



EUROPEAN
STATISTICAL
SYSTEM

**IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS
SWITZERLAND**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM OF SWITZERLAND IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendation

The Federal Statistical Office should strengthen its documentation on methodology and quality to cover more statistical domains and include the Single Integrated Metadata Structure Reports in the Metadata system (Statistical Information System) to facilitate the intended use of statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 6.4 and 15.1).

Current situation

The FSO documents the quality of its statistics by means of the European standard, the Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) reports. The information sheets that accompany each statistic on the website are another form of documentation useful to the FSO, are easily accessible and practical for users. A plan to complete the methodological documentation for the various statistical domains is currently being developed. The FSO would like to gradually introduce methodological notes that provide a quick and concise overview of the main conceptual and methodological information on the most important statistics. Initially, a selection of pilot statistics will make it possible to test and validate the concept developed on a standardised basis. Publication of these methodological notes on a harmonised basis for the most important official statistics will be introduced from 2026. The methodological notes will be published on the FSO website.

In addition, the FSO is currently continuing to develop its metadata management system (SMS 2.0) by integrating the SDMX "SIMS" artefact, which offers the possibility of producing quality reports. The aim is to ensure the production of such reports for all Swiss statistics anchored in the European statistical system in accordance with the annex to EU regulation 223/2009.

Improvement sub-action 1.1: The FSO produces methodological notes providing methodological and conceptual information on the most important statistics.

Improvement sub-action 1.1.1: The FSO defines the specifications of the methodological note concept.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.1.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 1.1.2: The FSO implements a prototype and publishes the first methodological notes for a selection of pilot statistics.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.1.2: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 1.1.3: The FSO publishes the methodological notes for the most important official statistics not covered by methodological reports.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.1.3: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 1.2: The FSO continues to develop the metadata management system (SMS 2.0) by integrating the SDMX "SIMS" artefact, which offers the possibility of producing quality reports.

Improvement sub-action 1.2.1: The FSO defines the specifications for integrating SIMS into SMS.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.2.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 1.2.2: The FSO finalises the integration of SIMS into SMS.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.2.2: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 1.2.3: The FSO produces its first quality reports via SIMS in SMS.

Deadline : Q1 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.2.3: Federal Statistical Office

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should update the Quality Assurance Handbook to include more recommendations on administrative data and other non-survey data, with the aim of better guiding the official statistics producers in the Swiss statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2, 4.2 and 8.1)

Current situation

The FSO's Quality Assurance Handbook provides important guidance regarding statistical standards and methods, mainly for traditional surveys. It is also a vital part of the Quality Management System at the FSO. Besides this, the Quality Assurance Handbook is also available to the Other National Authorities which can obtain guidance for the quality assurance of their statistical production. However, in light of the current situation with more administrative data and other non-survey data becoming available, the Quality Assurance Handbook could be made more relevant if it were updated to include guidelines for working with and quality assuring these types of data. Another reason for updating is the fact that many of the ONAs are already quite reliant on administrative sources. This limits a broader use of the Quality Assurance Handbook by the ONAs.

Improvement sub-action 2: Develop a new version of the Quality Assurance Handbook with the integration of administrative and other non-survey data. The handbook will be published on the internal and external webpages.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2: Federal Statistical Office

3. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should systematically implement its programme of quality reviews to include the Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics in participation in the reviews and their facilitation. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

Current situation

The FSO has an annual Quality, Processes and Risk programme that also specifies which statistical processes undergo a "quality review". These quality reviews help to identify potential improvements and contribute to preparing an action plan for these processes. A monitoring process led by the Quality and Processes Unit is also in place to ensure the follow-up of the action plans. Once a year, the status of the current improvement actions is presented to FSO's top management. The Quality and Processes Unit performs about five quality reviews annually.

The peer review team found that the FSO potentially has a good approach regarding quality reviews, with an extensive self-assessment template that the responsible statistical officers of the relevant statistics complete, with a focus on their strengths and weaknesses. However, the quality reviews need to be further enhanced and more systematically implemented. The team also recommends that the review approach be extended to cover ONA activities to foster continuous quality improvements. The benefit of the quality reviews could also be further enhanced if the ONAs themselves were involved in the process.

