate the required resources, you can assume that completing a narrative sheet takes approximately 3 working days, and completing an assessment sheet takes around 2 days. These

estimates may vary based on the assessor's knowledge level regarding the NSI/NSS/sector, the accessibility of the documentation and the availability of the persons to be interviewed.

Step 2 – Grasp the assessment scope: You will read the detailed questions, guiding notes and pre-coded information to grasp the dimensions and issues under assessment. You will also have a look at an example of final output (see [Summary](#)).



Don't get blocked by the wording or phrasing of a question or the guiding notes. If you find it necessary to interpret or adjust your understanding of a question, that's perfectly fine. Just ensure clarity in the notes you will put in the 'Situation/Remarks' column, including your interpretation of the question.

Step 3 – Gather the documentation you will need: In the 'Identified sources' column, you will discover the documents that you must gather and analyse to carry out the assessment.

Step 4 – Documentary review: Begin the process of collecting and analysing these documents.



Remember to write down pertinent information in the tool's either in the narrative sheet or in the 'Situation/Remarks' column as you come across it during your reading. Please do provide as much detailed information as possible! Do update the 'Identified sources' column with the references of the documents you have used!

Step 5 – Conduct individual interviews or facilitate workshop to fill the gap. Identify the persons you should meet to collect the missing information. You can either conduct individual interviews or group meetings. A list of the persons to interview is available in chapter [Who](#) under information provider.

Step 6 – Conduct the assessment. Complete the information in the 'Situation/Remarks' column and choose the most appropriate pre-coded answer in column 'Answer'. A colour code will automatically appear in the column 'Initial assessment'. If you select the first answer (the most favourable), the 'Initial assessment' cell will turn green. If you choose the second answer (the average), the 'Initial assessment' cell will turn orange. If you opt for the third answer (the least favourable), the 'Initial assessment' cell will turn red.



Maintain objectivity when choosing pre-coded assessment answers. Your assessment should be based on evidences and these evidences should be detailed in the 'Situation/Remarks' column. Remember that the purpose of the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment is to support a country's

statistical development and provide an initial assessment of prioritised areas for improvement.



TIP

When completing the 'Situation/Remarks' column, consider how this information will be used. Ensure you **provide detailed information**, particularly when the pre-coded answer is orange. This will facilitate identifying the required support.

To learn how to effectively fill in 'SNAPSHOT', let's view the instructional video How to fill in? The filling approach is the same as for Module 1.



Step 7 – Present the findings and collect comments. After completing the document review, interviews and having conducted the assessment, it is recommended to discuss the draft assessment with the NSI and sector stakeholders. The goal is to clarify questions, filling in information gaps and receive a last round of feedback. It is recommended to condense the summary figures and key outcomes into a visual presentation to organise the discussion and gather the necessary feedback.



TIP

Bear in mind that conducting an assessment can be a sensitive undertaking. Stay receptive and be prepared to refine, add nuance, or modify your findings when presented with compelling evidence.

Step 8 – Finalise the assessment. Based on the comments collected under step 7, the assessor will possibly review the findings and update the assessment. This version of the .xls is the end product you will get from the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment.



Keep in mind that the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment is just a starting point, marking the beginning of a more extensive process. This process could potentially lead to the identification of future statistical projects, among other possibilities.

Step 9 – Report on the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment. In certain instances, this reporting phase may be integrated into the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment process. For example, when the assessor works within the NSI and is tasked with reporting on the results of the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment. The report on



TIP

the assessment should be as simple as the assessment itself and be based on the Summary sheet.

One approach is to make a PowerPoint presentation with (1) a summary of the latest and ongoing development as per the narrative sheet, (2) a screenshot of the summary graph at the Themes level to present an overall assessment, and (3) a screenshot of the Key Questions graphs. For each Key Question, you could present a synthesis of the situation and main findings by using the information from the 'Situation/Remarks' column.

Adjust the reporting scope and format to align with the specific requirements of the organisation that has commissioned the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment.

7. When to fill it in and whom to involve?

7.1. When

The 'SNAPSHOT' assessment can be made either regularly, occasionally or as a quick one-shot exercise.

If the assessment is conducted **regularly**, it would imply that the NSI or the sector statistics producer (i.e., Ministry) has chosen to embed 'SNAPSHOT' in its routine monitoring and evaluation processes. This regular assessment occurs annually, enabling the NSI or other producers to track year-to-year developments and make informed decisions based on the observed changes.

