

STRATEGY
developing the national statistical system
for the period 2023-2030

Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

Section 1
Importance of the document

The development of the National Statistical System Development Strategy for the period 2023-2030 (hereinafter – *Strategy*) is justified by the central role of official statistics for the governance act, including the provision of quality and relevant statistical information necessary for the development, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of economic, social and environmental policies, public authorities' decisions and the business community, scientific research and information to society as a whole. Statistical data are imperative for the decision-making process informed by records and disaggregated in accordance with the relevant criteria.

The strategy responds to the priority of increasing the quality of governance, for which the collection and transparency of statistical and administrative data is indispensable for monitoring the implementation of policies, public services and projects, including presenting data in a user-friendly form. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to develop the National Statistical System (hereinafter *SSN*), in line with the provisions of this Strategy. The development of the Strategy is foreseen in Action 1.7.1. Drawing up and approving the draft Strategy for the Development of the National Statistical System until 2030' of the Government Action Plan for the years 2021-2022, approved by Government Decision No 235/2021.

The drafting of the Strategy is also motivated by the fact that statistics are an explicit area of activity of the Government (Article 4 (q) of Law No 136/2017 on the Government). The document constitutes the basic strategic framework for further alignment of national statistics with the *acquis communautaire* in the field of statistics (Article 44, Chapter 6, Title IV, Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova, of the one part, and the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the other part (Law No 112/2014, Official Gazette, 2014, No 185-199, Art. 442) ratifying the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova, of the one part, and the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States), contributing to the objective of providing reliable and consistent statistical

information in a timely manner, internationally comparable respecting the fundamental principles of official statistics (Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on 15 April 1992 and by the United Nations Statistical Commission on 14 April 1994) and the European Statistics Code of Practice (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-catalogues/-/ks-02-18-142>).

The development of the Strategy is imperative in the context of the Republic of Moldova's aspirations for membership of the European Union. The status of candidate country for membership of the European Union dictates speeding up the harmonisation of national statistics with European Union standards in order to ensure internal and external users with quality statistics comparable at European level.

The interventions proposed in the document relate to SSN, which, in accordance with Article 6 (1) of Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, consists of the National Bureau of Statistics (hereinafter the *NBS*), as the central statistical authority and coordinator of the system, the National Bank of Moldova (hereinafter: *BNM*) and other producers of official statistics.

The need to develop the Strategy is also determined by the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 (Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E) (hereafter – *Global Agenda 2030*), adopted by United Nations member countries in September 2015. One of the targets set out in the Global Agenda 2030 is: “By 2030, significantly increase the availability of qualitative, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other relevant features in national contexts”. The Republic of Moldova's contribution to the achievement of the Global Agenda 2030 will materialise through the implementation of the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”, with the strategic aim of enhancing people's quality of life, as well as through other sectoral policy and strategic documents integrating sustainable development objectives and targets (<https://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/apc/nationalizarea-obiectivelor-de-dezvoltare-durabila>). These documents are based on the application of the ‘no one left behind’ principle, which increases the need for multidimensional disaggregated statistical data.

According to the 2017 Report on nationalisation of Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter *SDG*) monitoring indicators (<https://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/apc/nationalizarea-indicatorilor-pentru-monitorizarea-obiectivelor-de-dezvoltare-durabila>), some half of the SDG monitoring indicators were not available in the SSN. At the same time, the Voluntary National Progress Report on the Implementation of the Global Agenda 2030 (https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/vnr_2020_ro.pdf)

concludes that the production of indicators to measure the SDGs must be a priority for the Moldovan Government. This highlights the need for a clear strategic approach and coordinated action on strengthening the whole SSN, and it is imperative to provide data for indicators for monitoring and evaluating the country's strategies and policies, informed by qualitative, relevant and timely records.

The aim of the Strategy is to provide the relevant regulatory and institutional framework and to create the necessary conditions for the strategic allocation of human, financial, technical and technological resources to strengthen and modernise the SSN.

The strategy's vision is that, by 2030, SSN should operate as a consolidated structure capable of delivering high-quality statistical products and services in line with European standards, meeting the needs of a wide range of users.

The document will guide the development of programmes with integrated action plans, planning of sectoral and institutional spending budgets and strategies, more efficient coordination by the NBS of SSN development and external assistance to the sector.

The implementation of the Strategy will contribute to the achievement of the SSN's mission to provide timely and qualitative data to support information, research and decision-making processes informed by records, both in the public and in the private world.

The drafting of the Strategy is supported by the National Council for Statistics, which, in accordance with its decision of 30 June 2022, recommended that it be promoted, followed by medium-term SSN development programmes (incorporating action plans and estimated resources for their implementation).

Section 2

Consistency with the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”

The strategy directly supports the implementation process of key documents of the national strategic planning framework. By providing official statistics necessary for an evidence-based policy process, the SSN will support the Government's efforts in the implementation, continuous monitoring and mid-term and final evaluation of the impact of the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030” and sectoral policies, on society, in particular on vulnerable population groups, with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. In particular, the strategy will contribute to the achievement of General Goal 7 of the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030” – “Ensuring efficient, inclusive and transparent governance”, including specific objectives 7.1. Building an intelligent, accountable, efficient, transparent and open public administration for citizens' participation in decision-

making processes' and 7.3. Integrating science, technologies and data into the governance process".

The lack of disaggregations according to the relevant criteria of some indicators to monitor the National Development Strategy 'European Moldova 2030', necessary to measure inequalities and identify policy measures to improve the situation of certain vulnerable groups and to respect the principle of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 to 'leave no one behind', but also the limited capacities to set and monitor targets by policy makers and implementers, are among the constraints (National Development Strategy Assessment Report (SND) 'Moldova 2020', https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_evaluare_2020_rom.pdf) that have undermined the quality of public policies over the past three decades. At the same time, sporadic policy impact analysis is seen as a major gap in policy development and coordination (https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/moldova/documents/press_corner/20160512_1_ro.pdf).

Without substantial, precise and strategic interventions, it will be increasingly difficult to ensure the quality of statistical data across the SSN. However, the European Moldova 2030 National Development Strategy stresses that monitoring progress and assessing its development impact will be done through disaggregated statistical indicators, including SDG indicators. And in the process of developing sectoral strategies, as well as monitoring and evaluation, each indicator is to be disaggregated by relevant criteria to reflect the actual degree of human inclusion in the development process. The SSN will ensure the collection of disaggregated data according to the relevant criteria, so that policy makers, the association and private sectors, as well as development partners, make use of this data into community information and public good.

Thus, the Strategy will contribute directly to monitoring the implementation of each of the 10 objectives set out in the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030", including the direct implementation of the objective of ensuring effective, inclusive and transparent governance (general objective 7), whose indispensable tool is statistics as a prerequisite for evidence-based decision-making and transparency.

Section 3

Consistency with the medium-term budgetary framework (MTBF)

The scope of the new strategy corresponds to the 12 Budget Programme. Statistical, archiving and civil status system' and sub-programmes 1201 respectively. Policies and management in the field of statistics', 1202. Statistical Works', 1204. Conducting censuses' and 1207. Applied scientific research in the field of statistics". *Those* programmes relate in particular to the NBS. *The* financing of statistical activities carried out by other members of the SSN shall be carried

out within the limits of the budgets of these institutions allocated under budget programmes other than those devoted to statistics, but also with the support of development partners. The projects in question often do not reflect the support provided for statistical activities, which are not related to the sector “Building statistical capacity” (code 16062 according to the DAC/OECD External Assistance Committee Sector Classification (<https://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/purposesectorclassification.htm>) under the External Assistance Coordination and Management Mechanism (Governmental Platform for External Assistance Management, <http://amp.gov.md>). Respectively, neither the medium-term budgetary framework nor the sectoral spending strategies implemented by the members of the SSN are specified in sufficient detail or are missing data on expenditure for statistical work.

The strategy took into account budgetary constraints and available sources from potential donors and development partners. The details of financing the implementation of the Strategy will be reflected in the medium-term programmes, which will be further developed (based on a separate concept, in accordance with Government Decision No 386/2020).

Section 4

Consistency with government priorities and other planning and public policy documents

In addition to the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”, the proposed Strategy also took into account the provisions of other strategic planning documents under preparation or implementation in order to ensure a single and consistent approach to the area in question.

The strategy also touches upon other planning and public policy documents in the implementation or development process, in which the necessary supporting objectives have been integrated into the development of statistics specific to certain domains, such as:

1) The environmental strategy for the years 2014-2023 and the Action Plan for its implementation (approved by Government Decision No 301/2014), which provides for the establishment and development of an integrated environmental information system, the drawing up and approval of the list of environmental indicators;

2) The programme for the years 2022-2025 on the implementation of the Strategy for Strengthening Inter-ethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for the years 2017-2027 (approved by Government Decision No 1464/2016) and the Programme for the Support of the Roma for the years 2022-2025 (in the process of drafting), including activities on consultation with institutions responsible for policies in the field of national/ethnic minorities, civil society organisations, ethnic minority associations on the topics to be collected under the next Population and

Housing Census (LR or census) and on promoting the participation of representatives of ethnic minorities in the conduct of the census (as census), as well as in the LR itself;

3) National Child Protection Programme for the years 2022-2026 (approved by Government Decision No 347/2022), which includes specific objective 1.2. Making the coordination by the Central Child Protection Authority of the child protection system more effective on the basis of records provided by an automated child protection information system to be in place in 2024 and a set of 50 institutionalised national indicators by 2023’;

4) The action plan for the years 2021-2022 on the implementation of the National Strategy for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence for the years 2018-2023 (approved by Government Decision No 318/2021), including activities on strengthening systems for collecting, analysing and disseminating sectoral statistical data and ensuring regular monitoring of the dynamics of the phenomenon of violence against women and domestic violence;

5) Set of measures on the delivery of Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of the Republic of Moldova provided by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (in the process of implementation) – with actions to improve data to be disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, geographical location and other relevant factors;

6) The Education – 2030 development strategy (in the drafting process);

7) National Health Strategy 2031 (finalising);

8) Tourism National Development Programme, Tourism 2026’ (in the process of finalisation).

Furthermore, public institutions and development partners are encouraged to integrate SSN development objectives into public policies and assistance projects, in line with the vision and objectives of this Strategy. The NBS will monitor this process to ensure efficient inter-institutional coordination, including external assistance, on its implementation and to avoid possible overlaps and inconsistencies.

The results of the Strategy are important not only at strategic document level, but also at operational level, including for the National Development Plan and efficient planning of the national public budget and its components. It is of particular importance for the allocation of budgetary resources to users with disaggregated data, including by sex, on population at territorial level, as well as qualitative data in the economic, social and environmental spheres.

Section 5

Authorities and institutions involved in the process of developing the Strategy

The parties directly involved in the process of developing the Strategy are:

- 1) BNS – as central statistical authority and strategic coordinator of the strategy development process;
- 2) BNM – as an independent authority, which develops and produces official statistics in its area of competence in accordance with Law No 548/1995 on the National Bank of Moldova and in accordance with the fundamental principles of official statistics laid down in Law No 93/2017 on official statistics;
- 3) central public authorities and other public institutions concerned;
- 4) holders of administrative and private data sources relevant for the production of official statistics;
- 5) development partners in the UN system – as donors and supporters of the process;
- 6) national and international experts from UN agencies and other international bodies – supporting the development of the Strategy;
- 7) The National Council for Statistics – as an advisory body in the field of statistics which endorses the draft strategy;
- 8) local public authorities;
- 9) NGOs, academic institutions and analytical groups – as users of statistical data;
- 10) business – as respondents/providers, but also users of statistical data.

The parties concerned were consulted throughout the process of developing the Strategy. In this respect, the following consultation tools were used:

- 1) the creation of coordinating and technical working groups made up of representatives of public institutions that are members of and interact with the SSN, where the document has been discussed several times with a view to finalising it;
- 2) conducting online research involving public institutions – SSN partners to assess the current situation and identify policy challenges and priorities.

42 respondents from the following institutions participated in the survey: The Agency ‘Waters of Moldova’, the ‘Moldsilva’ Agency, the National Agency for Social Assistance, the National Agency for Public Health, the National Agency for Food Safety, the Agency for Land and Cadastre Relations, the State Agency for Intellectual Property, the National Agency for Employment, the National Agency for Regulation in Electronic Communications and Information Technology, the Public Services Agency, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Migration and Asylum Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Bank of Moldova, the National Social Insurance Agency, the National Medical Insurance Company, the National Financial Market Commission, the State Labour Inspectorate, the General Inspectorate of the Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Environmental Protection Inspectorate, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Environment, the

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Health, the Service of Information Technologies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs;

3) online consultation by placing relevant Strategy material on the official webpage www.particip.gov.md and www.statistica.gov.md;

4) collecting and systematising opinions from consulted public institutions;

5) organisation of separate stakeholder advisory workshops as follows:

a) producers of official statistics and administrative data holders;

b) private, academic and associative data users;

c) data users in the public domain;

d) the Community of development partners;

6) organisation of online consultative workshops with the participation of the territorial subdivisions of the NBS in the regions of the country;

7) consulting the opinion of international statistical experts on the draft strategy;

8) online opinion survey on user insurance with BNS products and services (June-July 2021, https://statistica.gov.md/ro/sondaj-de-opinie-online-privind-gradul-de-satisfactie-al-utilizatorilor-9933_3824.html);

9) the survey of data users (https://statistica.gov.md/ro/sondaj-de-opinie-privind-gradul-de-satisfactie-al-utilizatorilor-9933_59958.html) within the SSN, the results of which will serve as a basis for the development of indicators for monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy.

Chapter II

ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

Section 1

Definition of SSN problems

Most of the actions foreseen under the Strategy for the Development of the National Statistical System for the previous period, years 2016-2020 (*hereafter – SD SSN 2016-2020*), according to the Strategy Implementation Monitoring Report (https://statistica.gov.md/files/files/despre/Consiliul%20National%20pentru%20Statistica/24_iunie_2021/Anexa_1_Raport_monitorizare_implementarea_SDSS_N_2016-2020.pdf), were fully or partially implemented (out of the total actions/sub-actions planned for the years 2016-2020, more than 44 % were fully implemented, 45 % partially and 11 % were not implemented). Priorities that remain current and critical include strengthening human resources, implementing innovative methods and developing the integrated statistical information system of the NBS. This Strategy aims to address these problems.

Key factors hampering the full realisation of SD SSN 2016-2020 include insufficient financing of the area of official statistics, major delays in starting and implementing technical assistance projects for the NBS, limited institutional statistical capacities (data production and use), in particular as a result of the 2018

reform of the central public administration, and the functional constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At present, SSN is facing major problems that erode its ability to produce and effectively provide official statistics needed to make decisions and develop informed policies, but also to report on the fulfilment of international commitments in statistics and other areas of government activity. Among the most difficult issues addressed in this Strategy are:

1) insufficient recognition of the value of statistical data as an information resource indispensable to the act of governance and the protection of human rights and of vulnerable people, as a public good for the sustainable and equitable development of society;

2) incomplete institutional independence;

3) the level of institutional development and professional independence sufficient to ensure the sustainable development of SSN;

4) insufficient financial and human resources allocations for the functioning of a sustainable and efficient SSN;

5) limited opportunities and resources to attract and maintain qualified statistical staff, in particular within the NBS, as the central statistical authority, to meet growing data demand, international methodological requirements and support needs of other statistical data producers;

6) the lack of an efficient and sustainable system of initial and continuous training in statistics for professional development and empowerment with capabilities of innovation, information technologies, data science and know-how;

7) the untapped role of the NBS in coordinating SSN;

8) limited and sporadic use of new systems, technologies, ICT solutions and data sources in the context of the data revolution (<https://www.undatarevolution.org/2014/09/26/deputy-secretary-generals-data-revolution/>)(e.g. Big Data, Open Data, Geographic Information Systems, Artificial Intelligence) that hamper optimum automation and innovation in statistical processes and methods (e.g.: web scraping, machine learning, etc.);

9) failure to exploit existing data sources and available information resources by limiting the access of statistical data producers to administrative and private data sources for the purpose of producing official statistics, which can be solved by strengthening the technical, operational, regulatory and human capacities required by statistical and personal data protection legislation, and ensuring uniform interpretation of the provisions of that legislation;

10) the lack of a one-size-fits-all approach to ensuring the implementation of quality standards and international methodological recommendations on statistical processes and production of statistical outputs at the level of each official statistics producer and at the level of SSN as a whole;

11) low statistical culture and data literacy in state institutions and society as a whole, as well as limited abilities for efficient dissemination and compliant use of data.

Section 2

Analysis in the light of the principles of the Code best practice in European statistics

Below are the results of the SSN evaluation in the light of the principles set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice (with reference to the institutional environment, statistical processes and statistical outputs), thus providing an update of the assessment reflected in the overall SSN Assessment Report carried out by EUROSTAT and the UN Economic Commission for Europe in 2019 (https://statistica.gov.md/files/files/despre/evaluare_opinii/externe/GA_Moldova_Final_Report_Ro.pdf). The analytical framework for the assessment of SSN was based on the systemic analysis of the main drivers for statistical activity that positively or negatively influence the performance of the SSN, as well as on the analysis of the interlinkages between them.

Subsection 1

Professional independence

The professional independence of the NBS as the central statistical authority, as coordinator of the SSN, is a fundamental principle determining users' confidence in the quality of statistical data. In order to ensure the credibility of the data, independence must be ensured both from other public entities and from private entities. In the European Statistics Code of Practice, professional independence appears as the first principle, which once again underlines its importance.

As the central statistical authority, the NBS enjoys a relatively high level of professional independence. That principle is expressly laid down in Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, which provides that the NBS is an independent institutional and professional administrative authority directly subordinated to the Government. The heads of the NBS are appointed on the basis of professional criteria, which ensures a professional level appropriate to the position. In order to preserve independence, the NBS preserves political neutrality as required by the law, at the same time political neutrality is also part of the organisational culture. Thus, when drawing up the Statistical Work Programme, the decision to include or exclude some statistical works must belong to the NBS as the central statistical authority.