Improvement sub-action 3.1: Implementation of a pilot project introducing a risk management

system into statistical production. An implementation concept will be drawn up to define the requirements, the instruments used and the implementation plan.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 3.2: Revision of the Quality Assurance Handbook and guidelines for conducting quality reviews including the risk dimension.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.2: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 3.3: Implement the risk management system at operational level over a period of 4 years.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.3: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 3.4: Implement quality reviews incorporating the notion of risky activities. The prioritisation of quality reviews is based on the impact and probability of occurrence of the risk.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.4: Federal Statistical Office

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should systematically implement its programme of quality reviews to include the Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics in participation in the reviews and their facilitation. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

Current situation

The FSO has an annual Quality, Processes and Risk programme that specifies also which statistical processes undergo a "quality review". These quality reviews help to identify potential improvements and lead to an action plan for these. There is also a monitoring process led by the Quality and Processes Unit to ensure a follow-up of the action plans. Once a year, the status of the current improvement actions is presented to FSO's top management. The Quality and Processes Unit performs about five quality reviews annually.

The peer review team found that the FSO has a potentially good approach regarding quality reviews, with an extensive self-assessment template that the responsible statistical officers of the involved statistics complete with a focus on their strengths and weaknesses. However, the quality reviews need to be further enhanced and more systematically implemented. The team also recommends that the review approach be extended to cover ONA activities in order to foster continuous quality improvements. The benefit of the quality reviews could also be further enhanced if the ONAs themselves were involved in the process.

Improvement sub-action 4.1: The FSO is developing a concept for the implementation of the quality reviews which will be conducted in the ONAs. This concept is inspired by the internal quality reviews conducted within the FSO. The ONAs are informed in advance by the FSO of the scope and methods of carrying out the quality reviews.

Improvement sub-action 4.1.1: Definition of a concept for conducting quality reviews in ONAs.

Deadline: Q2 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.1.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 4.1.2: Organisation of an information session presenting the introduction of a quality review concept to the ONAs and selection of two pilot ONAs.
Deadline: Q2 2024
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.1.2: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities
Improvement sub-action 4.2: The FSO conducts quality reviews with the ONAs on an annual basis, in accordance with the concept presented to the ONAs. Initially, the quality review will be conducted with 2 pilot ONAs to assess the effectiveness of the approach. This will be followed by an evaluation phase which will allow the necessary adjustments to be made in the way the quality reviews are conducted and, if necessary, in its conceptual approach. The FSO will then communicate the annual plan for carrying out the quality reviews to the ONAs. At the end of each review, the FSO follows up the implementation of the improvement measures with the ONAs.
Improvement sub-action 4.2.1: Conducting a quality review in a pilot ONA.
Deadline : Q4 2024
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.2.1: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities
Improvement sub-action 4.2.2: Conducting a quality review in a second pilot ONA.
Deadline : Q4 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.2.2: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities
Improvement sub-action 4.2.3: Evaluation and adjustment of the concept and plan for conducting quality reviews.
Deadline: Q2 2026
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.2.3: Federal Statistical Office, all Other National Authorities
Improvement sub-action 4.2.4: Conducting quality reviews in accordance with the quality review concept and plan
Deadline: Q4 2026
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.2.4: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities
Improvement sub-action 4.2.5: Follow-up of the implementation of the measures with the ONAs
Deadline: Q4 2027
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.2.4: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

5. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistics Office should implement the new statistical production platform across statistical domains and consider the re-use of the platform's components in the wider context of the Swiss statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 10.4 and 8.4)

Current situation

The FSO has worked since 2020 on a new statistical production system which is based on the Generic Statistics Business Process Model (GSBPM). The new system aims at full automation and harmonisation of work processes, and it is designed to be metadata driven. Once fully implemented, it will generate important quality improvements and efficiency gains. It will also support statistical product portfolio development through data integration and the use of modern statistical methods. The technical platform is advanced and its implementation in statistical domains is progressing. Completing the transition to the new statistical production platform is key to fully harness FSO data. The new production platform will do this through integration and provide cost efficiencies, while at the same time, it will reduce the risk for errors stemming from non-automated processing.

