



**EUROPEAN
STATISTICAL
SYSTEM**

**IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS
LATVIA**



Central Statistical Bureau
Republic of Latvia

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

1. Recommendation

The relevant authorities should develop and implement strategies to strengthen the influence of the Statistical Council, starting with a reassessment of its membership to ensure greater diversity of user representatives and consideration of the possibility of an external chairperson. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 11.1)

Current situation:

The Statistical Council is an advisory body the purpose of which is to develop the system of official statistics by providing recommendations to Statistical institutions, as well as facilitating cooperation between Statistical institutions, respondents and users of statistics.

The Council is composed of thirteen representatives:

- a representative of the Central Statistical Bureau;
- a representative of the Ministry of Economics;
- a representative of the Ministry of Welfare;
- a representative of the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development (ex the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development);
- a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture;
- a representative of the Council of Higher Education;
- a representative of the Data State Inspectorate;
- a representative of the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre;
- a representative of the Bank of Latvia;
- a representative of the Employers' Confederation of Latvia;
- a representative of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments;
- a representative of the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- a representative of the Latvian Association of Statisticians.

On 28 September 2023 the national peer review coordinator presented to the Statistical Council the Peer Review report on compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice, including the issue about the reassessment of Statistical Council membership and its chairperson.

Improvement sub-action 1.1:

Statistics Latvia will send an official letter to the Ministry of Economics to inform about peer review team recommendations to examine possibilities to extend the representation of different user communities as well as consider the possibility of the Statistical Council being chaired by an external person of high public standing.

Deadline: Q1 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.1: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 1.2:

Statistics Latvia together with the Ministry of Economics will evaluate whether it is meaningful to prepare changes in the membership of the Statistical Council and will decide on best practice, considering obligations in the legislative system of Latvia.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 1.2: Statistics Latvia, Ministry of Economics

Improvement sub-action 1.3:

Each year, at the first meeting of the Statistical Council, the Council will decide on the annual management strategy for the next programming period and will use this strategy to increase its influence on addressing user needs for statistics.

Deadline: Q1 2025 (annually afterwards)
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.3: The Statistical Council
Improvement sub-action 1.4: The Statistical Council will manage and monitor implementation of the agreed strategy, and a report detailing the process will be published in the first quarter of the following year on the Statistics Latvia website.
Deadline: Q1 2026 (annually afterwards)
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.4: The Statistical Council

2. Recommendation Statistics Latvia should reflect on the possible negative aspects of the existing system in which the Cabinet of Ministers approves the content of questionnaires and, in cooperation with the relevant authorities, discuss, identify and implement specific proposals aimed at increasing the professional independence of Statistics Latvia. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1.4 and 1.3)
Current situation: Statistics Latvia is a direct administrative institution operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Economics (Statistics Law Article 4 (2)). Supervision means the rights of higher institutions or officials to examine the lawfulness of decisions taken by lower institutions or officials and to revoke unlawful decisions, as well as to issue an order to take a decision in case of unlawful failure to act (State Administration Structure Law (Article 7(5)). According to the definition, this form of subordination does not affect the functional independence of Statistics Latvia. The Ministry of Economics is not entitled to give direct orders to the Bureau regarding statistical production. In the legislative system of Latvia obligations to third parties can be issued only by the Cabinet of Ministers or by the Parliament. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers shall approve questionnaire forms for official statistics developed by the statistical institutions and lay down the procedures for submission and completion of questionnaires (Statistics Law, Section 12). The Statistics Law (Section 7(1)) stipulates that the Statistical Institution* shall act independently in the field of statistical provision and shall provide official statistics independently. Only Statistics Latvia can instruct other Statistical Institutions on the provision of official statistics and assess the legality of their activities in the area of provision of official statistics. In addition, the second paragraph of Section 7 lists more specifically the competences of Statistical Institutions, which characterize their independence in the provision of official statistics. * According to terms (Section 1 of Statistics Law), Statistical Institution – a State institution which provides official statistics.
Improvement sub-action 2.1: Statistics Latvia will send an official letter to the Ministry of Justice to inform about the peer review team recommendations and consult about possibilities within the existing system to increase the professional independence of Statistics Latvia.
Deadline: Q4 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.1: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 2.2: Considering obligations in the legislative system of Latvia, Statistics Latvia in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Economics will evaluate the existing system in which the Cabinet of Ministers approves the content of the questionnaires.