Some cumulative elements may be risky for professional independence. The NBS faces some constraints preventing it from fully deciding, as the national statistical authority, on statistical methods, standards and procedures, as required by Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, as some national legislative acts in force impose binding rules for the NBS as regards the way in which data are collected, accessed and stored (e.g. the electronic single window for reporting, difficulties in

accessing individual data, in particular personal data), without taking into account the specificities of the statistical activity. These rules are rigid and do not provide the necessary flexibility to adapt and continuously improve data collection tools. Moreover, the visibility and public image of the NBS at national level regrettably does not amount to its high position in the institutional hierarchy and its highly favourable international image. Together with the insufficient funding of the NBS, these shortcomings can create, in the long term, an enabling environment for the erosion of independence. Furthermore, the NBS does not have sufficient capacity to intervene regularly and promptly by properly informing the public about the misuse of official statistics. At a more technical level, as shown by the results of the Global Assessment of the SSN, the provisions of the regulatory framework on the security of the deputy directors' functions and on the exclusive powers of the Director-General for the approval of statistical methods are not sufficiently robust.

The government respects the professional independence of the NBS. At the same time, the functional nature of independence is directly related to the volume and quality of official statistics for decision-making, the level of cost-effectiveness demonstrated by the NBS. Some of these elements, primarily cost efficiency, are to be actively improved by the NBS, which will also strengthen its professional independence. It also involves investing in volume and time to improve information systems, improve working conditions and substantially increase the salaries of BNS employees up to the level of remuneration of similar qualification positions in other public institutions in the Republic of Moldova.

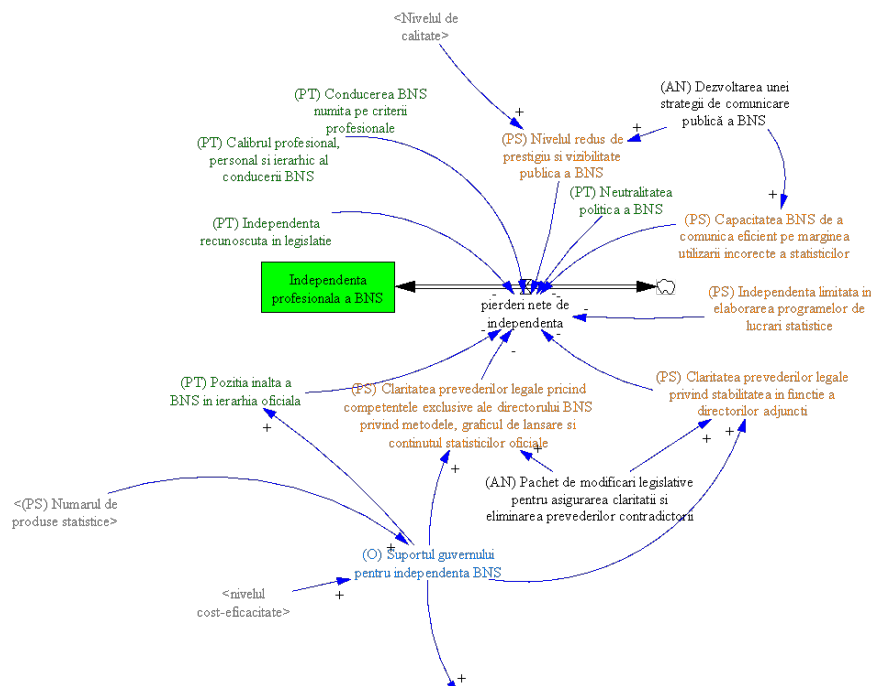


Figure 1. Graphicrepresentation of factors influencing professional independence

Subsection 2

Mandate for data collection

The existence of extensive and well-defined instruments within the regulatory framework for the national statistical authority is a fundamental and imperative principle for the efficient implementation of the work. This process involves broad interaction with households, business, central and local public authorities, and the general public, which is why the focus on data collection in the national statistical system must be a major one.

The current legal framework, through Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, explicitly defines the mandate of the NBS for data collection. Under that legislation, holders of administrative data, as well as other legal persons, which manage databases relating to natural and legal persons, are required to submit, free of charge, the data required by the central statistical authority for the compilation of official statistics in accordance with the programme of statistical works. The same law also provides the legal framework for carrying out statistical research to collect data from natural and legal persons. Despite the existence of these rules in national legislation, which are in the spirit of the European Statistics Code of Practice, the reality shows major vulnerabilities in the ability to implement the legal provisions on the mandate to access personal data by the NBS, in particular from administrative but also private data sources, for the production of official statistics.

In this respect, it is necessary to operate, in line with European standards and best practices of amendments to the existing legal framework, including Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, which would give the BNS effective access to the necessary individual datasets, including those containing personal data, which are contained in the information resources/databases managed by public and private sector data holders. For example, restricted access to personal data on state border crossings by natural persons jeopardises the timely estimation of the migratory flow and the number of the population habitually resident at national and territorial level, respectively. Alternative reception of anonymised data hinders the integration of data from various administrative data sources and resulting in the efficiency and quality of the production of official statistics. At the same time, in cases of access to individual data, the NBS shall implement the necessary organisational and technical measures to ensure an adequate level of data protection, proportionate to the risks and means used, and in the case of dissemination of official statistical data respecting statistical confidentiality.

The difficulties preventing the NBS from fully benefiting from compliance with the provisions of the Law on official statistics by the subjects concerned are also compounded by the shortage of specialists in the service subdivisions of the statistical system (lawyers, auditors, finance specialists, highly qualified ICT specialists, methodologies and data analytics specialists).

It should be noted that the exercise of the data collection mandate by the NBS indicates a low level of inter-institutional cooperation. As a result, despite the numerous discussions between the NBS and some holders of registers and other information resources, BNS access to individual data for statistical purposes, including personal data, as provided for in Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, currently remains largely untapped.

At the same time, there are also some ambiguities in the interpretation of the legal provisions concerning the obligation for private data holders to provide access to them at the request of the BNS for statistical purposes and the refusal of some private operators (e.g.: in the field of electricity supply, telephony operators) to allow the use of such data is a striking example of this.

At the same time, there is a need to further improve, in particular in terms of dialogue with data holders and explanation of the compatibility of statistical purposes with the subsequent use of individual data, the production of official statistics, but also the capacities and procedures of the NBS to ensure an adequate level of protection when using such data. At the same time, there is a need to intensify the relevant dialogue with the National Centre for Personal Data Protection and the holders of information resources in order to unify the practice of implementing legislation on the protection of personal data in accordance with the fundamental principles of statistics and the principles of protection of personal data in European Union law and best practices in these areas. Increasing professional independence and the adequacy of human resources can also contribute to better implementation of statistical legislation.

Given that one of the basic pillars on which the current Strategy is built concerns the full integration of all producers of official statistics into the SSN, a study assessing the needs and challenges of producing and disseminating statistical data has been carried out with the participation of SSN institutions and their partners. The study, which included 42 respondents – representatives of 30 institutions – reveals that the mandate to produce statistics in the areas relevant to the institution is most frequently indicated in government decisions – 14 responses, followed by laws (7) and other legislative acts (5), while 7 participants mentioned the lack of express provisions in legislation.

At the same time, when it comes to the stages of the statistical process in which they are involved, the data collection/acquisition phase is indicated by most respondents (32 replies), while almost similar numbers of survey participants ticked that the institutions they represent also deal with data processing and analysis (31). In this chapter, it should be emphasised that 3/4 of those involved in collecting and obtaining data have significant difficulties in this process, while 58 % have difficulties in data processing and analysis. The essence of these difficulties is explained by the answers to the question on the main constraints on the institution in producing and/or disseminating statistical data. Thus, the responses that became detached into respondents' choices are understaffing (24 responses) and the information system with limited functionalities (21). At the

same time, 1 out of 3 respondents mentioned the inadequate quality of the collected primary data, while insufficient funding and poor collaboration with other institutions can be found in the replies of 1 out of 4 participants.

As regards the data source, the statistical information produced by the institutions surveyed is in many cases based on information from several data sources. Most often the data obtained from administrative sources held by the institution in its own right (29 replies) were invoked, followed by data obtained directly from other entities (22). 18 other institutions also indicated that they also make use of other public sources (administrative data sources held by other institutions, etc.), while only 4 institutions also mentioned the collection of data directly from the population.

In the same vein, the areas for which the institutions surveyed produce statistics are diverse and those most frequently listed include social protection, population and demographic processes, environment, finance, justice and crime, pay and health.

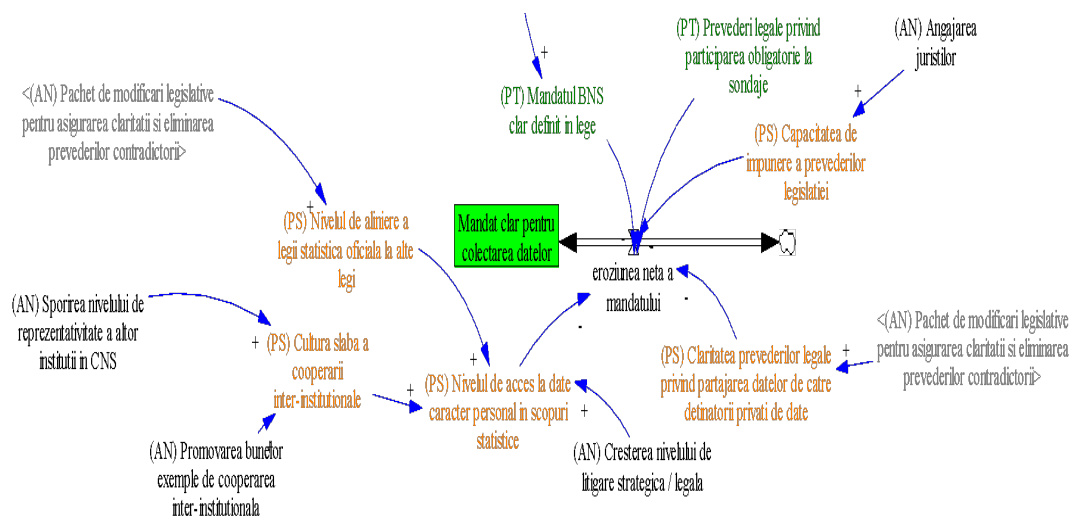


Figure 2. Graphical representation of factors influencing the exercise of the mandate for data collection

Subsection 3 Sufficiency and preparedness of human resources

Human resources are the key resource of the national statistical system. The staff employed in the system must be sufficient, in terms of numbers, to effectively respond to the tasks assigned to them. In this context, it is worth mentioning the clear trend of increasing and diversifying the demand for statistical data from an increasing spectrum of users, implying the hiring of more new staff. Secondly, the qualitative aspect of human resources, including professional qualification, field of training, level and spectrum of knowledge of data science, as well as practical skills, is also of utmost importance. The level of training of the workforce determines the extent to which the statistical system can keep up with

methodological and technological changes, as well as the efficiency of using other resources to produce data with an informative value that suits the needs of society and people.

The analysis carried out shows that the human resources problem is critical and has a long-term impact for the national statistical system, the situation being relatively more difficult than in other sectors. Data on fluctuation and frame needs are only available for the NBS, but there is no reason to believe that the situation is much better for other potential producers of official statistics.

According to the staff states in force at the beginning of 2022, 2 022.705 units were foreseen within the NBS, of which 242 in the central apparatus and 463 in its territorial subdivisions (regional centres for statistics). At the time only 635 posts were actually occupied, including 216 posts in the central apparatus (89.3 % filling grade) and 419 in the regional structure (90.5 %). At the same time, 51 posts in the NBS Staff States were included in the temporary (but continued 2-year) moratorium on the recruitment of staff in the budget sector. These data show that the pressure on BNS specialists, in particular in the central apparatus, is high, while the professional qualification requirements vis-à-vis them are high. In addition, the level of fluctuation of frameworks in the years 2019-2021 was from 6 % to 7.4 %. The average age of BNS staff increased from 41.4 years in 2016 to 47.0 in 2019, 48.1 years in 2020 and 48.6 years in 2021.

Although the NBS traditionally focuses on the input of young specialists from statistical specialists, the prospects of this source of potential human resources in the field have become more uncertain. Firstly, the number of students admitted to the faculty of statistics over the last decade has been very low and no new groups have been formed since 2017. Secondly, data show that only just over half of those admitted are successful in completing the statistical specialty and still fewer choose to start a career in the statistical system. The root cause is again the very low level of pay in the positions of entrance to the profession of statistician compared to the opportunities for complexity and similar profile in the public and private sectors. This factor is even more important in the case of traditional specialities considered 'auxiliary' to SSN, but which are clearly becoming increasingly important, such as ICT specialists, GIS, legal support or communication. For the holders of these specialities, the level of salaries of entry into other public institutions and the private sector relative to the level provided by the NBS is even higher than for statisticians. This caused vacant posts at the end of 2021 (70 posts), even above the moratorium (51 posts).

On the other hand, several reflows are constantly reducing the stock of human resources committed to the NBS. Some of the staff leave after retirement, and the increase in the average age of staff in the scheme observed over the last decade suggests that the influence of this factor will increase over time. There is also a backflow of highly qualified young and medium age staff opting for better-paid positions in other public and private entities in the country and abroad. Once again, the NBS is disadvantaged by an unfavourable wage ratio, thus losing a

number of key specialists in recent years. Burnout is another significant cause of the exodus of specialists. The explanation of burnout is an unfavourable combination of relatively low intrainstitutional mobility (having the same job over a long period of time) and high pressure falling on employed staff, triggering a vicious circle of burnout and early departure from the system. The assumption by the BNS of the new obligations of statistical products and processes further increases the staffing needs in the central apparatus and increases the pressure on current staff, where the level of automation of statistical processes and data collection is low and the ICT system is fragmented and largely obsolete.

With the intention of compensating, at least in part, for low salaries, the NBS is making substantial efforts to provide staff with non-financial motivation, including training opportunities and professional development. The professional training of BNS staff can be seen as high in purely statistical domains, but there are weaknesses elsewhere, such as ICT, communication skills in foreign languages (in particular English), as well as a number of soft skills related to self-organisation, public presentation and communication, teamwork, stress management, time management, project management, etc. The requirement for these “ancillary” skills is growing more prominently, as highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes they have brought about in the culture and organisation of work. A possible comprehensive automation and standardisation of statistical processes will also increase ICT skills needs.

The level of education of staff depends on both initial training and the intensity, quality and relevance of the continuing education process. Training, including self-training and continuous training organised by the employer, implies that staff have the necessary time to train, with the NBS facing critical constraint, with working time already under major pressure due to ever-increasing current tasks. The NBS makes use of ad hoc training opportunities as a matter of priority, while scheduled training opportunities are less used, given that following the last reorganisation in 2018 it was deprived of the opportunity to set up a training centre dedicated to statistics, as it did not have the staff responsible for organising the training. The unfavourable ratio between ad-hoc and programmed training makes training opportunities uneven, uninterrupted and accessible to a limited number of employees and reduces the relevance, timeliness and durability of previous training. The sustainability of the acquired skills also depends on their practical exploitation in the work process – for example, where the ICT systems of the BNS remain behind methodological, technical and technological trends, many of the skills learned remain theoretical and cannot be used in a practical way. Thus, the knowledge gained and the skills learned are quickly forgotten.

As suggested by the results of the survey of other statistical data producers, the staff problem is equally acute for them: 23 out of the 42 respondents who responded referred to “understaffing” as one of the main constraints on the institutions in producing and disseminating statistical data.

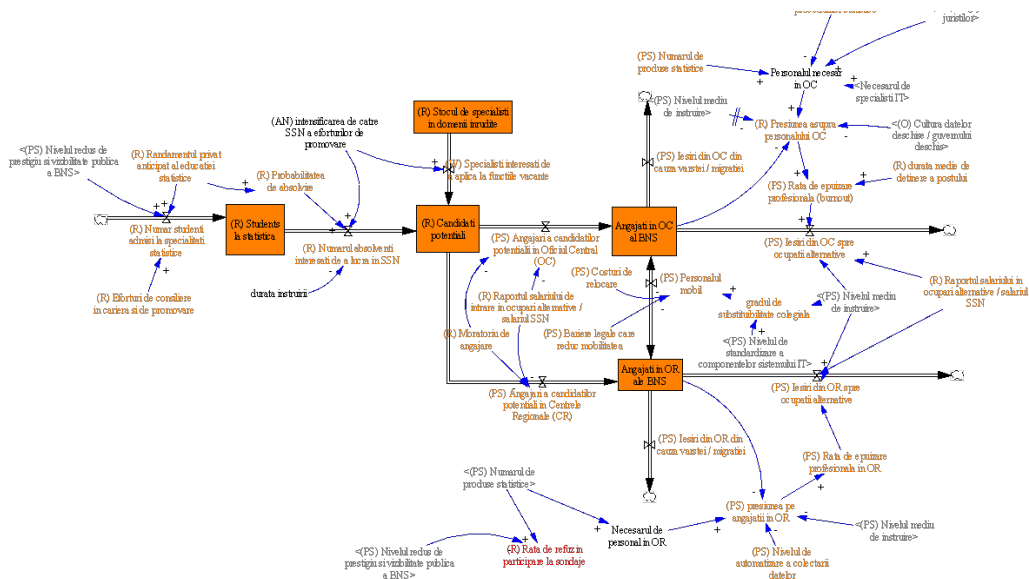


Figure 3. Graphical representation of factors influencing sufficiency and training of human resources

Subsection 4 Adequacy of financial resources

Ensuring continued and sustainable funding is a key element for the successful implementation of statistical activities and the effective implementation of the strategic objectives. It is vital that every effort be made to ensure that the financial coverage of the activities ensures that the tasks of the NBS and the producers of official statistics are carried out within the most predictable possible framework.

In general, the financing of the activities of the NBS takes place through the state budget as well as through various external assistance projects supported by the donor community. From a planning point of view, there are 3 sub-programmes from the budget classification dedicated to SSN, namely: 1201 – policies and management in the field of statistics, 1202 – Statistical work and, where appropriate, 1204 – Conduct of censuses.

The analysis of the implementation of budgets in recent years shows that past levels of funding for statistical activities only cover core activity and are dominated by around 85 % of salary expenditure, which does not allow for the modernisation and dynamic development of the SSN. The approved spending implementation levels are generally high – 99.0 % in 2019, 92.3 % in 2020 and 92.1 % in 2021. This is one explanation if we take into account that the budget is dominated by expenditure on labour remuneration. The biggest challenge for the statistical authority in terms of funding is at the resource planning stage. A good illustration of this statement concerns the financing of preparatory work for the Population and Housing Census (LR), World Round 2020 (planned for 2024), which does not correspond to the actual needs of the LR. Thus, out of the amount

of RON 20.4 million needed in 2021 for the preparation of the LR 2023, only RON 2.4 million (11.8 % compared to the need) were planned in the State budget.