Several elements of the statistical production platform (SIS platform – “Statistisches Informationssystem”; “statistical information system”) have already been deployed and are being actively used by several survey teams. The MVP (minimal viable product) of the SIS platform will be available to all FSO collaborators by the end of 2024. Given the complexity of the project to harmonize processes and data for a multitude of surveys, the SIS platform will remain an ongoing project of optimization for the rest of the product's life cycle.

Improvement sub-action 5.1: Elaborate a detailed and realistic roadmap for the integration of the FSO's statistical activities in the SIS system.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 5.2: Improve and configure the SIS for integrating the FSO's statistical activities.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.2: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 5.3: Complete the migration of all FSO statistical activities into SIS.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.3: Federal Statistical Office

6. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should enhance metadata harmonisation to support quality improvements in administrative data used for statistical production. The Federal Statistical Office should continue working with key stakeholders under the current governance of data management networks, in order to complete metadata harmonisation in a cooperative way (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.4, 9.5 and 10.4)

Current situation

In the context of the new public sector data management function assigned to the FSO, a metadata catalogue and an interoperability portal (I14YP) have been developed and are supported by dedicated resources, as established by the government. The new platform aims at documenting relevant information regarding public data assets and their quality, supporting their reuse in line with

the "once only principle". The initiative is supported by a dedicated governance structure facilitating collaboration among different public administrations which are data owners. While progress has been made, not all datasets are included in the catalogue yet and important information on quality are still missing. The completion of the metadata catalogue platform will critically benefit from further efforts in metadata harmonisation and quality assessment.

At the same time, the data management project will also increase the ability of the FSO (and the Swiss statistical system) to fully harness administrative data for statistical production. The completion of the metadata catalogue platform is planned by 2026 in line with available dedicated funding assigned to the FSO.

In its role as Swiss Data Steward, the FSO is developing intensive cooperation with the authorities that own and use administrative data. The aim is to promote their multiple use. Within the framework of working groups, a joint action plan is being developed for each topic area to determine uniform standards and to publish these on the I14Y interoperability platform together with the documentation of the existing data stocks (metadata and quality indicators). This is the basis for harmonising the data stocks in the administrative units.

Improvement sub-action 6.1: Set-up and convene working groups to harmonize administrative data in the thematic areas of health, agriculture, mobility, energy, infrastructure and security.

Deadline: Q2 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 6.2: Analysis of the ongoing harmonisation of administrative data and its support within the framework of the available resources in the thematic areas of education, environment and social security.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.2: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 6.3: Implement harmonisation work in the thematic areas of education, environment and social security with key stakeholders under the current governance of data management networks in a cooperative way in line with financial framework conditions.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.3: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 6.4: Seeking additional financial support for further harmonisation work in the thematic areas of labour, foreign relations, jurisdiction, culture, society, construction, political activities, taxation and the economy.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.4: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 6.5: Implement harmonisation work in the thematic areas of labour, foreign relations, jurisdiction, culture, society, construction, political activities, taxation and the economy in line with financial framework conditions.

Deadline : Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.5: Federal Statistical Office

7. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should accelerate the cooperation with private data holders with the aim of exploring new data sources for statistical production purposes, making use of modern technology for data processing and data science methodologies for the dissemination of experimental statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.4, 8.6 and 8.7)

Current situation

The new Data Science Competence Center (DSCC) established in 2021 aims at providing technical competencies and support services to government bodies with the goal to promote the use of artificial intelligence. The DSCC also supports the use of data science methods in statistics in the FSO and in the Swiss statistical system. It has so far led to the implementation of experimental statistics projects in areas such as the use of images for land use and land cover statistics and scanner data for price statistics. The use of AI supported by the DSCC could further accelerate the use of digital data sources for the production of statistical indicators and increase the ability to respond rapidly to user needs, including during crises and emergencies. Regular and sustainable access to high quality data from privately held data sources is particularly critical to the development and implementation of data science for statistics and cooperation with data holders to ensure good data and metadata quality.

The use of private data has already been tried out at the FSO, since scanned data from the retail trade are currently being used to record prices for the consumer price index (CPI). It is now a question of seeking out new, untapped potential from private suppliers for the needs of the FSO's current statistical production.

Improvement sub-action 7.1: The FSO puts in place mechanisms designed to promote and favour the use of administrative and privately held data in statistical production, with the aim of reducing the need for surveys. When developing or revising any statistics, the decision-making process is adapted to ensure that a systematic analysis of the potential offered using administrative and privately held data is carried out.