Deadline: Q4 2025
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 2.2: Statistics Latvia, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Justice
Improvement sub-action 2.3: The relevant authorities will implement the decision taken with regard to changing or maintaining the existing legal framework.
Deadline: Q4 2027
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 2.3: Statistics Latvia, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Justice

3. Recommendation Statistics Latvia, in cooperation with the relevant authorities, should review and adjust the setup of the National Statistical System related to the division of work between Statistics Latvia and the Other National Authorities with limited access to resources for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)
Current situation: The National Statistical System in Latvia is relatively centralised, with Statistics Latvia producing a large majority of European statistics and seven Other National Authorities being responsible for the remaining parts. Statistics Latvia has efficiently developed coordination within the National Statistical System by setting up a strong framework that organises its relations with the Other National Authorities. The division of work within National Statistical System is set up according to the responsibilities determined in national legislation. In 2017/2018 Statistics Latvia carried out formal reviews of the data production process of other national producers of European statistics including the production process and its efficiency, as well as explored other relevant aspects and took respective actions. As a result, the seven existing producers are among the biggest ones and/or produce specific statistics for which Statistics Latvia does not have enough competence. Consequently, the decision was taken not to assume responsibility for these functions. Although the use of human and IT resources is efficient and aimed at delivering quality services to all its users, and, as Statistics Latvia is continuously seeking efficiency gains, it produces excellent value for money. However, financial constraints may reduce the ability of Statistics Latvia to assume the responsibility for producing European statistics currently produced by ONAs.
Improvement sub-action 3.1: Statistics Latvia will assess and evaluate whether it would be useful and meaningful to take over the development, production and dissemination of European statistics produced by ONAs, considering the specifics of the data and metadata, as well as necessary competences and legal framework for data preparation. Depending on the results of assessment, Statistics Latvia will decide if it is possible to overtake some functions of ONAs.
Deadline: Q4 2027
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 3.1: Statistics Latvia and ONAs
Improvement sub-action 3.2: Statistics Latvia and ONAs will implement the decision taken based on a review of the system.
Deadline: Q4 2027
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 3.2: Statistics Latvia and ONAs

4. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should reflect on its future role in the national data ecosystem and discuss and implement its proposals in cooperation with the relevant authorities. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.7, 1bis.1 and 2.4)

Current situation:

The Statistics Law establishes Statistics Latvia as the leading institution of the National Statistical System in Latvia. Statistics Latvia has a long-established position as the producer of independent statistical data. The Statistics Law ensures the professional independence of Statistics Latvia, provides access to all data sources and provides an administrative framework, which obliges all respondents to provide data requested by national statistical authorities.

Statistics Latvia has a well-established place within the government administration, works in partnership with respective policymakers to participate in state information systems development from the perspective of standardisation, interoperability and data reuse.

A further development of a vision on role of Statistics Latvia in the national data ecosystem requires the vision of the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development (ex the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development), which is in charge of the national IT policy, and the vision of the Ministry of Economics, which grants funding for Statistics Latvia.

Improvement sub-action 4.1:

Statistics Latvia will reflect on its future role in the national data ecosystem, to assume direction to become a central data competence centre and a provider of a secure data processing environment.

Deadline: Q2 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.1: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 4.2:

The Director General of Statistics Latvia will present the vision on the institution's role in the national data ecosystem to all employees of the Statistics Latvia and to the members of Statistical Council, including representatives of the relevant ministries.

Deadline: Q3 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.2: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 4.3:

In order to implement the vision and strengthen the role of Statistics Latvia in the national data ecosystem, Statistics Latvia plans to obtain funding from the European Regional Development Fund and engage in the realisation of two projects:

- 1) Modernisation of Integrated Statistical Data Management System (ISDMS) to provide modern data collection, processing, analysis and publication system for creation of official statistics data;
- 2) Establishment of a Secure Data Processing Environment for the Data Competence Center.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.3: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 4.4.