An impediment to the measurement of the specific costs of statistical work activities (research) is the lack of a time recording system that would allow the evaluation of the costs of statistical products and provide a basis for linking the products to the annual programme of statistical works with the necessary resources.

In terms of support from development partners, the NBS is supported by several external partners for statistical activities and the most significant contributions in recent years have been made by projects supported by the European Union and UN agencies (<https://statistica.gov.md/pageview.php?l=ro&id=6755&idc=622>). However, for external assistance too, a predictable framework is not always achieved, and the experience of SD SSN 2016-2020, where several actions could not be carried out due to the postponement/cancellation of external projects, is a striking example. It should be noted that at institutional level the coordination of external projects lies with the Directorate for Statistical Coordination and International Cooperation. De facto, this subdivision is mainly focused on operational activities and strategic fundraising efforts to bridge the gap between the available public resources and the statistical authority's needs *for* modernisation and achievement of objectives largely fall to the executive management of the NBS, which also highlights staffing constraints, which also negatively affects the possibilities for the NBS to attract external technical assistance. It may also be added to this chapter the need to strengthen the coordinating role of the external sectoral support of the NBS by reviving the Sectoral Council in the field of external assistance related to statistics in accordance with Government Decision No 377/2018, which will help to better coordinate and attract technical and financial assistance. Previous attempts to set up such a committee have yielded modest results, leading to a single meeting in 2017, but taking into account the lessons learned and the new provisions of the regulatory framework, this can be reinvigorated in the right direction.

In terms of funding, the level of prioritisation of statistics by the Government remains the most influential and impactful variable, and the decision-makers' culture of policy making, analysis and monitoring based on data and records is one of the key factors determining that level. The priority given by the Government depends both on the allocation of a sustainable budget to support strategic activities, the overall coordination on attracting and managing external assistance in the area of statistics, and the frequency of unexpected cuts in some expenditure due to the occurrence of unpredictable events requiring budget cuts.

Respondents' replies in the SSN Evaluation Questionnaire on the approach to the financing of statistical activities within the institution's budget in most cases suggest that the production of statistics either occupies a significant place in terms of weight or is not a priority for the institutions concerned. Thus, in the 33 valid answers to the question asked, 63.6 % of respondents mentioned that expenditure

the related operating systems are no longer supported by manufacturers. Storage equipment is aged and used and must be replaced by more efficient equipment. Thus, the technical infrastructure of the NBS requires renewal and upgrading in line with modern ICT and information security requirements. The Directorate-General for Information Technologies of the BNS is in crisis with ICT staff, which also has a negative impact on the maintenance and development of ICT infrastructure.

Data connectivity between BNS and other data providers is performed through the Interoperability Platform (MConnect) managed by the Electronic Government Agency. It is currently used by the NBS for access to a small number of data sources and will be extensively usable with the provision by administrative registrars of the necessary web services for BNS access to individual data, in particular personal data.

Some progress has been made in the use of the Joint Governmental Technology Platform (MCloud). Thus, some BNS IT applications have been transferred to MCloud, this process being restricted in particular by the fact that a number of applications are being developed in ORACLE, which is currently not supported under the Joint Governmental Technology Platform (MCloud).

Some improvements to the ICT infrastructure have been initiated by developing a metadata system to develop an integrated statistical information system for statistical production processes, which are currently fragmented, with each statistical production activity using its own programmes and information flows. At the same time, a detailed assessment of the ICT infrastructure is needed to identify the complex development needs of hardware and software components and to develop a roadmap for the development of the statistical information system.

According to the survey of BNS partner institutions in the statistical production process, an important obstacle to maintaining a modern and efficient ICT infrastructure for the production and dissemination of statistical data is the inability to attract and maintain relevant and highly qualified staff due to the low level of financial motivation.

The main reasons behind these problems are the following:

1) difficulties in legal expertise and ICT hold back the pace of regulatory adjustment, including in order to gain access to administrative data sources;

2) most investment in ICT infrastructure, with the exception of the years 2021-2022, when large amounts (more than RON 4 million per year) were allocated to the area in question from the state budget for the first time, came from technical assistance projects, making it difficult to systematically replace obsolete hardware and software;

3) the uncompetitive salary of IT specialists, both in comparison with the salary level in the real sector of the economy and in relation to civil servants, which hinders the attraction and retention of ICT staff.

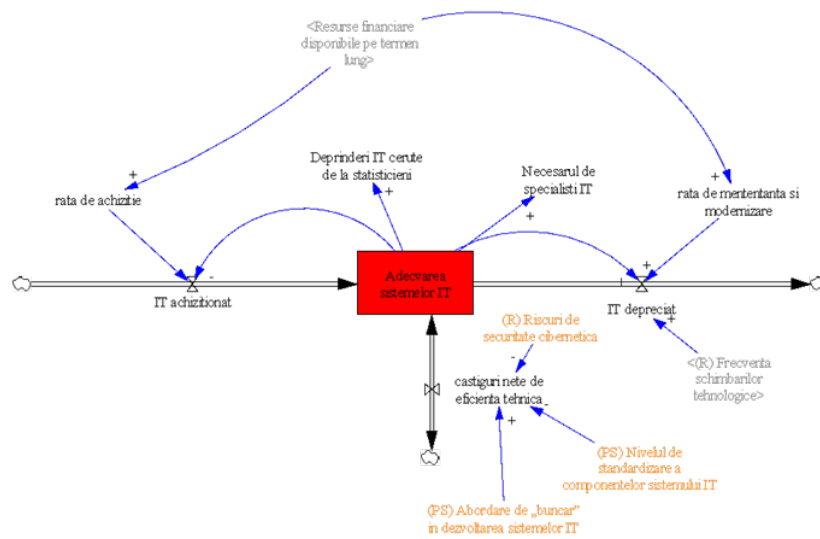


Figure 5. Graphical representation of factors influencing ICT infrastructure

Subsection 6 Commitment to the quality of statistical data

The provision of qualitative statistical services involves the promotion of international standards for data production, as well as prompt responses to user requirements. The improvement of data quality is achieved through the adoption and implementation of quality standards. In turn, the implementation of quality standards leads to improvements in the functioning of the SSN, which is manifested by: (I) the use of standardised classifiers and nomenclatures by all actors involved in the statistical work (producers of statistics and holders of administrative data sources relevant to official statistics), (ii) provision of relevant statistics and (iii) providing access to statistical data and metadata enabling the correct interpretation of statistical information.

The implementation of the quality management system is a priority for BNS and NBS. The commitment on the quality of official statistics is laid down in Law No 93/2017 on official statistics. The quality policy was adopted by BNS Order No 52/a of 10 July 2017, which in fact transposes the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The NBS quality policy addresses 3 components and provides:

1) **Institutional environment.** The efficiency and credibility of official statistical products is influenced by organisational and institutional factors. The institutional environment is characterised by: professional and institutional independence, mandate of producers of official statistics for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality and data protection, impartiality and objectivity;

2) **Statistical processes.** In the production of official statistics, the NBS complies with European and other international standards and best practices. The production process is supported by robust methodologies, appropriate statistical procedures, monitoring and ensuring a non-excessive burden on respondents, compliance with the principle of cost-effectiveness;

3) **Statistical production.** The official statistics published correspond to quality standards and serve the needs of the central and local public authorities of the Republic of Moldova, international and European organisations, research institutions, business and the general public. The production and dissemination of official statistical data is characterised by relevance, accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, coherence and comparability (<https://statistica.gov.md/ro/calitatea-in-statistica-142.html>).

The BNS has an internal audit and quality management unit (section). However, this unit focuses more on the internal audit of administrative processes than on the quality management of statistical activities and products.

A series of activities are carried out within the NBS which relate to monitoring the quality of the production of official statistics, but there is no holistic approach in this area. Different quality assurance procedures are carried out in the different statistical production processes. Thus, quality indicators are produced, such as non-response rates, coefficients of variation and confidence intervals for the Labour Force Survey, Household Budget Research and Corporate Structural Survey (Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Moldova, 2019, p. 40). Production systems include data validation modules at different stages of the production process (data input, processing and tabulation) (Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Moldova, 2019, p. 40). It has also recently been used to produce metadata in SIMS (Single Integrated Metadata Structure) format for some statistical research (Labour Force Survey, PRODMOLD Industrial Products Research and Social Protection Statistics), which are also quality reports, and this approach is also to be implemented for the rest of statistical research.

The data provided by the BNS are accompanied by reference metadata, presented in a format aligned with the European Union ESMS (Euro SDMX Metadata Structure) standard, and are available to users on its webpage. External evaluation reports of SSN, including the quality of the statistics produced, e.g. evaluation reports, are also placed on the NBS webpage: overall of the national statistical system; industry statistics; evaluation of business statistics; evaluation of population statistics; education statistics.

The NBS is taking steps to improve official statistical outputs, but there is no systematic quality management approach. For example, for certain areas improvement actions are discussed in dedicated inter-ministerial groups (gender statistics or regional statistics). The creation of the National Council for Statistics also offers the possibility to regularly consult the users of data on the quality of the statistics submitted. External experts are also used to assess certain statistical

domains in more detail. The NBS, in its work, shall take into account, as far as possible (technical, financial, etc.), the results of consultations and evaluations in order to improve the quality of its statistical products.

In general, the NBS pays greater attention to quality assurance and takes various actions in this regard. Quality management is now rather carried out within a systemic framework that is not yet well established. Although several quality management activities are carried out, they are not yet based on fully standardised procedures. In particular, this finding concerns the monitoring of the quality of statistical processes and outputs. The BNS is currently developing the 'Quality Guide', which describes the quality requirements for statistical products and processes, and on the basis of which systematic quality assessment will be possible in the future. However, the development and implementation of the quality system is a relatively new activity for the NBS, which requires better knowledge of other States' advanced experience in the field, as well as addressing the problem of limited staffing availability. Within the BNM, greater attention is also paid to ensuring the quality of data produced and disseminated, including external evaluations to this end.

In addition to BNS and BNM, other data producers also have data quality assurance commitments stemming from: provisions of national normative acts (laws or government decisions), international agreements to which the Republic of Moldova is a party, or documents drawn up within the institutions. The questionnaire on the evaluation of SSN found that around 1/4 of respondents (23.7 %) stated that their institutions had produced internal documents providing for data quality assurance. Among the institutions that have adopted internal documents are: Moldovan Waters Agency, National Agency for Public Health, State Labour Inspectorate, General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. At the same time, 42.3 % of respondents said that data quality assurance is regulated by national legislation, including: The National Agency for Social Assistance, the Agency for Land and Cadastre Relations, the National Agency for Regulation in Electronic Communications and Information Technology, the Civil Aviation Authority, the National Social Insurance Agency, the National Financial Market Commission, the Environmental Protection Inspectorate and the Ministry of Finance. 13.2 % of respondents also said that international agreements require institutions to ensure the quality of the statistical data produced. These provisions are linked to the work of the following institutions: Migration and Asylum Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, BNM and Moldsilva Agency. At the same time, in several institutions, data quality assurance is governed by several documents at the same time. Thus, the Information Technology Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Information Technologies Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) contains provisions on data quality in internal documents, national legislative acts and international agreements, and at the National Employment Agency, the Public Services Agency and the General Inspectorate of the Border Police of the Ministry of Internal

Affairs are stipulated in internal documents and national legislative acts. It should be noted, however, that they are institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice, for which there are no documents regulating data quality assurance, and that attention is paid to this issue in the work of these institutions.

At the same time, only around 1/3 of interviewees (32.5 %) said that standardised data quality assurance procedures had been developed in their institutions. Institutions with standardised data quality assurance procedures include: The National Agency for Public Health, BNM, the National Financial Market Commission, the State Labour Inspectorate, the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the Information Technology Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The vast majority of institutions ensure quality without standardised procedures (55 % of respondents to the questionnaire). This is due to shortcomings in the coordination of the SSN. Consistency of statistical notions, definitions and classifications must be ensured within the SSN. At the same time, most statistical and administrative data producers lack the necessary staff to ensure the quality of statistics.

Regardless of the way in which compliance with the quality of the statistical data produced by the institutions interviewed is regulated, no reference has been made to the data quality assurance framework in the European Statistical System(<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/european-quality-standards/quality-assurance-framework>), the European Statistics Code of Practice or the fundamental principles of official statistics. The same is confirmed by respondents' answers to other relevant questions in the survey (such as the existence of methodologies for data production).

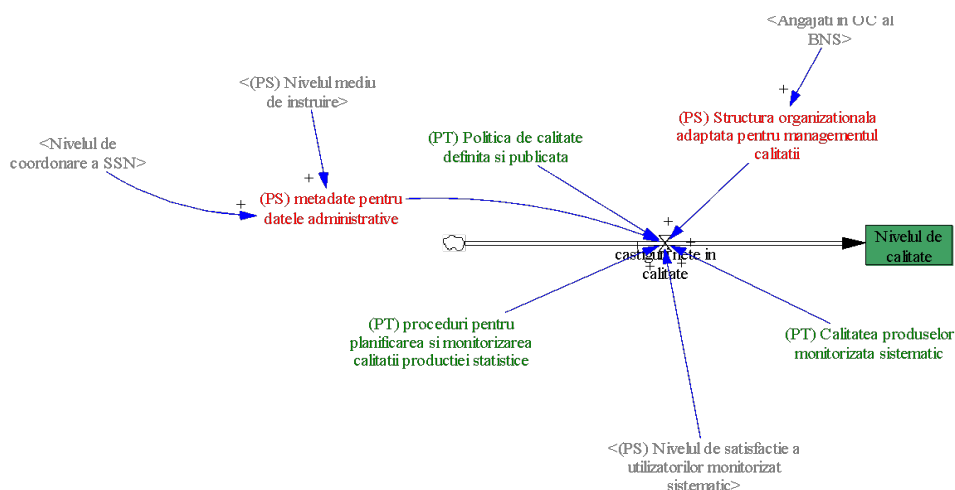


Figure 6. Graphical representation of factors influencing data quality

Subsection 7

Statistical confidentiality and data protection

Statistical confidentiality (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/statistical-confidentiality-and-personal-data-protection>) implies that data on persons or entities can only be used for statistical purposes and that specific rules and measures are in place to prevent the disclosure of information relating to a person or entity that allows them to be identified.

Guaranteeing the confidentiality and security of the data collected is one of the basic principles for the proper conduct of statistical activities. In addition to the need to respect the fundamental right of respondents to have their individual data protected when processing official statistics, efforts to ensure statistical confidentiality and data protection are also covered by the need to ensure a high level of credibility on the part of data providers, respondents and society at large.

The legal basis for ensuring statistical confidentiality is laid down in Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, with several provisions on statistical confidentiality, protection and access to data in the context of the production and dissemination of statistical information. The law shall clearly and unequivocally prohibit the disclosure of information which, directly or indirectly, allows statistical units to be identified. In general, the NBS has multiple procedures and systems in place to ensure that the principle of statistical confidentiality is respected in a practical way throughout the statistical processes.

Thus, BNS employees, including temporary employees, are required to sign on employment a privacy statement committing themselves to use the individual data for statistical purposes only. At the same time, sanctions for any intentional violation of statistical confidentiality are not directly specified either in Law No 93/2017 on official statistics or in the Republic of Moldova's administrative code No 218/2008 – where in essence these sanctions should be provided for.

The NBS has a policy on the security of personal data when processed within the institution's information systems. That policy aims to lay down the rules for the implementation by the NBS of the technical and organisational measures necessary to ensure the security, confidentiality and integrity of the personal data processed in the information systems and of the datasets and/or registers kept manually. On the other hand, a general privacy policy within the SSN with instructions of rigour and delivered to the public is not available. However, a draft of the Guide to ensure privacy and data protection, including disclosure control, is currently being developed. The purpose of this guide is to ensure data protection, with an organisational privacy model that includes behavioural principles and indicates the necessary measures to ensure that processes involving the processing of confidential data are managed in such a way as to promptly intercept and govern any situations of risk to the confidentiality of stakeholders, in a timely and consistent manner with European and national reference regulations.

At the same time, in order to facilitate secure access to statistical data for researchers, the BNS has developed the Regulation on Access to Individual Data for Scientific Purposes (<https://statistica.gov.md/ro/solicitare-de-acces-la-microdate-205.html>), which is operational, as well as a first Public Use File exercise. Under the scope of opportunities, the NBS could reduce potential disclosure risks by further developing an open data policy in the maximum amount possible.

From the statistical data dissemination perspective, during 2021 improvements were made to the procedures for the application of statistical disclosure control (CSDs) of data, as a result of training courses on the use of these methods, using the software 'Tau-Argus'. These methods shall prevent the indirect identification of individual data in the case of dissemination of statistics, including where they relate to less than 3 statistical units.

The most important exogenous factors with a significant impact on the principle of data privacy are resource adequacy and ICT infrastructure. Maintaining an up-to-date and realistically adapted ICT system can help maintain high privacy standards. Similarly, a policy of communication with the public that is equidistant, balanced and transparent can give a positive boost to privacy policy, while a motivated and dedicated staff dedicated to the values of the BNS is also a strong attribute for it.

The public perception of compliance with this statistical principle is predominantly positive. Thus, the results of the online survey from the evaluation of SD SSN 2016-2020 show that 38.2 % of respondents consider that the level of access to official statistical data while respecting the confidentiality of individual data has improved significantly, while 45.6 % noted some insignificant improvements.

In general, respondents' answers in the Evaluation Questionnaire of SD SSN 2016-2020 suggest that there are certain vulnerabilities in a good part of the institutions interviewed. Thus, out of the 39 valid answers to the question on the measures in place to ensure the protection and confidentiality of individual data, at the time of the study:

- 1) in 19 cases (49 %) there were no institutional-level regulations with the relevant confidentiality provisions;
- 2) in 20 cases (51 %) there was no obligation for employees working with individual data to sign a privacy statement;
- 3) in 15 cases (38 %), the institutions did not have information technology systems protecting data;
- 4) at the same time, 6 respondents (15 %) mentioned that the institutions in which they were active did not have data that would fall under the category of confidential data.