If the assessment is conducted **occasionally**, it suggests a commitment made in collaboration with a supporting regional statistical organisation or donor. These periodic assessments typically occur every 2 or 3 years and serve as a means for an NSI or sector statistics producer to demonstrate accountability to a regional statistical organisation and/or to donors.

If the assessment is a **one-shot exercise**, it would imply that 'SNAPSHOT' is used to provide a quick overview of the main strengths and weaknesses of the NSI/NSS or the sector statistics producer.

7.2. Who

The decision to initiate a 'SNAPSHOT' assessment can originate either internally within the NSI or the sector organisation, involving managers, top executives and NSS directors, or externally from organisations such as a sector statistical organisation, or from a donor interested in gaining insights into the quality of statistical production and products, or in supporting the overall statistical development or the development of a statistical sector in a country.

The arrangements for conducting the assessment depend on the leadership and initiation of the exercise. It can be led either by the NSI/NSS, the sector statistics producer or driven by the donor.

Three categories of actors should be mobilised: the **assessor**, the **information provider** and the **assessment reviewer**.

The **assessor** can either be someone from the NSI/NSS, the sector statistics producer or an external consultant. The prerequisites that are to be fulfilled by the assessor are

- good knowledge/understanding of the NSI/NSS, the sector statistics producer
- good knowledge/understanding of 'SNAPSHOT' and aim of the assessment
- good knowledge/understanding of production of official statistics
- Analytical and communication skills
- Capacities to conduct interviews or facilitate workshop

The **information providers** are listed in 'SNAPSHOT' column 'Identified sources':

- Top and middle management of the NSI
- Top and middle management of the sector statistics producer
- Bodies involved in the production of policy documents
- Users of microdata
- Representative of the national statistical council or other statistical coordination body
- Representative of other producers of official statistics.
- Representative of the Ministry of Finance
- Some media/journalists
- Representative of research institutes and cooperation bodies on statistics
- Ministries as data users, donors and other potential users
- Representative of statistics unit in the sector
- Representative of statistical service in charge of survey
- Representative of the user support service
- Other users
- ...

This list is not exhaustive and can include any additional categories of actors as required.

The assessment reviewer is a group of persons from the NSI/NSS and the sector statistics producer that will review the assessment outcome and share comments with assessor.



It is important to involve not only the NSI and the sector statistics producer in the discussion, but also other actors/partners in the NSS and beyond.

The review of the 'SNAPSHOT' results is an opportunity to open a dialogue on the priorities for statistics in the country and, as such, it must be as inclusive as possible.

8. How to read the results of 'SNAPSHOT'?

8.1. Summary

The Summary worksheet offers a clear and visually accessible overview of the assessment outcomes. It summarises the key strengths and weaknesses of the NSI/ NSS or the sector producer/information system. It highlights areas for enhancement.



The Summary sheet will allow you to swiftly grasp the assessment results at a glance.