Statistics Latvia will implement the vision and strengthen the role of Statistics Latvia in the national data ecosystem.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.4: Statistics Latvia

5. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should review the compliance of the Other National Authorities with the ES CoP thoroughly and work with them to ensure compliance with the ES CoP in areas where this is not the case, such as metadata, dissemination, pre-release access arrangements and error correction. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)

Current situation:

The National Statistical System in Latvia is relatively centralised, with Statistics Latvia producing a large majority of European statistics and seven Other National Authorities responsible for the remaining parts. Statistics Latvia has efficiently developed coordination within the National Statistical System by setting up a strong framework that organises its relations with the Other National Authorities.

Statistics Latvia has issued the Order '*On General Quality Requirements for Official Statistics*' (defining the obligation of statistical institutions to comply with the CoP (when producing and disseminating official statistics)). Paragraph 2 of the Order states that the persons responsible for the implementation of the Order are the Heads of the institutions producing and disseminating official statistics. Statistics Latvia regularly monitors the statistical institutions' compliance with the requirements of the CoP, and also regularly organises meetings for those institutions, both to inform them about the activities and to provide them with informative methodological support, also reminding them of the requirements of the Statistics Law. It is planned that until the end of 2025, all seven ONAs will disseminate the full scope of their data on the Official statistics portal to ensure their compliance with the ES CoP concerning dissemination and metadata.

Improvement sub-action 5.1:

Statistics Latvia will regularly monitor the ONA's compliance with the requirements of the ES CoP and organise meetings for them.

Deadline: Q4 2024 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.1: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 5.2:

Statistics Latvia will discuss with ONAs regarding best practices and share with them how to manage dissemination of statistics, including compliance of statistical metadata, error correction, pre-release access to statistical data and how to make it limited, well-justified, controlled, and publicised. Statistics Latvia will monitor the implementation process.

Deadline: Q1 2025 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 5.2: Statistics Latvia, ONAs (The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; The State Ltd 'Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre'; The Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics; The State Plant Protection Service; The Ministry of Agriculture; The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs; The State Border guard)

6. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should review its arrangements for non-publicised pre-release access to the government and other users, which conflict with the principle of impartiality. If pre-release access is to be retained, Statistics Latvia must ensure that it is limited, well-justified, controlled, and publicised. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 6.7)

Current situation:

Before the official publication time, a limited number of officials are granted access to the statistics to have time to analyse, understand and prepare their opinion on the data. Before providing such information, Statistics Latvia assesses the necessity and the benefit to society.

Statistics Latvia agrees with the relevant state officials that they undertake not to disclose these data, the text of the press release, their opinion on the data, nor to indicate descriptively the trend that these data reflect before the press release is published.

The current Dissemination policy of Statistics Latvia determines that Statistics Latvia may grant privileges to access data prior to press releases on topics such as:

- Consumer price statistics;
- Producer price statistics;
- Gross domestic product;
- Employment, wages and salaries;
- Industrial production output;
- Retail trade turnover;
- Foreign trade.

Officials who have been granted an access to the data prior to a press release undertake:

- not to disclose the data or the contents of the press release to third parties in any way before their official publication,
- not to express, directly or indirectly, their view on the data or the content of the press release prior to their official publication,
- not to try delaying the determined date and time of the press release,
- not to try making that the press release data or content is changed,
- use the data solely to prepare for journalists' questions about the socio-economic phenomenon or process covered in the relevant press release.

Privileges to access data prior to the publication of a press release are granted to: Ministry of Economics (3 officials).

The Dissemination policy of Statistics Latvia (adopted 27 December 2021) is available at: <https://www.csp.gov.lv/lv/media/3706/download?attachment>

Statistics Latvia sends a press release to officials who have the privilege to access the data before the press release via e-mail, which contains a reminder about the confidentiality of this information.

Considering the positive impact on promoting the importance and increasing the value of official statistics provided to society, as well as to facilitate the correct interpretation of the data, pre-release access is to be retained. Statistics Latvia agrees that arrangements of pre-release access to the government and other users should be revised to ensure that pre-release access is limited, well-justified, controlled and published.