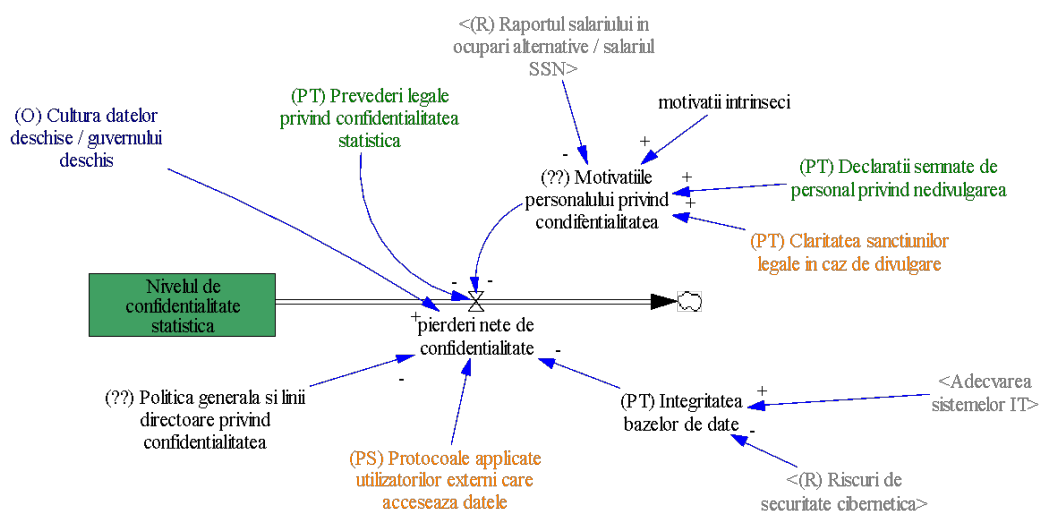


Figure 7. Graphical representation of factors influencing data privacy

Subsection 8 Impartiality and objectivity

Impartiality and objectivity can only be ensured where producers of official statistics compile, produce and disseminate statistics based exclusively on scientific methods, in an objective, professional, transparent and equal treatment of all data users. This is of critical importance in order to have credible data that can serve as a basis for making decisions informed by the records, and for the general public to trust them.

The existence of the legal provisions on objectivity and impartiality in Law No 93/2017 on official statistics and other legislative acts provides the necessary levers for the NBS to produce statistics on objective criteria determined by statistical considerations, and the choice of statistical sources and methods and decisions on the dissemination of statistics are informed by statistical considerations. The NBS has approved methodologies (<https://statistica.gov.md/ro/metodologii-statistice-104.html>) for statistical research and information about them and the data sources used are publicly available and disseminated through reference metadata (<https://statistica.gov.md/ro/metadata>), other methodological documents and statistical publications (<https://statistica.gov.md/ro/publications>). All revisions of the data shall be announced publicly and in advance. For the development of statistical toolkit for new research (https://statistica.gov.md/ro/bns-a-prezentat-proiectul-noului-chestionar-care-vizeaza-utilizarea-tic-12_1188.html) or revisions of important statistical data, communication measures are undertaken, such as the development of notes and stakeholder consultation

(https://statistica.gov.md/ro/procesul-de-recalculare-a-numarului-populatiei-cu-resedinta-obisnuita-12_1075.html).

The dissemination of press releases, publications and the update of the databank shall be carried out in accordance with the public dissemination calendar and all users have equal access to statistical products at the same time. Since 2020, the BNS has improved the content of statistical communications with several references that direct users to methodological clarifications, access to the databank, concepts and definitions, international statistics, presentation of data of tables and figures in digital format, in order to facilitate users' access to statistical data and metadata, thereby taking over international best practices and EUROSTAT recommendations.

One success in this compartment is that, in order to implement the quality management system, statistical processes according to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) model, promoted by UNECE (<https://statswiki.unece.org/display/GSBPM>), have been documented for some business and household statistical research. At the same time, there is some backlog since the implementation of SD SSN 2016-2020, which are still relevant, such as the implementation of statistical product quality principles in line with the European Statistics Code of Practice, but also the evaluation of the quality of statistical data and processes according to the rulers of the European Union. Communication BNS specialists regularly follow the media in order to keep track of the use of BNS data or products (maintaining the Press Revise – disseminated weekly in the intranet), detecting situations of misuse or bias in the statistics produced by the BNS and interacting with media sources in order to correct the information disseminated and eliminate such cases in the future. Thus, 120 actions were taken in 2021 and the first half of 2022, including 70 information emails and 50 telephone calls, to address, including corrigendum, the various statistical aspects of the journalistic material. At the same time, during this period, in 80 journalistic material, statistical data were corrected as a result of the intervention of the BNS, which represents around 70 % of all articles that made material errors and 3 % of the total occurrence of the media during this period. If the media source does not want to correct the manipulative or erroneous information, the BNS publishes a denial on the official website (https://statistica.gov.md/ro/anunt-12_624.html).

The lack of an automated media searching system and the low level of statistical education of journalists are challenges to be overcome.

The public perception of the evolution over time of that statistical principle (impartiality and objectivity) is overall positive. Thus, in the online survey carried out in summer 2021 as part of the evaluation process of SD SSN 2016-2020, 4 out of 5 respondents mentioned some improvements in the information calendars proposed to make available statistics and practical details of obtaining and accessing information at the databanks and other means of disseminating information by SSN members to the general public. A similar positive perception

of survey participants also had the organisation of the electronic library of statistical information content.

Compliance with the principles of impartiality is determined by the institution's commitment to quality, including the robustness of statistical methodologies and procedures, as well as the existence of a modern ICT infrastructure.

Respondents' answers in the SSN Evaluation Questionnaire (collected from respondents, except for the NBS) on how the institution's statistical data are disseminated/published show that the institution's webpage is the most popular way of 37 out of the 42 responding institutions. Press releases and the Open Data Portal www.date.gov.md were mentioned by 20 representatives of the institutions, while periodical publications – by 17 respondents.

When asked whether the dissemination of data is done according to a timetable, 39 % of respondents indicated that such a dissemination calendar did not exist, a further 36 % reported that such a timetable existed but was not available to the general public, while only 1/4 of the participants who replied to that question indicated that there were timetables for the dissemination of information available on the official website of the institutions.

Another important aspect for the impartiality and objectivity of the data is the existence of publicly available methodological specifications when disseminating the data. When asked about the issue at hand, out of the 39 valid responses only 4 respondents to the survey indicated that all the data disseminated were accompanied by methodological clarifications and 5 others that most of them were accompanied by such clarifications. The dominant response (17 cases) shows that only in some cases the disseminated data are accompanied by methodological details, whereas in 1/3 of cases the disseminated data are never accompanied by methodological details. The lack of methodological clarification influences the value and credibility of the data, i.e. once SSN producers have been identified, efforts should be concentrated to remedy these issues.

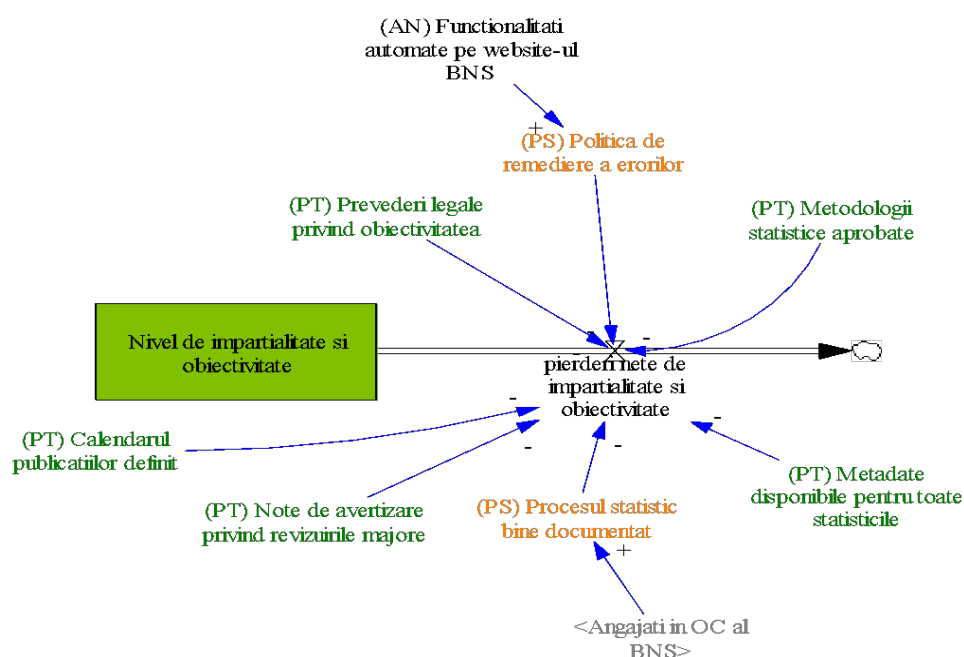


Figure 8. Graphical representation of factors that influences impartiality and objectivity

Subsection 9

Sound statistical methodologies

Providing qualitative statistical data, reflecting the reality with a high degree of accuracy and on the basis of which historical legalities and trends can be identified, is the primary task of producers of official statistics. Robust statistical methodologies are one of the basic factors ensuring the provision of qualitative statistical data.

The NBS and NBS have a clear policy to adopt methodologies based on international standards in the compilation of official statistics. Important progress has been made in this area. In recent years, new classifications and methodologies have been implemented which are linked to international rulers, in particular European ones. This makes it possible to make international comparisons between national statistics and those produced in other countries.

In general, the situation regarding the existence of statistical methodologies is good in the work of the NBS. The methodological framework used shall take into account international, including European, standards and best practices. However, not all domains or statistical research is yet based on international statistical methodologies, using a standardised approach. It should also be noted that during 2021 a standard structure of statistical methodologies was developed based on the GSBPM model, to be applied in all statistical domains. Several methodologies under this standard approach are currently being developed.

Succinct recommendations for the development of methodologies have also been developed and procedures have been put in place to ensure the consistent application of identical concepts, definitions and classifications across the statistical authority. Similarly, a number of national classifications are harmonised with international classifications, including those of the European Union. However, the process of aligning national classifications with international ones, in particular those of the European Union, needs to be stepped up.

BNM is also one of the producers of official statistics where a good record on the application of statistical methodologies is found. The methodologies applied by NEBs in the production of official statistics are in line with international recommendations

At the same time, other statistical data producers do not have publicly disclosed assessments of whether methodologies are in line with international standards. In this context, it is difficult to make certain findings on the alignment of methodologies used by other data producers with international standards.

Despite important progress, there are also risks related to the application and development of methodologies. A first issue concerns staff. It is becoming increasingly difficult to employ people with good skills either in statistics or in related fields: mathematics, sociology, economics (the problem is described in the chapter “Human resource efficiency and preparedness”). Another issue relates to the fact that the Moldovan academic world is insufficiently involved in the development of statistical methodologies. In turn, this problem is driven by several factors: (I) weakening the capacities of the national education system related to the ‘production’ of highly qualified specialists in statistics or related fields, leading to a decrease in the supply of researchers/scholars who are concerned with statistics; (II) low interest on the part of the State in financing research related to the development of the statistical domain; and (iii) the limited interest of the national scientific community in carrying out analyses/research related to the development of statistical methodologies.

Similarly, it should be noted that, at the request of the authorities, the NBS carries out a string of statistical research and works which have no similarities in the countries of the European Union (e.g.: statistical research on museum activity). International methodological recommendations are missing for these types of work and the BNS needs to develop statistical research methodologies in its own right. These activities represent an additional effort and put additional pressure on statisticians.

In general, it should be noted that most institutions produce data on the basis of methodologies that are not harmonised with international standards or on the basis of instructions where no separate methodologies are described. This opinion is divided by 53 % of the respondents to the survey on the evaluation of the SSN. Just over 1 / 4 of respondents said that the statistical data produced by the institutions they represent are based on national methodologies harmonised with international standards. Among the organisations that do this, we can mention: The

Agency “Moldsilva”, the National Agency for Public Health, the Civil Aviation Authority, the Migration and Asylum Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the BNM and the National Commission of the Financial Market.

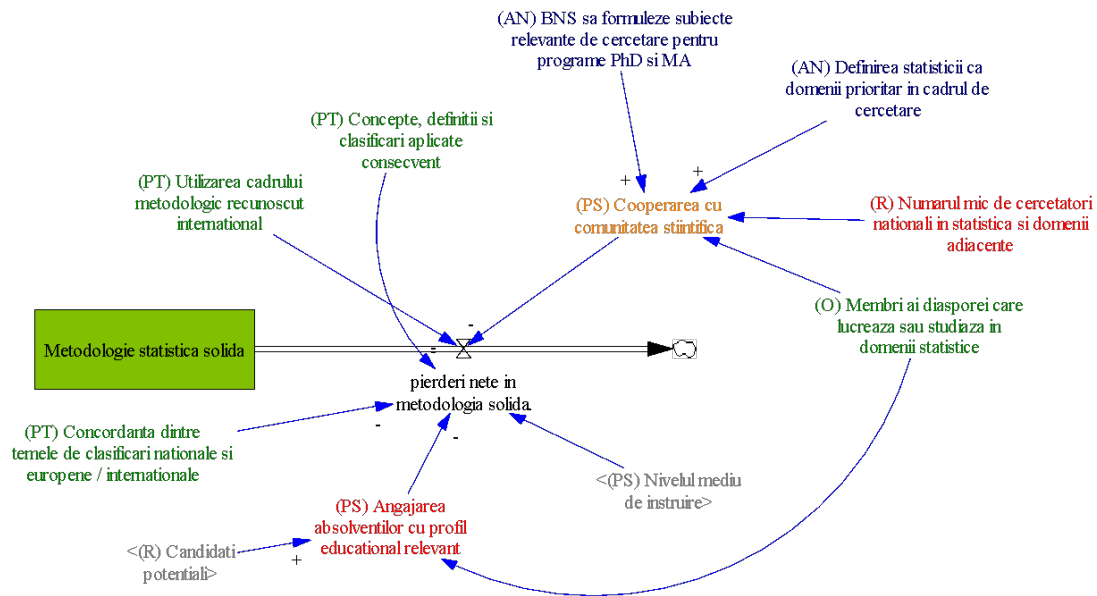


Figure 9. Representation of factors that influences the robustness of statistical methodologies

Subsection 10 Statistical procedures

The statistical procedures managed by the NBS cover a wide range of activities, including the design and testing of statistical survey tools, sampling, data collection methods as well as the use of administrative data sources, data editing and imputation, data estimation and dissemination, standardisation of statistical processes. These procedures underpin the work of the NBS to produce high-quality statistics.

Overall, the management status of statistical procedures is relatively good and follows the guidelines of the fundamental principles of the UN Official Statistics (FPOS), but requires their standardisation in various statistical surveys. Samples selected for statistical surveys and estimation methods are reviewed regularly, as are data collection, input and coding. Definitions and concepts used for administrative data are appropriate for statistical purposes. Progress is being made in adopting the GSBPM model for standardisation of statistical processes, which however depends on the overall state of the ICT infrastructure.

Recently, the NBS has developed the Data Review Policy, which defines the standard rules and principles for the revision of statistical data, in line with the European Statistics Code of Practice adopted by the European Statistical System Committee in 2011, with the European Statistical System Policy Guide on the

Review Policy of Key European Economic Indicators, which include common principles for the revision of European statistics.

The NBS has certain difficulties in accessing more than one administrative data source. Despite access to individual business data and the willingness of the NBS to cooperate with data providers, it cannot obtain access to personal data about individuals at individual level for official statistics production purposes.

There are also certain weaknesses in consistency, internal coherence and standardisation in the preparation and testing of statistical questionnaires (in particular those for electronic data collection) which is currently difficult to ensure across all statistical domains, which could have an impact on the quality of both new and existing questionnaires.

The root causes of these problems are:

1) difficulties in BNS access to relevant administrative data sources for the production of official statistics. This is due to the inadequate legal basis for obtaining access to personal data for statistical purposes (inconsistencies between Law No 93/2017 on official statistics and Law No 133/2011 on the protection of personal data, etc.);

2) the absence within the NBS of a subdivision with responsibilities dedicated to the development and testing of the statistical toolkit for all areas and the need for specific training of staff to ensure the quality of this stage of the statistical process.

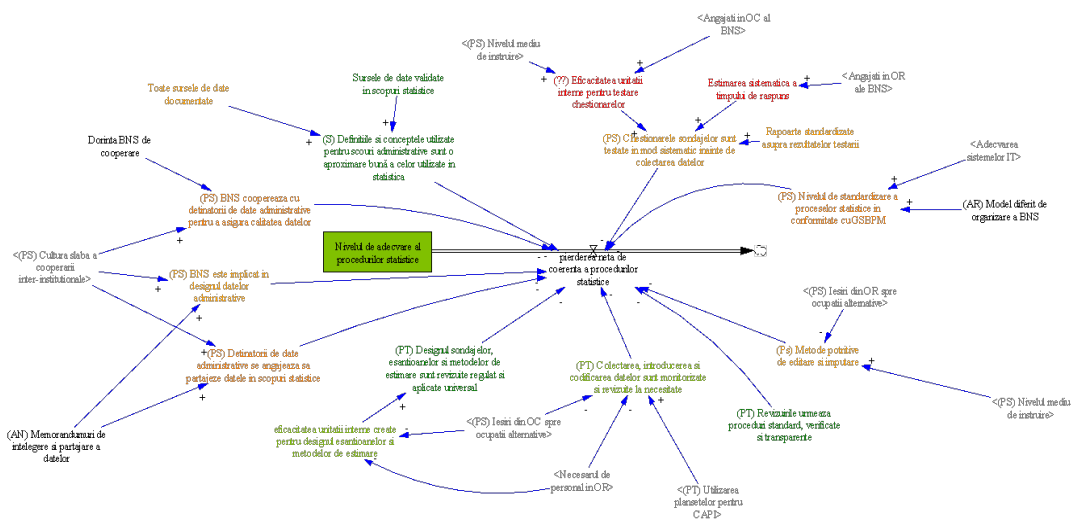


Figure 10. Representation of factors influencing statistical procedures

Subsection 11 Reporting burden on respondents

One of the guidelines of the statistical authority is to ensure that the response burden is proportionate to the needs of users and is not excessive for respondents

(Principle 9 of the European Statistics Code of Practice). This is important to ensure a reasonable compromise between the delivery to the public of a sufficient and comprehensive amount of statistics without overburdening respondents, both the business environment and the population. In the case of companies, statistical reporting is part of the policy relating to the cost of regulating entrepreneurial activity, which aims to minimise the administrative burden on business to what is strictly necessary. From the perspective of individuals, this statistical principle is important on the basis of the high rate of non-response from respondents, including as a result of high frequency statistical research, which is a persistent problem. Moreover, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the collection of statistical data has been hampered by increasing the level of reluctance on the part of respondents, in particular due to the multitude of independent sociological surveys conducted by various interest groups that virtually invaded the market for sociological services becoming a burden on the population.