Improvement sub-action 7.1.1: Update the general concept and detailed concept document templates to include a chapter on the potential use of administrative and privately held data for statistical purposes.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.1.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 7.1.2: Adapt the decision-making process and systematic verification of the analysis of the potential use of administrative and privately held data for all new statistics or in the case of a revision.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.1.2: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 7.2: The FSO is conducting a pilot project to obtain through the Swiss National Bank (SNB) payment transaction data from a company specialising in securing payments and financial transactions. Initially, data requirements will be clarified in collaboration with the SNB, and an initial acquisition process will be drawn up. The potential of these data for statistical production will be assessed on the basis of specific cases, for example in the field of tourism or national accounts. Among other things, this will also involve defining new processes and developing specific skills.

Improvement sub-action 7.2.1: Definition of data requirements concerning payment transactions in collaboration with the Swiss National Bank.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 7.2.1: Federal Statistical Office, Swiss National Bank
Improvement sub-action 7.2.2: Receive data on financial transactions from the Swiss National Bank
Deadline: Q4 2025
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 7.2.2: Federal Statistical Office, Swiss National Bank
Improvement sub-action 7.2.3: Evaluate the potential for practical use of the data in production and clarification of the technical and possibly financial framework. Assess whether the data will be used for plausibility purposes and/or to optimize existing products.
Deadline: Q4 2026
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.2.3: Federal Statistical Office
Improvement sub-action 7.2.4: Start regular data transmission and use of data in production for plausibility purposes and products optimization/breakdown.
Deadline: Q4 2027
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.2.4: Federal Statistical Office, Swiss National Bank
Improvement sub-action 7.2.5: Start publishing documentation on the interoperability platform (I14Y).
Deadline : Q4 2027
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 7.2.5: Federal Statistical Office, Swiss National Bank
Improvement sub-action 7.3: The FSO and the Swiss confederation are putting in place a legal framework to promote the multiple use of data and to ensure that the FSO's activities are carried out in the fields of interoperability, data science and the re-use of secondary data.
Improvement sub-action 7.3.1: Publish the new Federal Statistics Ordinance and put it into effect. This new ordinance provides a clearer and more transparent overview of existing data, how it is obtained and processed, and of new data science and artificial intelligence services.
Deadline: Q1 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.3.1: Federal Statistical Office
Improvement sub-action 7.3.2: Launch of a new legislative project to create the legal basis for the multiple use of administrative data from registers.
Deadline: Q1 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.3.2: Federal Statistical Office
Improvement sub-action 7.3.3: Give requirements for the re-use of secondary data in compliance with the Federal Statistics Act, statistical confidentiality and data protection in the project led by the Federal Office of Justice. This project also includes access to new (also private) data sources.
Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.3.3: Federal Statistical Office

8. RECOMMENDATION

The relevant authorities should revise and strengthen the Charter of Swiss Official Statistics, as a complement to the legal framework for official statistics in the Swiss statistical system, with the aim of developing a document that is applicable for all types of organizations in the Swiss statistical system and maximizes the coherence with the ES CoP. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1.1, 1bis.2 and 4.1)

Current situation

The Swiss statistical system is quite intricate and comprises of actors on different levels. The FSO has a clear coordination mandate with the help of two coordination committees – Fedestat and Regiostat. However, based on an agreement between the FSO and the Conference of Regional Statistical Offices (CORSTAT), the general guidelines for quality in statistics have been entrusted to the Ethics Council which has also developed the Charter of Swiss Official Statistics, the latest version of which was adopted in 2012. The peer review team was informed that a decision has been taken to update the Charter. There is a clear need to modernize this important document such that different types of organizations find it relevant and up to date, resulting in a broader acceptance of the Charter in the Swiss Statistical System. Also, as the Swiss statistical system promotes adherence to both the Charter and the ES CoP, it would be an advantage if those principles of the Charter that are similar to the ES CoP regarding content and purpose, were harmonized to avoid confusion and misunderstandings.