Improvement sub-action 6.1:

Statistics Latvia will reflect on and review its written agreements for non-public pre-release access for government officials.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.1: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 6.2:

The dissemination policy will be revised with an updated list of government institutions and new organisations which have pre-release access under embargo to make sure that the pre-release arrangements are justified, limited and controlled. Statistics Latvia will publish the revised dissemination policy.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.2: Statistics Latvia

7. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should intensify its efforts to obtain more funding from the government, and through paid services, to enable more competitive compensation for all categories of staff and attract and retain employees and should also consider a broader skill set for vacant positions. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

Current situation:

Statistics Latvia regularly assesses the availability of human, financial and technical (technological) resources in everyday work, as well as in the annual process of planning and producing and disseminating official statistics.

Statistics Latvia attracts additional resources by implementing different projects (EU grants, ESF, ERAF, Norwegian Financial Instrument, etc.), as well as by submitting applications for new priority initiatives at the national level. When taking on new responsibilities, an additional calculation for the required resources is made.

Statistics Latvia has prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Economics the calculation and the supporting explanations in order to obtain additional funding for salaries.

Despite that Statistics Latvia has repeatedly alerted the Ministry of Economics about its financial needs, there is very limited funding for remuneration in Statistics Latvia's budget to ensure adequate remuneration for employees in accordance with the new wage system (in force since 1.07.2022).

Statistics Latvia has considered a broader skill set for vacant positions, through using different job advertisements to attract more qualified specialists and fill vacancies.

Improvement sub-action 7.1.:

Using the planning cycle, Statistics Latvia will intensify efforts and will submit to the Ministry of Economics the calculation of funding and supporting explanations needed for implementing priority initiatives to obtain additional funding.

Deadline: Q4 2024 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.1: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 7.2:

By updating its operational strategy, Statistics Latvia will actively define a policy on how to search for possibilities to attract additional resources by implementing different projects, for example using the various financial instruments available to EU Member States, the extension of the range and revenue from paid services.

Deadline: Q2 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.2: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 7.3.:

Based on the Strategy of Statistics Latvia 2023-2027, Statistics Latvia will improve the level of employee welfare and employee satisfaction with the work environment in order to retain highly qualified specialists.

Statistics Latvia will:

- 1) secure a hybrid model for a well-being working environment,
- 2) increase the annual salary base for Statistics Latvia employees and improve material motivation within the limits of the funding allocated for this purpose,
- 3) develop engagement programmes: initiatives to keep employees motivated and engaged, such as team-building activities, feedback systems and employee recognition programmes.

Deadline: Q4 2024 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.3: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 7.4:

Statistics Latvia will continue the current practice of varying the requirements of job advertisements in order to attract as many candidates as possible, so that the most suitable candidates can be selected from a larger pool of people.

Deadline: Q4 2024 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.4: Statistics Latvia

8. Recommendation

The relevant authorities should increase budgetary funding for Statistics Latvia, taking into account the need to further increase the value that official statistics provide to society, to promote and use new data sources for the production of official statistics, and to reach a wider range of users. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

Current situation

Statistics Latvia regularly assesses availability of human, financial and technical (technological) resources in everyday work as well as in the annual process of planning and producing and disseminating official statistics. All resources, including human, financial and technical resources are adequate to ensure all official statistics included in the Official Statistics Programme for a particular period because Statistics Latvia plans its input for Official Statistics Programme based on the available resources.

Statistics Latvia assesses and justifies all demands for new statistics against their costs in the context of allocated budget, considering importance, justification, costs and availability of other resources. All official statistics to be produced and disseminated are included in the Official Statistics Programme of the respective period. Statistics Latvia's internal procedures for defining needs for new statistics (including assessment and justification considering costs of new statistics and available budget) are defined in the QMS Portal process: 1. Determining needs that includes subprocesses 1.1. Defining needs of statistics and 1.3. Preparation of the Official Statistics Programme.

Statistics Latvia repeatedly alerts the Ministry of Economics and other relevant authorities that delivering high-quality statistics and providing reliable data to decision-makers, relevant stakeholders and the public at large requires adequate resources. Statistics Latvia also agrees with the peer review team considerations that additional funding is necessary to support the adoption of new technologies, maintain and increase professional excellence in human resources, and develop communication toward a wider range of users.