Overall, the activities carried out in recent years with implications for the non-excessive burden on respondents have had a major impact, and at present the range and detail of statistical requests are largely limited to what is absolutely necessary. In support of this finding, we can note that the deadlines for the submission of statistical questionnaires have been optimised. Following the review of the statistical reporting system in the framework of the preparation of the Annual Programmes of Statistical Works (hereafter *PLS*), the NBS comes with a number of initiatives to reduce their number. Only in 2022 were statistical reports on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis for business excluded from the SWP. At the same time, the use of modern reporting collection methods – *CAMI* (Computer-assisted Web Interviewing), which involves self-reporting via the internet, makes it easier for entities to report statistics and contributes considerably to reducing the information burden on business. Currently for 29 questionnaires (around 32 % of the reports collected from economic entities), the digital version for reporting to the BNS online is created via the Single Electronic Reporting Guide. In addition to electronic reporting, the NBS makes extensive use of sample research (based on sampling), which also helps to reduce the information pressure on respondents.

The NBS has a plan of actions to reduce reporting pressure, including the use of administrative data sources and pre-filling of questionnaires. Ongoing is the work on estimating the information pressure on businesses, including by type of enterprise. Recently, the assessment of the pressure on respondents from ongoing research through the annual statistical work programmes was not carried out by the NBS. At the same time, as the EUROSTAT evaluation team also notes, a more integrated and systemic approach is needed in this regard, with a methodology in place to measure the response burden on a regular basis and set targets to reduce it, which is at the drafting stage of the BNS.

It should be noted that the NBS, at the request of the decision-makers, carries out a series of research and statistical works which are not analogous in the countries of the European Union (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products->

manuals-and-guidelines/-/ks-gq-21-006) and have traditionally been carried out (e.g. research on museums, culture houses, physical culture and sport development, activities of public sports institutions, detected offences, sanitation of municipalities, consumption and expenditure of the entity, number of crossings of the state border by foreign nationals and citizens of the Republic of Moldova). In addition to these activities, the NBS carries out activities involving the collection, generalisation, dissemination and storage of financial statements in accordance with Article 8 (4) of Law No 287/2017 on accounting and financial reporting – activities which are not specific to the central statistical authorities. This contributes to additional information pressure on respondents as well as on statisticians. At the same time, in the context of the endorsement of the annual programme of statistical works approved by the Government, the proposals for reducing and optimising statistical research submitted by the NBS are not always supported by other public institutions, which in turn often propose the implementation of new statistical work and research, in some cases without any international analogy. On the one hand, the interest of the public authorities is worthy of appreciation and can be regarded as a sign of appreciation of the capacity of the NBS to produce qualitative statistical information. On the other hand, taking into account the limited resources but also the need to implement a number of new international standards in national statistical practice, in particular according to the European Statistical Compendium, reasonable trade-offs need to be found.

The biggest existing vulnerability, hindering further reduction of the response burden, remains the under-utilisation of the potential of administrative data to substitute or/and complement different statistical research. From this point of view, improving the size of the data collection mandate is critical. Beyond the aspects of invoking the protection of personal data, the use of administrative data sources to avoid duplication of data requests is hampered by their content and format, which often do not correspond to statistical needs. Even though the BNS promotes the use of statistical classifications, concepts and definitions adopted at international level, they are not fully used in administrative records. This fact, as well as the current lack of access in the mode and format necessary for the production of official statistics to relevant personal data from administrative data sources (such as the State Population Register owned by the Public Services Agency or the information system held by the General Inspectorate of the Border Police on state border crossings by natural persons) hinders the efficiency of statistical activity. Another challenge, which remains open, relates to the fact that no software tool is developed to allow entities to easily transmit information from corporate accounting systems to the BNS. At the same time, the NBS is currently in the process of communicating with development partners on the possibility of providing technical assistance to develop, test and analyse the feasibility of such a solution.

At present, for most other statistical data producers, the issue of the reporting burden on respondents is not a priority in their work.

Some institutions have not set up basic statistical procedures, such as the existence of robust methodologies for data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination, and the reporting burden becomes an issue that can only be addressed once other existing constraints have been resolved or mitigated.

In this context, it should be noted that many of the institutions concerned obtain the data from their own registers/information systems, based on data reported directly from other entities.

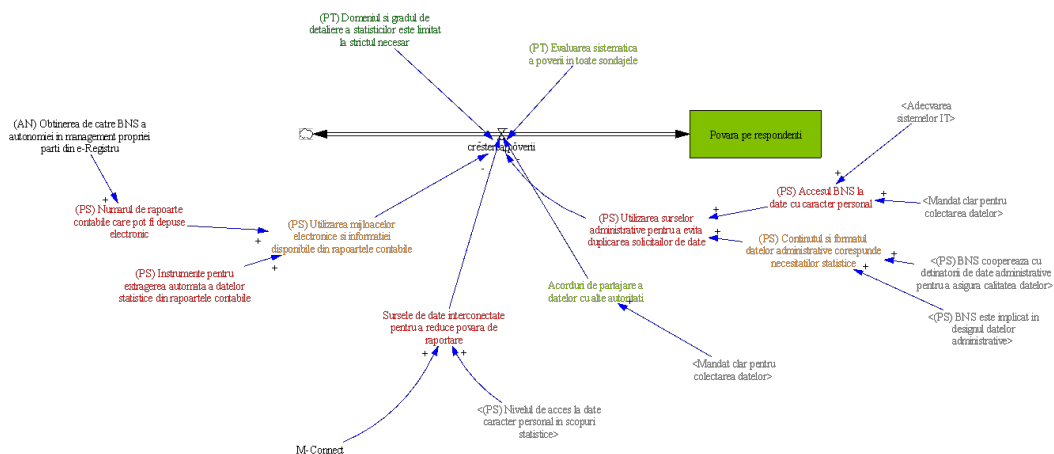


Figure 11. Representation of factors influencing the reporting burden

Subsection 12 Cost-effectiveness

Cost efficiency is determined to assess the benefits obtained, i.e. the information services provided by statistical producers in relation to the resources used. In the framework of the NBS it was measured for the following areas: the potential for using IT to optimise work, the level of use of administrative data to reduce the overall cost of data collection, the capacity for staff mobility within the subdivisions of the BNS and to measure the use of resources and the cost of statistical products.

The ability of ICT to help increase cost efficiency depends on: I) the adequacy of the ICT infrastructure (as referred to in Section 5 ‘ICT Infrastructure’); II) the level of IT skills of statisticians to use IT resources efficiently; and iii) the level of standardisation of statistical processes. At the same time, the use of tablets for interviewing CAPI for data collection could have a positive impact on cost efficiency.

The uptake of innovations can help improve cost efficiency. Such measures could include accessing new data sources (Big Data), implementing the BNS Integrated Statistical Information System (SIIS) and adopting international

standards in the field, such as the Common Architecture Standard for the Production of Statistics (CSPA), to enable the exchange of software within the international statistical community and the use of the format for statistical data and metadata exchange (SDMX) for data exchange.

The extensive use of administrative data to reduce data collection costs and the response burden is hampered by the lack of access to these data sources, in particular to personal data (addressed in the section “Statistical procedures”) despite the efforts made by the NBS to use them (subsection 2.2.2).

There is currently no time measurement system in place to allow the NBS to calculate the cost of producing statistical outputs and carrying out statistical works and to monitor the use of available resources that could be optimised and redirected to motivate staff, upgrade ICT infrastructure, implement innovations and other development actions.

Due to legal restrictions, the management of the NBS does not have the autonomy to direct staff in areas and activities where they could be more efficiently distributed (including between the central apparatus and the territorial statistical bodies of the NBS).

The main reasons behind these problems are the following:

- 1) outdated ICT infrastructure;
- 2) problems in obtaining access to administrative data sources;
- 3) legal obstacles preventing the transfer of staff to the institution.

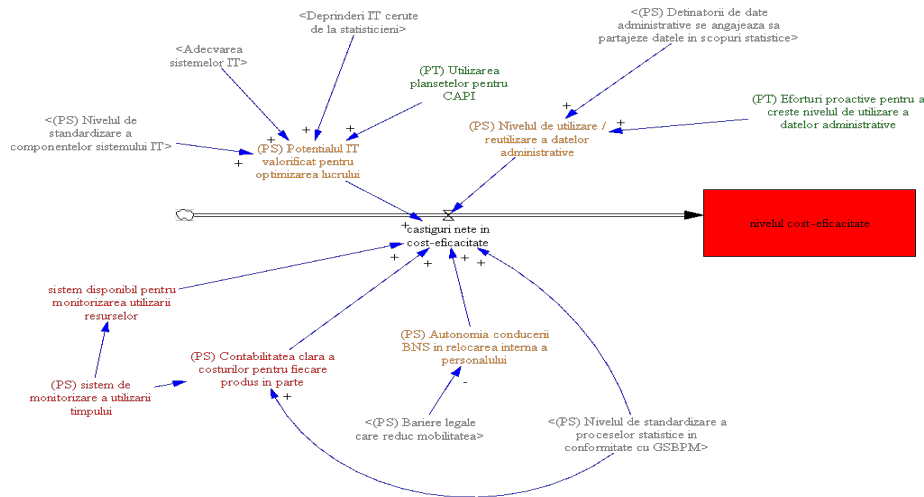


Figure 12. Representation of factors influencing cost efficiency

Subsection 13 Relevance of statistical data

The relevance of the data reflects how statistical data match users’ needs. It is therefore an important area for the work of statistical data producers to ensure the usefulness of statistics. Only by knowing users’ statistical information needs

can the producers of official statistics make the necessary adjustments to ensure the provision of relevant statistics.

In general, BNS, BNM and other manufacturers use various tools to interact with users.

One of the main achievements in the field of user consultation is the creation of the National Council for Statistics (CNS), provided for by Law No 93/2017 on official statistics and carried out by Government Decision No 244/2018 on the National Statistical Council. The Council is an advisory body in the field of statistics set up alongside the Government for the purpose of strategic development and promotion of official statistics.

The Council shall include in its composition representatives from the central authority in the field of statistics, academia, NEBs, specialised bodies of central public administration, employers' organisations and civil society. CNS operates regularly. Issues relating to the statistical system are discussed at CNS meetings and through this platform BNS, BNM and other statistical data producers can identify the needs of specialised data users (public institutions). Although the activity of CNS can rather be seen as a strength, there are areas that can be improved. It can be noted here that the mechanisms for translating CNS decisions into practical actions aimed at meeting the needs of users of statistical data are not yet well established.

In general, the NBS uses several ways to find out the needs of users. For example, on the institution's webpage is the 'Letter to BNS' compartment. The NBS also has Facebook, Twitter and Telegram pages. The NBS also carried out some opinion polls on user satisfaction. At the same time, in the annual opinion of the Statistical Work Programme, users (in particular representatives of public authorities) express their requests for the statistical information they need.

In 2021, the BNS conducted for the first time a comprehensive online survey on user satisfaction with statistical products and services (https://statistica.gov.md/ro/sondaj-de-opinie-online-privind-gradul-de-satisfactie-al-utilizatorilor-9933_3824.html). In the future, it is planned that such surveys will be conducted regularly and conducted in accordance with the best practices of the statistical offices of the European Union.

In addition to conducting research on the opinion of data users via its webpage, the BNS employs independent entities to conduct opinion polls (https://statistica.gov.md/ro/sondaje-de-opinie-9933_3817.html). These surveys are carried out on a regular basis, the latter being carried out in the years 2012-2013, 2015, 2016 and recently in 2022 (often linked to the strategic or institutional planning processes of the NBS), and are usually financed from the means of external assistance projects. In addition to the NBS, the BNM regularly carries out the assessment of data user needs.

Despite this progress, it cannot be said that there is a systemic approach to user consultation within the SSN. This also refers to the fact that the NBS and other data producers do not regularly assess the level of user satisfaction. Thus,

42.1 % of the participants in the SSN evaluation questionnaire stated that the data user needs assessment is carried out, but this exercise is carried out on a low frequency, and 34.2 % of interviewees said that the needs of data users are not assessed at all in the institutions that data users' needs are not assessed at all.

In general, other statistical data producers use a limited instrument of interaction with data users. One of the most common ways of interacting is direct contact with representatives of public institutions, and this option is practised by: The Agency "Waters of Moldova", the National Agency for Social Assistance, the National Agency for Public Health, the National Social Insurance Agency, the Ministry of Justice, the Information Technology Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Land and Cadastre Relations Agency, as well as the Agency for Public Services, organises meetings in working groups with specialised users (representatives of public authorities, business, academic institutions) and the Moldsilva Agency, the National Agency for Regulation in Electronic Communications and Information Technology and the Environmental Protection Inspectorate hold meetings dedicated to discussions with journalists, opinion formers and representatives of the association sector. At the same time, several data producers have entries dedicated to interaction with data users on the official webpage of the institutions. This category includes the following data producers: Civil Aviation Authority, BNM, the National Financial Market Commission, the State Labour Inspectorate, the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. With the exception of BNS and BNM, only a small number of data manufacturers apply several user interaction tools at the same time. These institutions include the National Health Insurance Company (direct interaction with representatives of public authorities and a section on the webpage dedicated to communication with data users), the National Employment Agency and the General Inspectorate of the Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (meetings in working groups with various specialised users and a tab on the webpage for interaction with data users).

In general, the assessment of data users' needs in the SSN is done sporadically by a large part of the manufacturers, and a number of institutions have never assessed users' needs.

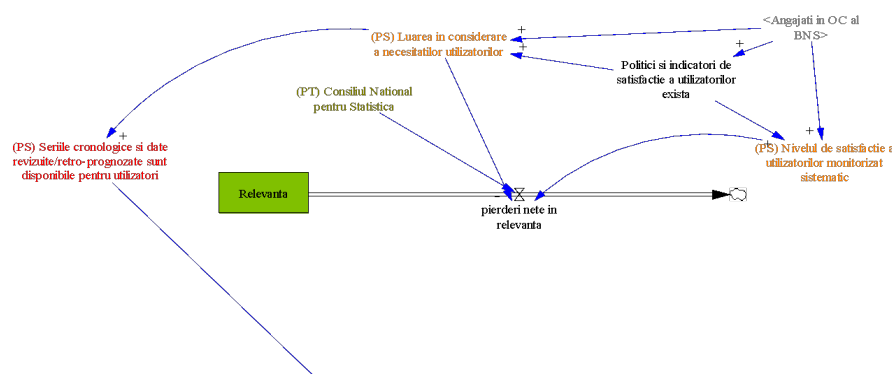


Figure 13. Representation of factors influencing the relevance of statistical data

Subsection 14

Accessibility of statistical data

One of the core tasks of the SSN implies that statistical data must reach the general public in a timely manner and be accessible to users so that they can use it in their interest.

The official statistics provided by the NBS are generally available and accessible to the public, presented in a clear manner on an impartial basis, with metadata and guidance, graphic visualisations and interactive tools. The corresponding statistics and metadata shall be presented in a format that facilitates the correct interpretation of the data. The NBS has a performant webpage, which is the main means of disseminating data. At the same time, the BNS also uses social media (e.g. Facebook) to present different information. The set of documents and the toolkit for granting access to individual data for scientific purposes has also been developed. At the same time, in order to improve users' access to the statistical database, the BNS has developed a new, more modern version of the webpage, which is currently under public testing. The new version of the webpage presents a modern design, it is easy to navigate and easier to search for information. The new page also has a mobile version, which takes into account recommendations on the accessibility of information (visual and auditory), gives users the opportunity to present interactive feedback and includes many other functionalities in line with the official webpage of European and international statistical offices.

In general, the accessibility of data in the case of BNS is an area where a relatively good situation is attested, but some inconveniences faced by some users can be mentioned. There are 2 points worth mentioning: (1) the Statistical Database, usually does not include statistical data on economic indicators for the period 1991-1994, although this information is available in the statistical yearbooks of those years; and (2) although for most indicators are statistical data for the period after 2000, for some statistical domains it is impossible to create long time series as the data series are interrupted due to the fact that they have been adjusted over the course of the calculation methodologies or/and statistical classifications in the framework of the alignment of national statistics with international standards; similar situations are documented in the work of the national statistical offices of other countries which, as far as possible, apply retrospective review of time series using reconciliation methods. It should also be noted that a large proportion of users have a low level of statistical culture, which slows down their response (feedback) on products and statistical work to improve them.

BNM and other data producers use several ways of disseminating information. The most common way of presenting data is the dissemination of information through the institution's webpage, often in reusable format (e.g. a majority of respondents (65 %) said that their institutions present the data in Excel

format. At the same time, it is quite common practice to place information in pdf (57.5 %) or word (50 %) format.

Other ways of disseminating frequently used data are: presentation of press releases (48 % of respondents), data placement on the Open Data Portal www.date.gov.md (47.6 % of respondents) and periodical publications (40.5 % of respondents). Although producers place statistical data publicly, a number of institutions do not have publicly displayed data release schedules. Thus, only some data producers, such as: BNM, the National Social Insurance Agency, the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Environmental Protection Inspectorate and the Ministry of Justice have a predetermined data dissemination schedule, which is available on the website of the institution. However, most producers either do not have timetables for data dissemination or, if they have timetables, they are not made public. At the same time, data producers use several data formats at the same time, but some formats used (pdf or word) create difficulties for data users. For example, a majority of respondents (65 %) stated that their institutions present the data in Excel format. At the same time, it is quite common practice to place information in PDF (57.5 %) or Word (50 %) format. Unlike other institutions, the BNS, through the Statistical Database (https://statistica.gov.md/ro/versiune-actualizata-a-bancii-de-date-statbank-12_433.html), provides for the integration of the API function that enables web or mobile app developers to access data stored from other systems or applications in a fast manner. A prominent example of this is the application www.genderpulse.md which automatically takes data from the Statistical Database of the NBS.

Most of the information submitted by most statistical data producers, with the exception of BNS and BNM, is not accompanied by structured metadata or methodological specifications. In addition to the NBS and BNM only to a few institutions, such as the National Food Safety Agency or the ‘Moldovan Waters’ Agency, most of the data submitted are accompanied by methodological clarifications. At the same time, in most statistical producers only some of the submitted data are accompanied by methodological explanations. At the same time, there are a number of institutions (such as the National Employment Agency, the National Social Insurance Fund or the National Health Insurance Company) where the data disseminated are not accompanied by methodological details.