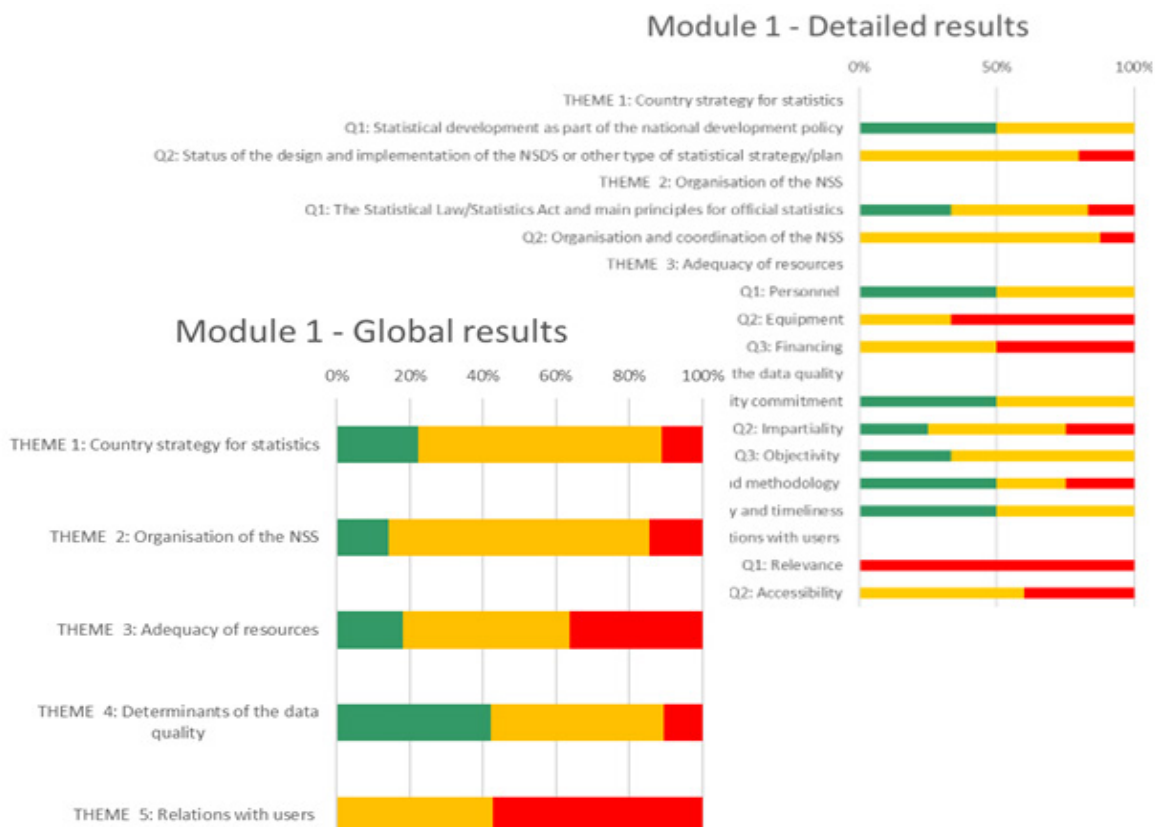
The graphs are automatically created both at the Theme level (global results), at the level of the key questions (detailed results). With this type of graph (100% stacked bar chart), you can easily see the proportions of green, orange and red answers per Theme or Key question.



TIP You should note though that the graphs do not differentiate between very important and less important criteria, nor does it consider the developments identified.

Examining this example, you can immediately identify that:

- The assessment of theme1 shows that there is an opportunity for enhancement within the statistical strategy framework. The detailed information provided in the 'Situation/Remarks' section underscores the absence of assessment of users' needs.



- The assessment of theme 5 confirms that the relations with users is a critical issue for this NSI/NSS, that both the data relevance and accessibility are to be improved.

For these initial assessment results to be valuable, it's essential to complement them with a deeper and more focused analysis. To achieve this, you should revisit the Modules 1 and 2 worksheets and examine the details in the 'Situation/Remarks' column. This will help you gain a clearer insight into the underlying causes of the situation and pinpoint areas that require intervention.

8.2. 'SNAPSHOT' usage

The 'SNAPSHOT' assessment outcome is a key input that supports:

- the policy dialogue between the NSI/NSS and the relevant national authorities
- the strengthening of the reliability and timeliness of data required for the monitoring of development programmes and projects,
- the identification of the NSS priorities for its future development.

'SNAPSHOT' can be used to identify the areas for investment and improvement; to assess the quality of statistics, to design a support programme, to advocate for statistics and to compare the NSI/NSS development evolutions over time.

8.2.1. Identifying the needs for investment and improvement

The first step in using the results of the Summary sheet is to highlight the main strengths and weaknesses identified by the tool.

This can be done globally for each **Theme** of 'SNAPSHOT' or at the more detailed level of the key questions. This is illustrated in the two graphs above. The first level of analysis concerns the Themes. The results for each theme may be addressed through broad conclusions connected to the graph highlighting the key issues mentioned in the 'Situation/Remarks' column and that should be the target for major improvements.

The same approach can be followed at the level of the **key questions** of each theme. For each key question, the main conclusions from the analysis of 'Situation/Remarks' column are given as an indication and as food for thought.

By identifying the needs for investment and improvement, the NSI/NSS is able to identify the priorities and plan relevant activities to strengthen national and sector statistics. This kind of analysis can be very useful to prepare for example a deeper investigation such as a NSDS.



The overall aim of the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment is to bring about sustainable improvements in national and sector statistics, by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses.

8.2.2. Assessing quality of statistics

Another use of 'SNAPSHOT' is to help national authorities and development partners, the European Union Delegation and other stakeholders in the country, assessing the quality of the data they receive from the national statistical authorities to monitor:

- the results achieved by the national policies and reform programmes;
- the performance of the support given by the European Union to these policies and reform programmes.