The organisations responsible for the Swiss Official Statistics Charter (FSO, Corstat, Ethics Council) have decided to revise the Charter, in particular by analysing the needs for adaptation based on the Code of Practice revised in 2017. The discussions and proposals are being carried out by a working group comprising representatives of the Ethics Council, members of Fedestat, CORSTAT and the FSO. The aim is that in the future there will be a code of conduct for all producers of official statistics in Switzerland, encompassing both regional and federal players.

Improvement sub-action 8.1: Consult federal and regional statistical stakeholders on the new official statistics charter by the FSO, Conference of regional statistical offices and the Ethics Committee.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 8.1: Federal Statistical Office, Ethics Committee

Improvement sub-action 8.2: Signature of the new official statistics charter by the members of the Swiss statistical system.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 8.2: Federal Statistical Office, members of Fedestat, members of the Conference of the regional statistical offices

9. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office, together with all Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics, should establish standard practices for privileged pre-release access and distinguish this type of access from data sharing, whose purpose is to assure quality in the production of statistics before dissemination. The external communication of any pre-release should be uniform within the Swiss statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 6.7 and 1bis.1)

Current situation

During the peer review and in meetings with the FSO and the reviewed Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics, it became clear that the practice of privileged pre-release access and embargo is interpreted in different ways. Both the FSO and the reviewed Other National Authorities demonstrate transparency in the communication on their websites regarding interactions with users. However, some of the exchanges that occur between different parties relate to specific stages of the production process, for example, concerning data processing before the final statistics/data are disseminated and are therefore not to be regarded as privileged pre-release access.

Improvement sub-action 9.1: Evaluate the different practices of privileged pre-release access by stakeholders.

Deadline: Q2 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 9.1: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 9.2: Draw up a plan to harmonise privileged pre-release access to the various statistics of the FSO and the ONAs.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 9.2: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 9.3: Implement the plan to harmonise privileged pre-release access to the various FSO and ONAs statistics.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 9.3: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 9.4: Update annually the inventories of privileged pre-release access to data by the FSO and ONAs.

Deadline: Q4 2026 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 9.4: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

10. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should strengthen its support to the Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics with a focus on methodological services and establishing standards and definitions, in order to raise the quality of statistics in the Swiss statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2, 1bis.1 and 7.2)

Current situation

The FSO and the reviewed ONAs agree that the FSO fulfils its coordinating role well and maintains good relations with the ONAs and the Swiss statistical system as a whole. In this respect, the statistical expert groups have an important role to play, as they examine statistical processes in depth. However, greater support should be provided, especially when it comes to innovations in statistical and other methodologies, standardization and the reuse of statistical services.

For example, the FSO has specific competencies including long experience within areas such as sampling, registers, analysis, metadata management and data science that could be made available

to and shared with ONAs to deepen their knowledge and understanding on the production of official statistics and to continuously improve.

There is also a clear need for the FSO to take the lead regarding decisions on standards, i.e., on certain common concepts, methodologies and nomenclatures shared by producers of official statistics.

In the future, the FSO will consult the support needs of the ONAs and other producers of Swiss official statistics in the fields of innovation, methods, re-use of procedures and data standardisation. A collaboration plan will be drawn up by the FSO and presented each year to the statistical bodies concerned according to a prioritization system based on the availability of its resources. The results of collaboration will be presented and evaluated by field of activity each year. This will help in planning collaboration for the following year.

Improvement sub-action 10.1: The FSO consults the ONAs on needs in the areas of innovation, methods, re-use of procedures and data standardisation.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 10.1: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 10.2: The FSO, together with the ONAs, defines a support plan in priority areas.

Deadline: Q2 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 10.2: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 10.3: Implement the support plan with ONAs in priority areas.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 10.3: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 10.4: The FSO, together with the ONAs, assesses collaboration with the ONAs and defines the next steps.

Deadline: Q2 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 10.4: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

11. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office, together with all Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics, should devise a common revision policy which comprises revision analysis, particularly for planned revisions including those made on a routine basis. The practice of performing revisions analyses for routine revisions should be strengthened. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 12.3 and 8.5)

Current situation

The FSO has published a Revision Policy which, among other things, advocates the practice of doing revision analyses. This is in line with the ES CoP and the European Statistical System (ESS) Handbook for Quality and Metadata Reports — 2021 edition. Revision analysis is relevant and important for several kinds of planned revisions: benchmark revisions, revisions that arise from a

change in methodology or classifications, and revisions relating to statistics that are routinely published first with an early, preliminary estimate which is later revised.