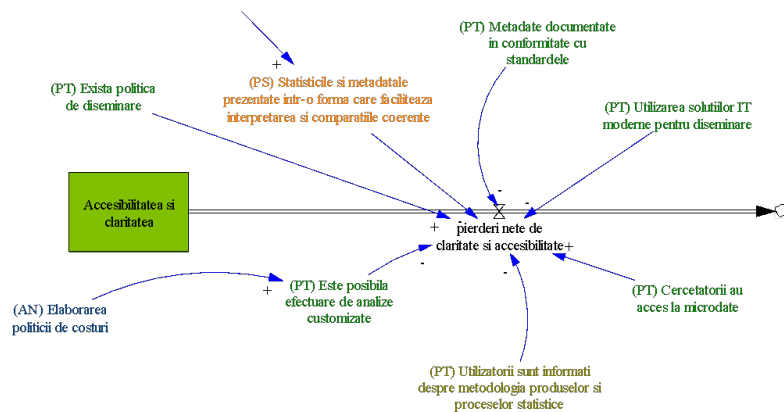


Figure 14. Representation of factors that influences the accessibility of statistical data

Subsection 15 Coordination of the national statistical system

According to Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, SSN is composed of producers of statistical data, including the NBS, as the central statistical authority, the NBS and other producers of official statistics. Within SSN, BNM develops and produces official statistics in its area of competence independently in accordance with Law No 548/1995 on the National Bank of Moldova and in accordance with the fundamental principles of official statistics laid down in Law No 93/2017 on official statistics.

Thus, where other producers of official statistics have not yet been officially recognised, the entire statistical system is practically reduced to NBS and NBS. Interactions between the NBS and other producers of official statistics are, for the time being, in most cases, limited to the receipt by the NBS of data provided by other producers and data holders and possibly their transmission to other users or international institutions. However, in certain cases the receipt of data in the required format and within the deadlines required to produce and disseminate official statistics according to the SWP remains problematic (According to the Report on the implementation of the SWP for 2020 (Division B), for the production of official statistics, the necessary information was submitted within the deadlines – 109 works, submitted late – 11 works, not completed – 3 works https://statistica.gov.md/ro/activitatea-statistica-examinata-in-sedinta-consiliului-national-pentru-statisti12_1206.html). At the same time, a strategic objective is to extend the list of producers of official statistics based on the application of the Regulation on the procedure for establishing producers of official statistics, approved by Government Decision No 51/2022(https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=129869&lang=ro) and on the basis of BNS Orders Nos 29/2022 and 30/2022. The process of setting up the SSN and ensuring its proper functioning will require strong and systemic

coordination efforts by the NBS, in particular with a view to providing the necessary methodological assistance, monitoring compliance with quality principles and coordinating the data dissemination process, and evaluating and optimising the distribution of responsibilities for the production and dissemination of data among the producers of official statistics, taking into account the areas of competence of the institutions, the data sources available for the production of official statistics and their development prospects.

Thus, the quality of the coordination of SSN by the NBS depends on three factors:

- 1) the internal capacities of the coordinating NBS (dedicated human resources, technological resources, sound statistical procedures);
- 2) the domestic capacities of other producers of official statistics to implement national and international legal provisions, standards and recommendations in the field of official statistics;
- 3) the complexity of the statistical system, determined by the number of manufacturers and their diversity, the statistical processes applied, as well as the openness and capacity of SSN members to implement the decisions and standards/rules adopted at SSN level.

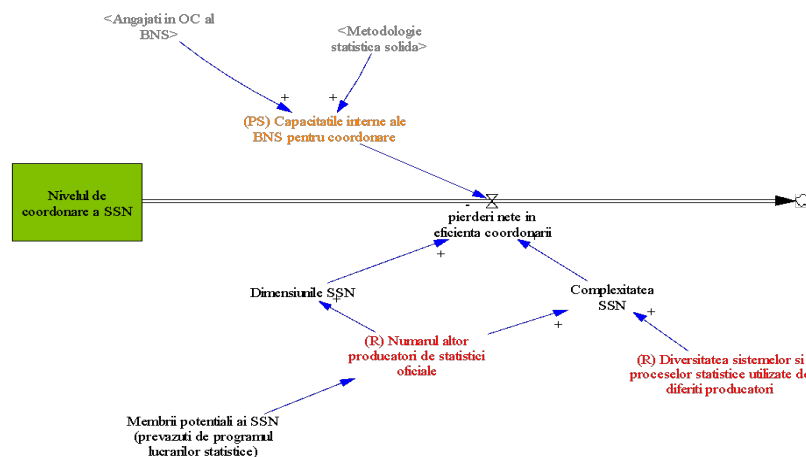


Figure 15. Representation of factors influencing SSN coordination

Subsection 16 Organisational and structural aspects

The organisational structure of a statistical authority must derive from the defined tasks, staff availability and readiness, the financial resources made available to the authority, etc. The major choices in the institutional structure are limited to the organisation by statistical topic/domain, function or most common or combination of these.

The current organisational structure of the NBS (approved by Government Decision No 935/2018 on the organisation and functioning of the National

Statistical Office) broadly corresponds to the short-term objectives of the NBS. The structure combines both structural units based on statistical domains and units providing generic services. The regional structure was streamlined in line with the recommendations of the Global Assessment of SSN carried out in 2019 by EUROSTAT.

At the same time, some structural units with generic functions do not operate at the expected level and are not fully operational. For example, the first specialist was employed in the Internal Audit and Quality Management Section only in 2021. The situation is also very difficult in the section of training in official statistics, where only one specialist works. All legal assistance necessary for the activity of the BNS is limited to one staff unit as part of the Legal and Human Resources Section. Under the current circumstances, it is also particularly important to strengthen the structural units responsible for: statistical methods, including subdivisions responsible for the use of data from administrative and private sources, and GIS; cybersecurity and protection of personal data; technological upgrading of the information systems of the BNS; explore the application and use of alternative (non-traditional) data sources and methods in the production activity statistics, such as: big Data, Spatial Data, machine learning, web scraping. The same thematic structural units are facing an acute staff crisis, one example being the Directorate for National Accounts, where more than 45 % of posts are vacant. At the same time, restructuring the statistical production process based on the GSBPM model

In the case of other institutions providing data for the purpose of producing official statistics, the organisation of the units responsible for the data is extremely diverse. For example, in the case of the Moldovan Waters Agency, there is only one specialist who, along with other functions, is also responsible for statistical activities. In the case of the National Agency for Public Health, statistical functions are performed by a subdivision exclusively responsible for statistical activities. Most institutions report problems in the performance of these functions, in particular due to understaffing and their qualifications.

Section 3

Analysis of the internal and external environment (SWOT)

The identification of critical influencing factors on the achievement of the objectives of this Strategy was carried out by assessing the internal and external environment of the Strategy's implementation process.

For this purpose, the SWOT analysis tool of influencing factors on the implementation of the Strategy was used to identify vulnerabilities (the most important internal weaknesses) and threats (external sensitivities) that may cause implementation risks. The results of this analysis of the internal and external environment at SSN level are presented in Table 1.

The assessment was carried out on the basis of SSN analysis, observing the operating framework, opinions, views and options expressed by BNS staff and other official statistics producers, main users of official statistics, representatives of the R & D sector.

Table 1

SWOT analysis

Firm points	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognition of the professional and institutional independence of the NBS in the national legislative framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low level of prestige and public visibility of BNS, statistician profession and SSN as a whole
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As a national statistical authority, the NBS holds a high position in the government hierarchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vague legislative provisions on the exclusive competence of the management of the NBS to define the statistical methodological framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment of the top management of the NBS on the basis of professional criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High fluctuation of frames in BNS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existence of a core of dedicated and experienced specialists in the BNS with strong intrinsic motivations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited internal mobility of frameworks due to national regulatory constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acceptable level of training of most staff in statistical areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High burnout and overburdening of statistician specialists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The NBS has a methodological framework that is largely connected to international standards, including European standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced number of scheduled professional development opportunities for SSN staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Procedures are in place to ensure that the same standardised concepts, definitions and classifications are used throughout the statistical authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Very limited time available for effective training of SSN staff and lack of adapted training programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consistency between national classification systems and corresponding European systems with most statistical classifications and classifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low level of training of staff in related areas, including ICT and communication skills in English
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The National Council for Statistics has been created and regularly works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increasing difficulty in employing people with good skills/knowledge in statistics or related fields
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The NBS has a well-defined quality system policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low level of involvement of the national scientific community in statistical science projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The reporting burden on the business environment is appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Absence of long time series for some statistical indicators; the time series for demographic and employment indicators are interrupted and developed using methodologies or classifications that have changed over time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A large proportion of users have a low level of statistical culture

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no standard procedures for quality management of statistical production processes in SSN
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several public institutions providing administrative data have not initiated quality systems implementation processes or/and the administrative data sources held by them do not correspond to the requirements of official statistics (by virtue of the use of concepts, definitions and classifications that do not correspond to statistical standards)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge of statistical staff in using alternative sources (administrative and private data sources, Big Data, etc.) for statistical purposes
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of government support to the independence of the NBS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergence of alternative data producers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New opportunities for the provision of technical assistance by the European Union to accelerate the harmonisation of national statistics with Community standards in the field of statistics following the Republic of Moldova's status as a candidate country for accession to the European Union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing pressure on SSN, in particular the NBS, in connection with the implementation of research and the production of new/adapted statistics in line with the acquis communautaire and the reporting on various international commitments, in particular following the Republic of Moldova's status as a candidate country for EU membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of many ad-hoc training and professional development opportunities for BNS staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low interest in statistical specialities and related fields (mathematics, econometrics, actuarial, etc.) and, as a result, the very low number of graduates in statistical specialities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of well-trained experts in statistics or related fields in diaspora: mathematics, economics, econometrics, sociology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfavourable wage level and outlook for statisticians
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing trend in the availability and use of administrative and alternative data sources (e.g.: "Big Data") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively high and increasing average age of staff in the NBS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing digital possibilities for graphical and interactive presentation of statistical data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High frequency of technological and methodological changes that reduce the relevance of previous training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of ICT infrastructure and, by default, mechanisms for collecting, analysing and representing statistical data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low possibilities and insufficient time for statistician staff of SSN members to keep up with rapid progress in data and information solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existence of many other potential producers of official statistics, which could be attracted to SSN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tendency to use statistical data for manipulation, propaganda or spread of fake news and the limited ability of SSN to intervene to combat these phenomena
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the culture of data/records-based policy making and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unexpected cutbacks due to the occurrence of uncontrolled events requiring cuts in budget allocations

Chapter III OBJECTIVES AND VISION

Vision 2030: The SSN will function as a strengthened structure capable of delivering high-quality statistical products and services in line with European standards, meeting the needs of a wide spectrum of users.

In order to achieve the vision, the Strategy will pursue four general objectives:

1. Institutional capacity of SSN members strengthened to produce relevant, accessible and interoperable statistical data governed by standards and driven by innovation.

2. The national statistical system reinforced by good governance systems, the common legal and regulatory framework, privacy and data protection practices to ensure transparency and accessibility of data of public interest and to increase public trust and use of the data.

3. High-quality data, including new data sets (timely, relevant, reliable, accessible, disaggregated, coherent, internationally comparable and harmonised with European Union requirements), produced to inform society and support effective decision-making and evidence-based public policy implementation leading to sustainable development and inclusive society.

4. A consolidated statistical culture in society to enable policymakers to use data efficiently and provide the services and resources people need in a sustainable way, for crisis recovery and to provide the general public with a better understanding of statistics and accountability of authorities.

Thus, the strategic vision for the development of SSN focuses on General Objective 7 of the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030” *Ensure efficient, inclusive and transparent governance and specific objectives 7.1. Building an intelligent, accountable, efficient, transparent and open public administration for citizens’ participation in decision-making processes* and 7.3. *Integrating science, technologies and data into the governance process*. And the implementation of the general objectives of this Strategy will directly contribute to the implementation of the policy directorates of the SDN as follows:

General objectives of Strategy	Specific objectives of National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”	Priority Policy/Intervention Directorate of National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”

General objective 1 and 2	7.1. Building an intelligent, accountable, efficient, transparent and open public administration for citizens' participation in decision-making processes	5.2. <i>Reforming public administration</i>
General objective 3	7.3. Integrating science, technologies and data into the governance process	5.5. <i>Efficient governance based on records and science</i> 2) produce quality statistical data (timely, relevant, reliable, accessible, disaggregated, consistent, internationally comparable and harmonised with European Union requirements) and new datasets needed to inform, based on evidence, public policies, decision-making processes and society
General objective 4	7.3. Integrating science, technologies and data into the governance process	5.5. <i>Efficient governance based on records and science</i> 1) integration of official statistical data, population forecasts at national and local level, other records across the science-based public policy cycle and fiscal framework 9) improving and integrating indicators on respect for human rights and gender equality in the collection of administrative data and national statistics

In order to ensure proper monitoring of the National Development Strategy 'European Moldova 2030' and the associated SDG targets, through the implementation of this Strategy, the national statistical system including the NBS, as well as other producers of official statistics and administrative data holders, will ensure the collection of the required disaggregated data.

In line with the commitments to implement the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development, the following SDG targets are to be implemented by 2030 through the implementation of the general objectives of this Strategy:

SDG target 17.18. By 2025, significantly increase the availability of qualitative, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other relevant characteristics in national contexts.

SDG target 17.19. By 2030, building on existing initiatives of measuring progress on sustainable development that complement Gross Domestic Product and provide support for the development of statistical capacities.

Chapter IV

PRIORITY DIRECTORATES

The priority directions and main activities planned to achieve each general objective mentioned in the previous chapter will be described below. The link between the priority directions and the specific objectives of the National

Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030” to which they contribute is presented by including the numeric code of the specific objective in brackets.

Section 1

General objective 1

General objective 1: Institutional capacity of SSN members strengthened to produce relevant, accessible and interoperable statistical data governed by standards and driven by innovation (SND, specific objective 7.1)

Subsection 1. Priority Directorate 1.1. Strengthening the mandate for data collection

1.1.1. Adoption of a legislative framework harmonisation package (adjustment of Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, Law No 133/2011 on the protection of personal data, etc.) in order to operationalise the provisions of the law on official statistics. This will involve an analysis of all implementation gaps and proper adjustment of the legislation to minimise ambiguities that could serve as refusal to provide personal and other individual data from administrative and private data sources to SSN members for the production of official statistics. In addition, with regard to ensuring access to personal data, harmonisation activities will cover other aspects such as the standardisation of variables/indicators collected by different institutions that are of major interest for official statistics (in particular to use administrative data sources for the production of official statistics, including for conducting population, housing and agricultural censuses).

1.1.2. Increase the culture of interinstitutional cooperation, in particular through the conclusion of agreements (memoranda of understanding) between SSN members and other partners, to ensure access to administrative data sources.

1.1.3. Evaluation of administrative and private data sources relevant for the production of official statistics, identifying strengths and weaknesses, good practices and measures needed to refine inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms, with the active participation of the holders of these data sources.

1.1.4. Strengthening the institutional capacities of the NBS, the NBS and other producers of official statistics on obtaining access and using SDA for statistical purposes.

1.1.5. The development and approval by the Government of the relevant regulatory framework on the concepts and regulations of the information systems of the BNS and other producers of official statistics, which will enable the consumption and processing of data from state and private registers, in particular

through the interoperability platform (MConnect), for the purpose of producing official statistics, including censuses.

1.1.6. Restructure the SSN by assigning, where appropriate, the function of producing sectoral statistical data (environment, justice, education, health, etc.) to the responsible institutions possessing the relevant capacities, expertise and information systems to the sectors concerned. Support producers of official statistics in the training and skills accumulation process, ensuring that the capacity of these authorities in the field of official statistics is increased.

Subsection 2. Priority Directorate 1.2. Human resources development

1.2.1. Develop a system for continuous monitoring of staff satisfaction and needs with a view to continuously improving working conditions, time use efficiency and organisational climate in the NBS and other SSN institutions.

1.2.2. Participatory definition (by involving the relevant representatives of all producers of official statistics) of a multiannual human resources development programme across the national statistical system, to be implemented through annual programmes integrated into the annual budgets of the SSN member institutions.

1.2.3. Develop a system of continuous monitoring and documentation of staff training needs in SSN and develop motivating tools to stimulate continuous self-training, including vouchers to co-finance participation in certified training courses, provision of a reasonable time budget from the work programme account for participation in training programmes, delegation of training to young specialists in master and doctoral programmes, definition of application topics for this research, sharing of professional experience within SSN.

1.2.4. Ensure an efficient and sustainable system of initial training, continuous training in statistics (both for SSN statisticians, statistical data users and respondents) and the use of data, for professional development and empowerment with innovation capabilities and know-how for national official statistics.

1.2.5. The establishment by the NBS of partnerships with high schools, vocational technical and higher education institutions to promote statistical culture, launch projects of applications to valorise statistical data and promote statistical speciality among young people who opt for careers in mathematical, economic or financial fields.

1.2.6. Increase the salary level for staff involved in the SSN, first and foremost within the NBS similar to those in the central apparatus of ministries.

1.2.7. Develop and deliver non-financial career benefits in the field of statistics in recruitment and human resources development plans: political

independence, opportunity to manifest themselves in a high professional environment, including internationally, clearly structured opportunities for professional development, merit-based career progression, etc.

1.2.8. Making the use of human resources more efficient through automation, standardisation and documentation of statistical processes, rotation of frameworks and increased staff mobility within the central apparatus of the NBS, between the central apparatus and the regional centres, as well as within the SSN as a whole, in order to prevent work-related stressors, burnout and excessive specialisation.

1.2.9. Motivate SSN staff by applying alternative forms of employment that would ensure the proper performance of duties, including flexible working hours, teleworking, etc.

1.2.10. Step up efforts and diversify strategies for recruiting qualified staff in SSN, including those with related specialties but with rapid learning capacity, including through active social media search, closer cooperation with the National Employment Agency and ensuring effective initial and continuous training.

1.2.11. Improve internal communication within the NBS in order to increase the efficiency of working sessions, make more rational use of time and improve professional performance motivations on the part of the staff.

1.2.12. Analysis of the use of working time for the production of statistical outputs, the performance of statistical work and related processes, with a view to improving the efficiency of human resources and staff motivation.