'SNAPSHOT' allows analysing the way key sector indicators are produced, using 7 specific assessment criteria. However, this analysis would be limited if left alone and not consolidated with the larger perspective of the overall quality of the sector statistics. The comparison can show that the quality level of the indicator, even if not particularly positive, is globally better than the one of the whole sector. This should lead to that the quality of the chosen indicator is considered with more care and that sustainable progress is being linked with a more global improvement of the sector statistics.



'SNAPSHOT' helps guiding local statisticians in identifying the areas where more efforts should be put and the issues that should be dealt with priority.

8.2.3. Designing a support programme

'SNAPSHOT' provides a solid common basis for the discussions and aids the process of reaching a common understanding with the donors of central challenges and priorities for the NSS or the development of a specific statistical sector. The assessment enables the definition of priorities and activities to strengthen national and sector statistics.

It can also aid in bringing the EU support to statistics more in line with national development priorities and in fulfilling the needs for reliable and timely information for the country's own monitoring and evaluation systems.

Additionally, it serves as a valuable tool for tracking the outcomes attained through the support program.



'SNAPSHOT' provides potential external donors with a comprehensive picture of the statistical areas much in need for support.

support.

8.2.4. Advocating for statistics

A 'SNAPSHOT' assessment enhances national awareness and stimulates interest in monitoring and evaluating the statistical system and critical statistical outputs. The robust methodological foundation of the tool increases the acceptance of both results and analysis.

Furthermore, the findings derived from the 'SNAPSHOT' serve as valuable inputs for engaging in policy discussions with national authorities, particularly the National Statistical Institute (NSI), and the entities responsible for statistics within priority development sectors.



Engaging in discussions centred on a 'SNAPSHOT' assessment can amplify local awareness and generate interest in statistics.

8.2.5. Enriching the dialogue within and with the NSS

It is important to involve not only the statistical office and the data producers in the sectors under review in the discussion, but also the other actors/partners in the NSS.



The review of the 'SNAPSHOT' results is an opportunity to open a dialogue on the priorities for statistics in the country and, as such, it must be as inclusive as possible.

8.2.6. Comparing results over time and between countries

Regular updates of the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment should be used to monitor progress and to continue the dialogue to provide better statistics for monitoring and evaluation of key development policies and programmes. Ideally, this exercise should be conducted on an annual basis, serving as an opportunity for an open and inclusive discussion among the various stakeholders of the NSS regarding progress, major accomplishments and the ongoing challenges.

In the case of a regional statistical organisation seeking to employ 'SNAPSHOT' to compare the statistical development across its member countries, it is imperative that the assessment adheres to a uniform approach and that all questions are consistently interpreted. Only under these circumstances can the assessment yield comparable results.



Conducting repeated assessments over time facilitates the monitoring of progress achieved. Under specific conditions, it allows for the comparison of statistical development across countries.



Filling in the tool and analysing its results is only a beginning, a starting point in a longer process. It is crucial to translate the results obtained with the 'SNAPSHOT' into recommendations for improvement and action plans, and to monitor closely and regularly the progress made. Discussions and dialogue must lead to concrete actions aiming at strengthening the national statistical system and to effective commitments to deploy the necessary means for achieving the objectives.



9. Other considerations

For more about the tool, go and visit Eurostat website:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/international-statistical-cooperation-tools/capacity-building-tools/the-snapshot>

For specific requests or remarks, kindly contact Eurostat:

estat-statistical-cooperation@ec.europa.eu

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'SNAPSHOT' - User manual for quick and reliable statistical assessments

A public domain good to build performant statistical systems and strengthen statistical cooperation

The 'SNAPSHOT' user manual is specifically crafted for those who will be responsible for completing the 'SNAPSHOT' assessment questionnaire. Its purpose is to provide you with clear and comprehensive guidance to aid in understanding the assessment process and the process of filling out the tool. The manual explains the purpose of the assessment questions and elucidates how to use the guiding notes. The ultimate goal is to foster coherent and comparable assessments across multiple countries.

'SNAPSHOT' is a user-friendly and innovative statistical tool developed by Eurostat that provides a concise assessment of the maturity of a statistical system and the quality of key indicators. DG INTPA kindly supported its latest edition.

For more information

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