The peer review team saw examples of revision analyses done by the FSO for the first two categories, but there was little or no evidence of any analysis regarding the latter category concerning routine revisions. The peer review team did however see some very good and comprehensive work done by The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) regarding Quarterly National Accounts.

This type of revision analysis is an important quality assurance activity providing knowledge and understanding for users and producers alike, regarding the quality of preliminary data compared with final data. It also gives users an indication, at the time of publication of the preliminary statistics, of what they can reasonably expect regarding the later revisions of the estimates. This area should be strengthened within the Swiss statistical system by way of a common revision policy coordinated by the FSO. Practices for performing this type of analysis should also be developed and shared within the Swiss statistical system. The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) can be a resource for the FSO in this respect.

Improvement sub-action 11.1: Draw up an overview of the statistics that are the subject of revision analyses, focusing on those that are affiliated to the European Statistical System (ESS).

Deadline: Q2 2025

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 11.1: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 11.2: The "Agenda" of the FSO is adapted to pre-announce upcoming revisions. The FSO solution is presented to the ONAs.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 11.2: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 11.3: The "Agenda " of the ONAs is adapted to pre-announce upcoming revisions.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 11.3: Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 11.4: Update the FSO revision policy, making it compulsory to analyse routine revisions.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.4: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 11.5: Information and training for ONAs on changes to the revision policy.

Deadline: Q2 2026

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 11.5: Federal Statistical Office, Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 11.6: Implement any changes to specific revision policies by the ONAs for their statistics.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 11.6: Other National Authorities

12. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should prioritise the provision of remote access to microdata for scientific purposes while safeguarding confidentiality and data protection. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 5.6 and 15.4)

Current situation

The peer review team witnessed the very good relationship that exists between the FSO and the scientific community. The FSO has a clear understanding of the need for access to microdata by the scientific community while the scientific community respects the legal provisions in this regard. The handling and provision of anonymised individual data are statutorily regulated. In order to simplify access to the individual data from the FSO's surveys for members of the scientific and research community, the FSO has worked closely with the Swiss foundation for research in social sciences (FORS).

Due to the regulation of personal data, data for researchers are provided for a limited period of five years and for the specific purpose of an individual project. Data protection agreements must be replaced with new agreements on the expiry of the fixed period, after which the data must be returned to the FSO or destroyed. In technical and operational terms, it is easier for both parties if the FSO provides the personal data to researchers on data storage devices or via Secure FTP. The researchers can then, in compliance with confidentiality principles and with the provisions of the data protection agreement, install and evaluate the data using their own systems and programmes. However, remote access is also envisaged in order to facilitate accessibility and an alternative way to have access to these data.

To this purpose, the FSO is studying the possibility of setting up the secure infrastructure needed to allow external users remote access to data for research purposes. The development of such a platform will be studied as part of the DigiSanté project, which aims to promote the digital transformation of the healthcare system.

Improvement sub-action 12.1: Develop a feasibility study for a solution meeting the needs of data linking and making data available to third parties.

Deadline: Q2 2024

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 12.1: Federal Statistical Office, Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication FOITT

Improvement sub-action 12.2: Define the requirements and specifications for remote data access as part of the DigiSanté project.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 12.2: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 12.3: Implement the remote data access platform as part of the DigiSanté project.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 12.3: Federal Statistical Office, Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication FOITT

13. RECOMMENDATION

The reviewed Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics (the Federal Finance Administration, the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs) should clearly indicate on their dedicated official statistics web pages that their organization belongs to the Swiss statistical system. Relevant documentation on the Swiss statistical system regarding official statistics should be clearly visible on these pages. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1.6, 1bis.1 and 1bis.2)

Current situation

The reviewed ONAs are responsible for both statistical and administrative activities, which are clearly separated from each other. However, the presentation of the official statistics for which the ONAs are responsible on their respective web pages should be more clearly delineated from their other, more administrative activities.

Furthermore, it is not very clear to the users of these web pages that the statistics are produced within the Swiss statistical system. The Charter for Swiss Official Statistics, the links to the FSO, the multi-annual statistical work programme and references to documents governing Swiss official statistics should be more easily accessible. Links to the FSO website from the ONAs' websites should be provided, which could potentially raise awareness of official statistics within the community of statistical authorities, key users and the general public. Official statistics should be easily accessible and recognised within the context they are produced.