Subsection 3. Priority Directorate 1.3. Ensuring the allocation of sustainable and efficient financial and technical resources

1.3.1. Analyse the efficiency of the use of resources allocated to institutions under the SSN to identify opportunities to make them more efficient.

1.3.2. Implement a time measurement system based on GSBPM processes and sub-processes, with the aim of systematically evaluating costs per product or statistical work, for the justified correlation of the amount of resources required with the volume of statistical work carried out and identifying and removing any bottlenecks and inefficiencies.

1.3.3. Identifying reserves to optimise budgetary resources following the review of statistical activities (including by excluding obsolete statistical research, increasing the use of administrative and private data sources for statistical purposes, wider use of modern IT solutions), which will bring additional benefits such as: producing new statistics, reducing the information pressure on statistical respondents, increasing the quality of statistical data, producing statistics more quickly and more frequently.

1.3.4. Operationalise the External Assistance Sectoral Council on official statistics with the NBS as its coordinator. It will contribute to improving the implementation of the Strategy by integrating more effectively the actions and envisaged financial and technical means with external support, as well as better monitoring of external assistance projects and programmes.

1.3.5. Strengthening the institutional capacities of the NBS and other producers of official statistics to attract and access external assistance projects to complement the financial and technical resources of SSN, in particular for complex statistical research such as censuses.

1.3.6. Assessing the BNS Business Model to identify opportunities for revenue diversification from the development and provision of new statistical services against payment (outside the statistical works programme), responding to the continuously growing demand for data in the market for requests for statistical information that is still in training and volatile.

1.3.7. Strengthen the capacity of the training subdivision in official statistics for: (I) organising and coordinating the work of other producers of official statistics or potential candidates; (II) thematic trainings focused on the beneficiary and with relevant content curricula (target group being data producers or providers, interviewer support staff, various categories of data users); (III) carrying out specific analytical or statistical activities (e.g.: sampling work, socio-economic analyses, experimental projects and statistical know-how with (re) use of new and alternative data, etc.).

1.3.8. Full involvement and effective participation of SSN institutions in the work of developing the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) in programme and spending budget prioritisation.

Subsection 4. Priority Directorate 1.4. Optimisation of the organisational structure of institutions within the SSN

1.4.1. Functional assessment of the NBS and review of the structure of the BNS based on recommendations. Regular update (every 4-5 years) of the functional analysis of the NBS in terms of the capacity to satisfy pre-defined institutional performance indicators and to bring the organisational structure into line with the new strategic priorities.

1.4.2. Ensure effective possibilities for independent reallocation of staff within the structural subdivisions of the NBS, from the territorial offices to the central apparatus and vice versa, according to the needs and priorities of the NBS.

1.4.3. Ensure the existence of structural units with clearly assigned statistical functions within the other producers of official statistics.

Section 2

General objective 2

General objective 2. National statistical system reinforced by good governance systems, common legal and regulatory framework, privacy and data protection practices to ensure transparency and accessibility of data of public interest and to increase public trust in and use of data (SND, specific objective 7.1)

Subsection 1. Priority Directorate 2.1. Strengthening the professional independence of the NBS

2.1.1. Adoption of a comprehensive package of amendments in legislation (on strengthening the mandate of the NBS to collect and access data for statistical purposes and dissemination of official statistics, etc.).

2.1.2. Ensure the necessary conditions to strengthen/enhance professional independence in the production and dissemination of official statistics (adequacy of resources for carrying out its tasks and powers, including statistical work, training and motivation of staff, development of compliant technical and material basis, ensuring compliance with statistical ethics, etc.).

2.1.3. Strengthening the presence of the central authority in the field of statistics in the public domain in order to promote standards and methodologies in official statistics, constructive feedback to criticism and misuse of statistics, thus contributing to the correct formation of public opinion on statistical issues and increasing statistical culture in society.

Subsection 2. Priority Directorate 2.2. Ensuring a favourable climate for the respect of statistical confidentiality and data protection

2.2.1. Strengthen regulatory, administrative, technical and organisational data protection measures for producers of official statistics to facilitate data consumption and use for statistical purposes.

2.2.2. Facilitating the access of researchers to individual statistical data for scientific purposes, in accordance with the Law on Official Statistics and International Good Practices in the Field.

2.2.3. Develop privacy and data protection policy and instructions for their implementation at SSN level.

2.2.4. Enhance the capacities and abilities of producers of official statistics to respect confidentiality and data protection in the production, dissemination and archiving of data.

2.2.5. Regular audit on data protection and security (including personal data) to ensure compliance with relevant requirements and standards and adaptation to new information technologies.

Subsection 3. Priority Directorate 2.3. Developing premises and capacities for strategic coordination

2.3.1. Develop the internal coordination capabilities of the NBS, including at the level of staff responsible for statistical processes and methodologies.

2.3.2. Preparation of annual and multiannual statistical work programmes across the SSN.

2.3.3. The development of SSN dialogue platforms with a view to ensuring the consistency of official statistics produced by its members, optimising statistical research and reducing the information burden on respondents, with a view to the coordinated implementation of the European Statistics Compendium and the European Statistics Code of Practice.

2.3.4. Ensure uniformity, including through regulatory provisions, of the processes and methodologies used by other producers of official statistics, based on developed standards and/or recommendations of the NBS.

2.3.5. Ensure coordinated dissemination of official statistics across the SSN in line with a common dissemination timeline.

Subsection 4. Priority Directorate 2.4. Optimisation of statistical production procedures

2.4.1. Increase collaboration with holders of state and private information resources to increase their use for the production of official statistics. Identify and establish partnerships for the use of new data sources and methods for the production of statistics (e.g.: Big Data, Spatial Data, Web scraping, machine learning, etc.), with the potential to partially supplement or substitute existing statistical sources.

2.4.2. Harnessing the potential of administrative and private data sources (e.g.: energy companies, telecommunications, trade) and new data by compiling experimental statistics with subsequent integration into statistical production. This will be done by experimental work and testing of these (non-statistical) sources in order to produce official statistics. The increased use of administrative and private data sources for statistical purposes will allow: (I) substitution of existing statistical research, including the gradual transition to registries censuses; (II) the compilation of new statistical data; (III) more frequent statistical data production; (IV) reducing costs for the production of official statistics; (v) reducing the information pressure on respondents.

2.4.3. Operationalise the legal provisions on the coordination by holders of administrative data sources with the NBS of the content and volume of data collected by them, including any changes to the data, and include additional indicators upon request of the BNS.

Subsection 5. Priority Directorate 2.5. Reducing information pressure on respondents

2.5.1. Collaboration of SSN members with respondents to promote a better understanding of the purpose, content and presentation of statistical questionnaires and identify ways to optimise the response burden.

2.5.2. Create regulatory, functional, organisational, methodological, technical and technological conditions for the development of tools for the automatic extraction of statistical data from companies' accounts for the production of official statistics.

2.5.3. Develop and implement a system for regular monitoring and evaluation of the response burden on respondents (entities and population) to optimise it.

2.5.4. Expand the digitalisation of statistical questionnaires for entities and households to facilitate the reporting of statistical data, in particular with the use of the CAWI online reporting method.

Section 3–a General objective 3

General objective 3. High quality data, including new data sets (timely, relevant, reliable, accessible, disaggregated, coherent, internationally comparable and harmonised with European Union requirements), produced to inform society and support effective decision-making and evidence-based public policy implementation leading to sustainable development and inclusive society (SND, specific objective 7.3)

Subsection 1. Priority Directorate 3.1. Strengthening quality management in the national statistical system based on a common approach

3.1.1. Develop and implement the Quality Management Guide in official statistics with common rules (general approaches and standardised procedures) on quality assurance in SSN.

3.1.2. The adoption by producers of official statistics of quality policy within their institutions, which is necessary to fully assume responsibility for the quality management of the statistics produced.

3.1.3. Create capacities within SSN institutions to ensure the quality management of the statistics produced.

3.1.4. Gradual implementation of the quality management system for official statistics by aligning with quality standards.

3.1.5. Carrying out regular global or sectoral assessments in order to bring official statistics into line with international, European quality standards, with the development of remedial plans.

Subsection 2. Priority Directorate 3.2. Align official statistics with international standards, in particular European standards

3.2.1. Carrying out regular sectoral and thematic evaluations of the suitability of the methodologies used in the production of official statistics with international standards, in particular European standards.

3.2.2. Develop statistical methodologies and expand statistical methods (quantitative models for estimating missing data – statistical imputation) in accordance with international standards and standards to ensure comparability of statistical data produced within SSN and meet user needs.

3.2.3. Organise and conduct the Population and Housing Census in 2024, in line with the recommendations of the Conference of European Statisticians for Population and Housing Census, Round 2020, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (https://unece.org/DAM/stats/publications/2015/ECECES41_EN.pdf) and the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census, UN, Revision 3 (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles_and_Recommendations/Population-and-Housing-Censuses/Series_M67rev3-E.pdf) (SDG target 17.19).

3.2.4. Carrying out research and statistical work in accordance with the provisions of the European Statistical Compendium and taking into account the UN framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) monitoring indicators, with a specific focus on disaggregating statistical data in order to provide records for the implementation of the principle, “no one is left behind” in the monitoring of the National Development Strategy, Moldova 2030” and sectoral policies (SDG target 17.18).

3.2.5. Expand the participation of SSN representatives in international platforms in the field of official statistics to enhance the exchange of experience with representatives of institutions from other states.

3.2.6. Strengthening cooperation between producers of official statistical data and academia, scientific research institutions, the expert community, including the dimension of improving statistical methodologies.

3.2.7. Increase the share of statistical or related research (econometrics, economic and demographic modelling and forecasting) in R & D programmes funded by the State or development partners, with the possibility of integrating their results into official statistics.

3.2.8. Implementation of the Review Policy (ESS guidelines on revision policy for PEEIs: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/5935517/KS-RA-13-016-EN.PDF>) statistical data and implementation of statistical techniques and methods to reconcile data and minimise the impact of methodological changes on indicators.

Subsection 3. Priority Directorate 3.3. Optimising statistical processes by upgrading the SSN ICT infrastructure

3.3.1. Regularly assess the ICT infrastructure of SSN institutions with a view to strengthening efforts to unify and digitalise statistical processes in line with the e-government and digital transformation agenda.

3.3.2. Develop and maintain the statistical integrated information system (SIIS) based on the metadata of the BNS in line with good practice in the field based on the comprehensive assessment of the existing ICT infrastructure and the experience of other statistical institutions.

3.3.3. Transitioning from the island statistical production approach, where certain areas have their own processes and architecture, to an integrated (holistic) approach, using common methods in which processes are shared and reused, to restructure statistical production processes, improve efficiency and produce results that better meet users' needs.

3.3.4. Use of new methods and technologies for data collection, such as computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI), computer-assisted WEB interviews (CAWI), computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI), data collection using geographic information systems (GIS).

3.3.5. Geospatial data management and data sharing taking into account good practices, such as through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and network services (WMS, WMTS, WFS, etc.).

3.3.6. Networking with ICT staff from national statistical offices in other countries, including participation in international projects among the statistical community and experience in international standards to modernise the statistical system.

3.3.7. Organise cooperation programmes with HEIs to attract relevant ICT students through internships, engage in short-term projects and offer jobs after completing their studies.

3.3.8. Continuous training of SSN staff to build capacity on modernisation standards, such as: Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA), Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations (GAMSO), Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX), use of open source languages (e.g.: R +) use of Big Data and other non-traditional data sources together with machine learning techniques for the production of official statistics.

3.3.9. Enhance data interoperability between administrative data holders and SSN members through the extensive use of the interoperability platform (MConnect) and with the integration of governmental platform services.

Subsection 4. Priority Directorate 3.4. Extending access to official statistical data for the general public

3.4.1. Development of webpages dedicated to official statistics, in line with a common dissemination standard (timing of data dissemination, publication of metadata, etc.).

3.4.2. Extending the access of public bodies with control functions to the relevant statistical information, in accordance with the provisions of Law No 93/2017 on official statistics, for the purpose of carrying out institutional tasks.

3.4.3. Extending secure access to anonymised statistical microdata for scientific purposes in line with the Regulation approved by the BNS, while respecting confidentiality and data protection requirements.

3.4.4. Improving statistical outputs produced by SSN institutions by: I) extension of time series; II) refinement and improvement of databases made available to users with new information; III) standardisation and improvement of the content of statistical products; IV) optimisation of deadlines for dissemination of statistical products, etc.

3.4.5. Expanding the dissemination of official statistics: (I) on the webpage of the BNS, compatible with mobile devices and adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities; (II) the Statistical Database; (III) interactive dissemination platforms; (IV) using social media, etc.

3.4.6. Development and management of the National Platform for Monitoring Indicators for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) produced at national level, with the regular update of metadata.

3.4.7. Create a statistical geo-portal for the dissemination of statistical data integrated with spatial data.

Section 4

General objective 4

General objective 4. Consolidated statistical culture in society to enable policymakers to use data efficiently and provide the services and resources the population needs in a sustainable way, for crisis recovery and to provide the general public with a better understanding of the statistics and accountability of the authorities (SND, specific objective 7.3)

Subsection 1. Priority Directorate 4.1. Consulting the opinion of data users for continuous improvement of the provision of official statistics

4.1.1. Regularly assess user satisfaction with the statistical products and services of SSN members, as well as users' needs to enhance statistical knowledge.

4.1.2. Ensuring public information and visibility on the work of SSN, in particular on new statistical research, large scale complex research (e.g. censuses), progress in modernising statistical methods, innovations in statistics, etc.

4.1.3. Strengthen communication policy, with the more active presence of BNS, BNM and other producers of official statistics in the public space.

Subsection 2. Priority Directorate 4.2. Qualitative development of data demand relative to the potential of data supply

4.2.1. Strengthening cooperation between statistical data producers, on the one hand, and academia, non-governmental organisations, educational institutions, on the other hand, in order to identify and implement different mechanisms through which the level of statistical culture can be improved among the general public.

4.2.2. Organise training activities, including in partnerships with other institutions (academia, educational institutions, NGOs, universities, business associations), on available statistics, basic concepts, use of statistics with different target groups.

4.2.3. Increase the transparency of statistical work in the SSN by better informing respondents and users.

Chapter V

IMPACT OF THE STRATEGY

Section 1

Administrative impact

From an administrative point of view, the most promising impact of the Strategy is to increase the capacity of authorities in monitoring and assessing the impact of policies. Monitoring throughout the public policy cycle and impact assessment is the premise for continuous improvement of these policies.

By providing a flow of qualitative and relevant statistical data, the Strategy will make it easier to inform evidence-based policies, communicate more transparently with the public and thus contribute to improving the quality of governance as a whole.

A lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic is the crucial importance of data in crisis situations. It is clear that the implementation of the Strategy will increase public authorities' crisis management capacities at all stages (evaluation, preparedness, management, rehabilitation) and thus increase the resilience of society as a whole to them.

Section 2

Economic impact

This Strategy will improve the economic efficiency of the allocation and use of resources available to data users, insofar as these data will be used for economically optimal decisions.

Thus, economic operators who will use more reliable, disaggregated and relevant statistical data will be able to make better informed decisions on investment projects, employment plans and the territorial location of production capacities, sales points and service provision. This will lead to overall efficiency

gains in the manufacturing sector and thus to the sustainable expansion of national production capacities.

Statistical data will provide households with more information on the labour force according to their socio-economic characteristics. It will increase the inter-sectoral and geographical mobility of the workforce, the level of pay for work, the level of satisfaction with the work done and ensure a healthier balance between family life and work. Using statistical data, households with a sufficient level of economic and financial education will be able to achieve the optimal composition of consumer expenditure, rational savings and ways to harness savings.

At the same time, an increase in the tax base associated with efficiency gains in the use of resources by the productive sector and households will also bring about economic benefits for the public sector, which will translate into higher budgetary revenues and increased accuracy and economic relevance of budgetary expenditure.

Section 3

Social impacts

The use of statistical data to identify optimal solutions to enhance collective well-being is a distinct feature of a modern, informed and responsible society. In such a society, data have a key role to play in answering key questions about the past, present and future.

In this perspective, the Strategy will provide qualitative, internationally comparable and disaggregated data (according to relevant criteria such as: sex, age, residence environment, territorial aspect, occupational status, disability, ethnicity and/or spoken language and other relevant disaggregations) necessary for research and substantiation of public policy decisions at national, regional and local level, but also decisions targeted at vulnerable population groups, with expected impact on their quality of life and the implementation of the principle, no one is left behind". It will help strengthen everyone's sense of belonging to the community, nation and state, educate people's critical thinking and strengthen social cohesion.

At the same time, the implementation of the Strategy will ensure a higher level of social fairness in relation to the allocation of public resources. In particular, it refers to the possible territorial impact of socio-demographic statistics and the incorporation of these data into the decision-making process throughout the budgetary cycle.

Section 4

Environmental impact

The strategy will ensure a sufficient amount of data of geographical detail and resolution to guide the transition to the green economy, minimise the

ecological footprint of human activity and valorise natural resources in a way that is fair to future generations.

At the level of economic operators, the use of statistical data will make it possible to implement more environmentally responsible technologies, both in terms of using environmental resources and minimising discharges into the environment.

In scientific research, statistical data will make it possible to study and better understand human-nature interactions, how ecosystems can adapt to climate change, build and operate integrated models and use them to develop sustainable development programmes and strategies.

At the policy level, official statistics data will increase the efficiency and social relevance of environmental regulation, shorten the response time of authorities in case of environmental crises and allow for faster recovery in the post-crisis phase.

Chapter VI

MONITORING AND EVALUATION INDICATORS

The assessment of the Strategy will be carried out on the basis of the result indicators of the priority and impact directorates related to the general objectives listed in Table 2. These indicators will measure the progress made towards achieving the objectives set by the Strategy and, accordingly, the priority directorates through the implementation of the resulting programmes/programme.

Impact indicators reflect the expected administrative, economic, social and environmental effects of the implementation of the long-term strategy – at the level of the implementation of the objectives.

Result indicators will assess the immediate and medium-term effects of the implementation of the Strategy in certain statistical elements/components, or on different target groups (producers, suppliers, users of statistical data). They will assess:

- 1) results at priority direction level, on an annual basis;
- 2) the effect of the measures taken on priority lines in the work and operation of the national statistical system, primarily on the quantification of the degree of harmonisation of the official statistics of the Republic of Moldova produced by the National Statistical Office in the framework of the implementation of European regulations and national development programmes.