Improvement sub-action 8.1:

To increase budgetary funding, Statistics Latvia will follow every annual cycle of the planning period and will prepare and submit to the Ministry of Economics the calculation and the supporting explanations in order to obtain additional funding for priority initiatives, taking into account the need to further increase the value that official statistics provide to society, to promote and use new data sources for the production of official statistics, etc.

Deadline: Q4 2025 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 8.1: Statistics Latvia, Ministry of Economics

Improvement sub-action 8.2:

In accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers' Instruction *Procedures for Developing and Updating the Institution's Strategy and Evaluating its Implementation*, Statistics Latvia will update its strategy on the initiative of the new Director General, indicating budgetary needs to the Ministry of Economics to realise new initiatives of Statistics Latvia, for example, development of technologies and other.

Deadline: Q2 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 8.2: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 8.3:

Statistics Latvia will present its new Strategy to the members of the Statistical Council to activate it and raise awareness about the needs of Statistics Latvia.

Deadline: Q2 2025 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 8.3: Statistics Latvia

9. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should develop active human resource management and promote itself as a desirable place to work, e.g. through social media, to become more attractive in the labour market. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

Current situation:

As provided by the state administration reform, the number of employees has been reduced each year at the expense of digitization and modernization. In addition, vacancies have been poorly filled recently, hence, there is a risk that planned tasks and development projects are not progressing according to the plan. Statistics Latvia experiences a problem to attract highly qualified specialists, so it has to invest more and more in new employees (e.g. through developing e-training, etc.). Due to uncompetitive wages (a new remuneration system has been introduced in the country as of 01.07.2021, but the finances for its implementation have only partly been allocated), it is difficult for Statistics Latvia to recruit professionals that are highly valued in the labour market, as the competition in the labour market is fierce.

Improvement sub-action 9.1:

Statistics Latvia will develop an active human resource policy.

Deadline: Q4 2026 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement action 9.1: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 9.2:

To promote Statistics Latvia as a desirable workplace and to become more attractive in the labour market Statistics Latvia plans:

- annual participation in different events, e.g. Career Days, Prakse.lv, Shadow Days, etc.;
- to introduce a new job advertisement concept focused on the applicant's benefits;
- to organize informative presentations and events for potential employees – students and other interested parties (four events).

Deadline: Q4 2024 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 9.2: Statistics Latvia

10. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should prepare a document assessing the long-term harms and benefits associated with a potential migration from its data servers to the federated data centre and analysing the effects on the confidentiality of sensitive data, costs and availability of storage for future use of new data sources, and potentially present it to the relevant authorities. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 5.5 and 3.1)

Current situation:

The regular planning of the institution's technical resources (renewal of resources) is encumbered by the planned reforms in the state administration, including the sector of the Ministry of Economy to which Statistics Latvia belongs (the reform concerns the creation of unified data centres). The deadline for the implementation of the reform in the sector of the Ministry of Economy is 2026, but still not all Statistics Latvia questions have been answered/ have received concrete answers.

If Statistics Latvia moves to a data centre, it will not be cheaper and it is not clear who will pay for the licenses. If the data centre will not work, problems (as the experience of other institutions shows) will be solved slowly, so there is a risk that it can significantly affect the operation of Statistics Latvia.

Statistics Latvia is ready to work in a hybrid variant with Statistics Latvia having their own servers and some other servers placed in the data centre.

According to the [Cabinet Regulation No. 435](#) (adopted 14 July 2022) *Regulations Regarding the Implementation of the Reform and Investment Direction 2.1 'Digital Transformation of State Administration, Including Local Governments' of Component 2 'Digital Transformation' of the Plan for the European Recovery and Resilience Facility* a digital reform of State Administration will be carried out.

Main objectives of the reform (Section 3, Paragraph 3.1.):

- transform the information and communications technology provision approach in public administration by centralising the provision of uniform information and communications technology sharing services in competence centres that support several institutions.
- develop the central system and platform of public administration and the consolidation of computing infrastructure services, enabling the automation and efficiency of the processes of supply and ensuring cross-border access to public administration services and the consolidation of public administration computing and data storage infrastructure services.

It is planned to complete the Digital Transformation reform of State Administration in 2026.