Improvement sub-action 13.1: Define a "corporate story" on the subject of official statistics for the ONAs to include on their websites. The concept includes content and links on the Swiss statistical system, the code of good practice, the Charter of Swiss Official Statistics and an inventory of the various institutions that make up official statistics.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 13.2: Draw up a plan for updating the ONAs' websites, explicitly incorporating their affiliation with the Swiss statistical system and mentioning the links to the statistical Charter and the code of good practice.

Deadline: Q2 2025

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 13.2: Federal Statistical Office, all Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 13.3: Update of websites, mentioning affiliation with the Swiss statistical system and establishing links with reference documents such as the Swiss Statistics Charter and the Code of Good Practice.

Deadline: Q2 2026

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 13.3: all Other National Authorities

Improvement sub-action 13.4: The FSO ensures that the websites of the ONAs are kept up to date, mentioning their affiliation to the Swiss statistical system and providing links to reference documents such as the Swiss Statistics Charter and the Code of Practice.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.4: Federal Statistical Office

14. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should develop a sustainable funding framework that can provide adequate resources for the Federal Statistical Office's new responsibilities and engage with the relevant governance bodies to secure such resources. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1 and 3.2)

Current situation

With the adoption of the new tasks of FSO (in the areas of data management, open data dissemination and data science), the sustainability of the current financial framework is exposed to potential challenges that need be addressed. The focus should be to ensure the long-term sustainability of FSO activities, taking into account its new role.

The FSO funding model has been working effectively over time to ensure adequate financial resources for the operation of statistical production processes and to provide resources for investment in innovation. With the adoption of the FSO's new tasks (in the areas of data management, open data dissemination and data science), the sustainability of this financial framework should be re-assessed to identify potential challenges to be addressed. This should ensure the long-term sustainability of the FSO's activities, taking its new role into account. In order to improve medium-term financial security, the financing framework has been modified in federal practice to allow financial planning to be carried out earlier than in the past, from 2025 onwards. As part of this process, the departments will play an increasingly important role in allocating funds. It is now through this process that the FSO can submit requests for financing for activities or projects, with improved visibility for the fulfilment of its new tasks.

Improvement sub-action 14.1: As part of the federal administration's new financial planning processes, the FSO will define a financial plan that will enable it to reconcile the resources it requires in the long term with its existing and new tasks.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 14.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 14.2: Submit a supplementary request to improve the financial situation of its new activities, taking advantage of the budgetary synergies offered by the financing framework proposed for the administration's digitalisation projects.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 14.2: Federal Statistical Office

15. RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Statistical Office should assess the need for future human resources and competencies, identify potential gaps and implement appropriate actions to address these gaps, particularly in the area of methodology. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1 and 7.5)

Current situation

The FSO has a competent and dynamic workforce, which has supported its operations well in the previous years and contributed to high-quality statistical products and users' strong trust in statistics produced by the FSO. Based on the human resource policies in place, the FSO has been able to attract talent with adequate skills to carry out statistical tasks and to support investment in innovative projects. This has been helped by close cooperation with the scientific community on concrete projects. However, an adequate level of staff and composition of skills will be needed to support the modernisation of statistical production in line with the FSO's strategic goals and to further strengthen its capacity, including with the methodological sector, to implement the new tasks assigned to the FSO in the areas of data management and data science.

Improvement sub-action 15.1: Develop a strategic human resource planning and a cyclical process for identifying the new skills and profile requirements needed to accomplish the FSO's missions.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.1: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 15.2: Identify new skills and profiles required to accomplish FSO missions in methodological and professional fields (statistics and mathematics, data science, data management, data protection and open government data, IT Skills, digital communication, project management).

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.2: Federal Statistical office

Improvement sub-action 15.3: Elaborate thematic development concepts and training plans according to validation and available resources planning of training courses on the basis of available personnel and financial resources

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.3: Federal Statistical Office

Improvement sub-action 15.4: Report skills needs and profiles identified, thematic concepts implemented and training plan rolled out to the Board of Directors.

Deadline: Q2 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.4: Federal Statistical Office