Table 2

Impact and result indicators

General Objective/Priority Directorate	Impact indicator (for general objectives) and result (for priority directions)	Evaluation/measurement method	Source of verification	Reference amount	Intermediate target (2026)	Final target (2030)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
General objective 1: Institutional capacity of SSN members strengthened to produce relevant, accessible and interoperable statistical data governed by standards and driven by innovation	Degree of confidence in the national statistical system	User survey <i>(very low – 0-25 %; low – 26-50 %; medium grade – 51-75 %; high – > 75 %)</i>	Regular data user opinion poll (every 2-3 years)	Environment (70 %) (2022)	Environment (71-75 %)	High (> 75 %)
Priority Directorate 1.1: Strengthening the mandate for data collection	Level of access to individual data from administrative and private sources (SDA/P) for statistical purposes	Share of SDA/P to which SSN members have effective access to the relevant SDA/P total <i>(limited access – 0-30 % partial access – 31-80 % advanced access – > 80 %)</i>	Annual SSN Activity Questionnaire (for SSN members)	Limited access (2022)	Access partially	Advanced access
Priority Directorate 1.2: Human resources development	Level of remuneration of statistical staff	Ratio of the average salary of BNS staff to the average salary of central government authorities	Annual official statistical data	67.7 % (2022)	100 %	100 %
	Staff satisfaction level of SSN institutions	Share of staff who are satisfied with the conditions and remuneration of work	Regular survey (every 2-3 years) of SSN employees	Lower environmental level (2022)	Medium level	High level

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Priority Directorate 1.3: Ensuring the allocation of sustainable and efficient financial and technical resources	Level of financing of SSN development activities	Share of budget allocations in SSN development (ICT technologies and infrastructure, technical and material base renovation, pilot research, experimental statistical calculations, evaluation/audit services, etc. excluding single statistical census works) in total allowances)	Annual report on budget allocations in the development of SSN	5.5 % (BNS)	Increase of 5 p.p. compared to the reference value (SSN)	Increase of 10 p.p. compared to the reference value (SSN)
Priority Directorate 1.4: Optimisation of the organisational structure of institutions within the SSN	Share of institutions included in the SWP holding structural units with clearly assigned statistical functions	Number of institutions with clearly assigned statistical function structural units in total institutions included in the SWP	PLS	7 % (2022)	15 %	30 %
	Share of producers of official statistics in total institutions included in the SWP	Number of producers of official statistics in total institutions included in the SWP	PLS	6 % (2022)	15 %	30 %
General objective 2: National statistical system reinforced by good governance systems, common legal and regulatory framework, privacy and data protection practices to ensure transparency and accessibility of data of public interest and to increase public trust and use of data	Degree of alignment of national statistics with the Code of Practice of European Statistics	Expert judgement <i>(low – 0-30 %;</i> <i>medium grade – 31-70 %;</i> <i>high – > 70 %)</i>	Periodic reports (every 2-3 years) of the external evaluation of SSN (EUROSTAT global evaluation)	Environment (2019)	Environment	High

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Priority Directorate 2.1: Strengthening the professional independence of the NBS	Level of professional independence in the production and dissemination of official statistics	Expert judgement	Periodic reports (every 2-3 years) of the external evaluation of the SSN (by UN ECE, EUROSTAT Global Assessment, other)	Partial (2019)	Flexibility	Flexibility
Priority Directorate 2.2: Ensuring a favourable climate for the respect of statistical confidentiality and data protection	Level of respect for statistical confidentiality and ensuring data protection	Expert judgement	Periodic (2-3 years) external evaluation and audit reports	Environment (2021)	High	High
Priority Directorate 2.3: Developing premises and capacities for strategic coordination	Level of integration of data manufacturers in the SSN	The indicator will be estimated from the perspective of the integration of potential APSO into SSN at statistical production level (applies BNS recommendations on methodologies, classifications, coherence in statistical indicators produced under SSN) and dissemination (compliance with dissemination standards, metadata assurance)	Annual assessment report by the NBS	Low (2022)	Environment	High
Priority Directorate 2.4: Optimisation of statistical production procedures	Share of revised statistical work with a view to optimising the statistical procedures applied	No of statistical work carried out on the basis of alternative data sources (administrative, private, etc.) by optimising the procedures compared to the total statistical works in the SWP.	Annual assessment report by the NBS	5 % (2022)	10 %	20 %

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Optimisation will include: testing of ADS and other alternative data sources, their evaluation, revision of definitions/concepts, statistics and use of these sources for the production of official statistics (to be calculated cumulatively)				
Priority Directorate 2.5. Reducing information pressure on respondents	Rate of decrease of response burden on business	Research to estimate the information pressure on businesses, on time consumption to complete and report statistical data annually (reference year 2022)	Regular business survey (every 2-3 years)	0 (base year 2022)	Decrease of 5 % compared to the reference value	Decrease of 10 % compared to the reference value
General objective 3: High quality data, including new data sets (timely, relevant, reliable, accessible, disaggregated, coherent, internationally comparable and harmonised with European Union requirements), produced to inform society and support effective decision-making and evidence-based public policy implementation leading to sustainable development and inclusive society	Degree of alignment of sectoral official statistics with international standards	Expert judgement (<i>low</i> – 0-30 %; <i>medium grade</i> – 31-70 %; <i>high</i> – > 70 %)	Periodic reports (every 2-3 years) of the external evaluation of SSN (overall EUROSTAT evaluation)	Environment (2019)	Environment	High
Priority Directorate 3.1.	Level of implementation of	The quality policy will be	Periodic reports (every	Low	Environment	High

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strengthening quality management in the national statistical system based on a common approach	quality policy and guiding principles by SSN members	implemented through recommended guiding principles for SSN members (in the Quality Guide) <i>(low – 0-30 %;</i> <i>medium level – 31-70 %;</i> <i>high level – > 70 %)</i>	2-3 years) of SSN members for monitoring and evaluation (based on Principle 4 “Quality Commitment” of the Code of Practice)	(BNS) (2022)	(SSN)	(SSN)
	Share of institutions within SSN aligned/certified in quality standards in official statistics	Alignment measured by confirmation of availability of quality certificates or other evidence (Total Quality Management, European Framework for Quality Management/EFQM, ISO)	Annual information based on documents confirming compliance with quality standards	0 % (2022)	30 %	60 %
Priority Directorate 3.2. Align official statistics with international standards, in particular European standards	Degree of alignment of official statistics with international methodological standards/recommendations	Share of official statistics (indicators/statistical work (s) in the SWP) where international methodological standards/recommendations (notions, statistical definitions, et.) are used in the total statistical work in the SWP <i>(low – 0-30 %;</i> <i>medium grade – 31-70 %;</i> <i>high – > 70 %)</i>	Regular reports (every 2-3 years) on the implementation of international standards	Environment	Environment	High
	Degree of alignment of relevant national classifications with international classifications	Share of classifications used in the production of national statistics adapted to international classifications in total statistical classifications used at national level for	Regular reports (every 2-3 years) on alignment with international classifications	Environment	Environment	High

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		which international classifications exist (<i>low</i> – 0-30 %; <i>medium grade</i> – 31-70 %; <i>high</i> – > 70 %)				
Priority Directorate 3.3. Optimising statistical processes by upgrading the SSN ICT infrastructure	Degree of digitalisation of collection, SSN statistical data	Proportion of statistical questionnaires for which data collection is carried out through new ICT (CAPI, CATI, CAWI, other) (<i>low</i> – 0-30 %; <i>medium grade</i> – 31-70 %; <i>high</i> – > 70 %)	Annual progress reports of SSN members	Low (BNS) (2022)	Environment (SSN)	High (SSN)
Priority Directorate 3.4. Extending access to official statistical data for the general public	Degree of access to statistical data by the general public	The degree of access will be judged by users in the light of a number of criteria: — <i>clarity</i> (data is clear, accompanied by metadata) — <i>relevance</i> (reflects users' information needs) — <i>opportunity</i> (data disseminated on timelines that meet users' needs) — <i>accessibility</i> (dissemination channels) — <i>coherence and comparability</i> (<i>very low</i> – 0-25 %; <i>low</i> – 26-50 %; <i>medium grade</i> – 51-75 %; <i>high</i> – > 75 %)	Regular data user opinion poll (every 2-3 years)	Clarity – environment (70 %) Relevance – environment (70 %) Opportunity – environment (67 %) Accessibility – environment (67 %) Coherence and comparability – environment	Environment (71-75 %)	High (> 75 %)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
				(67 %) (2022)		
	Proportion of sustainable development indicators available at national level, according to relevant disaggregations and Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (SDG indicator 17.18.1)	The availability of SDG indicators will receive values: fully available, partially available, missing	Annual report assessing the availability of SDG indicators (on annual and regular reporting (National Voluntary Review) of SDG implementation	50 % fully available 25 % in part 20 % missing (2020)	70 % fully available 15 % in part 15 % missing	90 % fully available 10 % in part
General objective 4: Consolidated statistical culture in society to enable policymakers to use data efficiently and provide the services and resources people need in a sustainable way, for crisis recovery and to provide the general public with a better understanding of statistics and accountability of authorities	The extent to which official statistics are used by the main users (central and local public authorities, NGOs, business, academia, etc.)	User survey (<i>very low</i> : 0-25 %; <i>low</i> – 26-50 %; <i>medium grade</i> – 51-75 %; <i>high</i> – > 75 %)	Regular data user opinion poll (every 2-3 years)	Environment (Daily, weekly or monthly use – 66 %) (2022)	Environment (Daily, weekly or monthly use – 70 – 75 %)	High (Daily, weekly or monthly use – > 75 %)
Priority Directorate 4.1. Consulting the opinion of data users for continuous improvement of the provision of official statistics	User satisfaction with SSN members' statistical information	User survey (<i>very low</i> — 0-25 %; <i>low</i> – 26-50 %; <i>medium grade</i> – 51-75 %; <i>high</i> – > 75 %)	Regular data user opinion poll (every 2-3 years)	Environment (70 %)	Environment (71-75 %)	High (> 75 %)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Priority Directorate 4.2. Qualitative development of data demand relative to the potential of data supply	Rate of increase in the number of visits to SSN members' webpages (base year 2022)	Statistics on access to SSN members' webpages	Annual report based on web meters	0	20 % increase from baseline (base year 2022)	40 % increase from baseline (base year 2022)

Chapter VII IMPLEMENTATION RISKS

Table 3

Implementation risks

Anticipated risks	Probable quantity (low/medium/high)	Impact (low/medium/high)	Risk mitigation measures
Access by producers of official statistics to personal data from state and private registers and information systems is not offered, serving as an obstacle to the production of statistics on the basis of registers	average	great	Adjust legislation to ensure access to personal data in state and private registers and information systems. Bi- and multilateral discussions, at different levels, to address existing problems
The difference between salaries of other public institutions and the private sector on the one hand and the remuneration of work in SSN on the other hand remains high	average	great	Examination of the possibility of providing a statement of reasons for staff, both materially and immaterial
Low funding of SSN from budgetary sources and technical and financial assistance from development partners, in particular for complex SSN modernisation activities and the production of statistics based on registers	great	great	Additional financing of SSN development from the account: - the provision of additional services for remuneration not provided for in the PLS; - technical and financial assistance from development partners
Dissemination of statistical data by non-SSN actors that do not meet the quality standards	average	environment	Producers of official statistics to provide high-quality data, accompanied by metadata, and communicate them to the general public as accessible as possible through modern dissemination methods. Prompt reaction from official statistics producers in cases of provision of low quality data by non-SSN actors or misinterpretation of official statistics. SSN to take over best practices, where appropriate, from the work of new private-sector data producers.

Perpetuating low statistical culture among data users (in particular among policy makers)	great	great	Ensure training of statistical data users upon taking up duties (MEPs, local councillors, mayors in the first term of office)
Lower interest in real sciences (mathematics, statistics) in the education sector (in particular at tertiary level: University and postgraduate studies)	great	great	Adjustment of training programmes with compulsory teaching of statistics/discipline dedicated to the use of statistical methods in all faculties. Expanding research programmes in the field of statistics, modelling and economic forecasting with funding from the state budget
Weak interest of political actors in the field of statistics	great	great	Active communication of the NBS management with the political environment. Empower the media, civil society organisations and involve academia and academia in promoting a public agenda informed by records

Chapter VIII RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES/INSTITUTIONS

Table 4

Responsible institutions

Indicator	Main institution responsible	Partner institutions
General objective 1. Institutional capacity of the members of the Consolidated National Statistical System to produce relevant, open, interoperable and coherent statistical data governed by standards and driven by innovation	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Ministry of Finance; holders of public administrative data sources; National Centre for Personal Data Protection
Priority Directorate 1.1. Strengthening the mandate for data collection	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics; Electronic Government Agency	Public Services Agency; State Fiscal Service; The General Inspectorate of the Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; other administrative and private data holders

Priority Directorate 1.2. Human resources development	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	State Chancellery; Ministry of Finance
Priority Directorate 1.3. Ensuring the allocation of sustainable and efficient financial resources	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Ministry of Finance; development partners
Priority Directorate 1.4. Optimisation of the organisational structure of institutions within the SSN	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Development partners
General objective 2. The national statistical system reinforced by good governance systems, the common legal and regulatory framework, privacy and data protection practices to ensure transparency and accessibility of data of public interest and to increase public trust and use of the data.	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Holders of administrative and private data sources
Priority Directorate 2.1. Strengthening the professional independence of the NBS	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	
Priority Directorate 2.2. Ensuring a favourable climate for the respect of statistical confidentiality and data protection	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	National Centre for Personal Data Protection
Priority Directorate 2.3. Developing premises and capacities for strategic coordination	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Development partners
Priority Directorate 2.4. Optimisation of statistical production procedures	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Holders of administrative and private data sources; development partners
Priority Directorate 2.5. Reducing information pressure on respondents	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Centre for Information Technologies in Finance; Electronic Government Agency; institutions of central government authorities; professional associations; non-governmental organisations; academia
General objective 3. High-quality data (timely, relevant, reliable, accessible, coherent, internationally comparable, in particular European), produced to inform society and support effective, evidence-based decision-making leading	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Electronic Government Agency; Ministry of Finance; academia and academia; development partners

to sustainable development and inclusive society		
Priority Directorate 3.1. Strengthening quality management in the national statistical system based on a common approach	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Development partners
Priority Directorate 3.2. Align official statistics with international standards, in particular European standards	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Academia; development partners
Priority Directorate 3.3. Optimising statistical processes by upgrading the SSN ICT infrastructure	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Electronic Government Agency; Centre for Information Technologies in Finance; Ministry of Finance; academia and academia; development partners
Priority Directorate 3.4. Extending access to official statistical data for the general public	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Academia; civil society organisations; development partners; institutions of central government authorities
General objective 4. Consolidated statistical culture in society to enable policymakers to use data efficiently and provide the services and resources people need in a sustainable way, for crisis recovery and to provide the general public with a better understanding of statistics and accountability of authorities	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Institutions of central government authorities; professional associations; non-governmental organisations; academia and academia; specialised media
Priority Directorate 4.1. Consultation of data users' opinion for continuous improvement of the provision of official statistics	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Academia and academia; specialised media; non-governmental organisations
Priority Directorate 4.2. Qualitative development of data demand relative to the potential of data supply	BNS; BNM; other producers of official statistics	Specialised media; professional associations; Non-governmental organisations; academia

Chapter IX
MONITORING PROCEDURES,
REPORTING AND EVALUATION

The ongoing monitoring of the Strategy in the implementation process will be carried out by the NBS in order to establish the degree of implementation of the actions, to ensure the uniformity, continuity and compliance of the actions taken with those planned, to prevent delays, to adjust to important changes in the internal and external environment and to continuously streamline the implementation process.

The monitoring will be carried out in relation to the monitoring indicators set out in the Strategy – with annual periodicity on *the basis of result* indicators and with a frequency of 2-3 years based on *impact* indicators. The results of the monitoring will be included in annual reports (based on the relevant indicators), to which all entities in the national statistical system will contribute under the coordination of the NBS. The monitoring reports will be examined by the National Council for Statistics and submitted to the Government by 1 July, with placement on the official website of the NBS.

The assessment of progress for each of the pre-defined monitoring indicators will be made by comparison with a baseline to be calculated on the basis of existing information at the level of 2022 or another year (as appropriate depending on the availability of data).

For other indicators, namely *impact* indicators, baselines will be established on the basis of opinion surveys of statistical data users, respondents or members of SSN and expert assessments that will be carried out with a certain periodicity (usually every 2-3 years). They may also be used for the evaluation activities of the Strategy.

The strategy foresees a mid-term evaluation (in 2027) and a final evaluation after the deadline for implementation of the Strategy (2031). The purpose of evaluations is to provide objective information on the impact of the Strategy. The results of the mid-term evaluation will be used to adjust, where appropriate, the provisions of the Strategy and will be taken into account in the implementation programmes of the Strategy. The assessment will be carried out against the following criteria:

- 1) the relevance of the Strategy and the measures included for the country;
- 2) analysis of the degree of compatibility of the Strategy with other policies and public policy documents (coherence);
- 3) the degree of achievement of the objectives (effectiveness);
- 4) how to use the allocated budgetary means (efficiency);
- 5) ability to produce lasting effects (durability);
- 6) the impact of the strategy, estimated in the final evaluation.

The interim evaluation will be based on internal evaluations carried out by the NBS, as the authority responsible for the implementation of the Strategy, and regular SSN evaluations by experts and international organisations. The final assessment will be carried out by an independent entity contracted by the NBS. Evaluations will be carried out in a participatory framework that reflects the diversity of users and their needs. The evaluation reports (interim and final) will

be examined by the National Statistical Council, submitted to the Government by 1 July of the year following the evaluation and made public via the official website of the NBS.

The evaluation reports shall follow the structure laid down in Government Decision No 386/2020 on the planning, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policy documents and shall include the following components:

1) Executive summary (results achieved in the implementation of the Strategy against the stated objectives, conclusions and key recommendations);

2) introduction (short description of the Strategy, the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation methods, the sources of documentation and the constraints encountered in the evaluation process);

3) findings (detailed presentation of the results of the assessment according to the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and, in the case of the final assessment, the impact of the Strategy);

4) conclusions (brief description of the conclusions drawn from the assessment);

5) recommendations to improve the Strategy, in the case of mid-term evaluations, and for long-term statistical policies in the case of the final evaluation.