Improvement action 10:

In 2025, Statistics Latvia plans to obtain funding from the European Regional Development Fund and engage in the realisation of two projects:

- 1) Modernisation of Integrated Data Management System (ISDMS) to provide modern data collection, processing, analysis and publication system for creation of official statistics data;
- 2) Establishment of a Secure Data Processing Environment for the Data Competence Center.

During the implementation of these projects, Statistics Latvia plans to assess the long-term harms and benefits associated with a potential migration from its data servers to the federated data centre and to analyse the effects on the confidentiality of sensitive data, costs and availability of storage for future use of new data sources. The conclusions will be submitted to the relevant authorities.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement action 10: Statistics Latvia

11. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should promote how it reduced the response burden over time, and better use the results in negotiations with the government authorities and data providers. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 9.2)

Current situation:

Statistics Latvia has successfully reduced the response burden through the use of administrative and other data sources, sampling techniques and electronic data collection systems for enterprises and population. Work is being continued on identifying new data sources, developing new methods for preparing indicators (for example, household matrix in social surveys) to reduce the burden on respondents. The burden of respondents is balanced as much as possible and monitored so that the volume and quality of the data to be obtained does not suffer. Sample sizes are regularly reviewed and reduced as far as possible, but quality requirements set by regulations must not be forgotten.

Statistics Latvia also agrees with the peer review team considerations that a regular quantification and publication of the evolution of the response burden, could prove the effectiveness of Statistics Latvia's measures in this regard and promote it as a modern and innovative state institution.
Improvement sub-action 11.1:
Update and publish a report on the reduction of respondent burden and wider use of administrative data.
Deadline: Q4 2024
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.1: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 11.2:
Update descriptions for questionnaire forms of official statistics to ensure that the description of the questionnaire form contains up-to-date information on the measures taken to reduce the administrative burden.
Deadline: Q4 2027
Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 11.2: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 11.3:
Update and publish another report on the reduction of respondents' burden and wider use of administrative data
Deadline: Q2 2027
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.3: Statistics Latvia

12. Recommendation
Statistics Latvia should continue to explore and capitalise on the opportunities to use new data sources to reduce the response burden, improve timeliness, increase efficiency and produce new statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 10.3, 9.4, 9.3 and 9.5)
Current situation:
Although it is not prescribed by any law the Statistics Latvia has signed agreements with a majority of administrative data holders in order to facilitate smooth technical cooperation. Prior to launching any new survey, the following data assessments are performed (QMS process: 2.1 Project planning): 1) conformity assessment of the existing Statistics Latvia data (QMS processes: 1.2. Existence and availability of the data (sub processes: 1.2.1. Conformity assessment of the existing Statistics Latvia data)) 2) existence, conformity and availability assessment of the administrative data and data produced by other institution (1.2.2. Assessment of existence, conformity and availability of the administrative data and data of other institutions). Statistics Latvia regularly assesses availability and quality of new data sources; it's a part of everyday work, e.g., Statistics Latvia evaluates and uses different new data sources to produce official and experimental statistics to reduce the response burden. For example, the Population and Housing Census 2021 was fully register-based. An assessment and work on identifying and evaluating new data sources for use in the official statistics is also included in Statistics Latvia strategy for 2023-2029. Possibilities to use new data sources to reduce the response burden, improve timeliness, increase efficiency and produce new statistics are also assessed during the annual cycle of planning the Official Statistics Programme.
Improvement sub-action 12.1:
To achieve the objective set in Statistics Latvia strategy for 2023-2029, Statistics Latvia will develop 5 innovative methods used in the production of statistics.

Deadline: Q4 2026
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 12.1: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 12.2: To achieve the objective set in Statistics Latvia strategy for 2023-2029, Statistics Latvia will explore 4 new administrative and other data sources for use in production of statistics.
Deadline: Q4 2026
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 12.2: Statistics Latvia

13. Recommendation Statistics Latvia should develop a comprehensive metadata system that can provide an overview of all reference metadata including classifications, concepts and documentation of statistical products. The system should introduce guidance on how to complete the Single Integrated Metadata Structure for all statistical products. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.4, 15.1 and 15.5)
Current situation: The methods and procedures used to produce official statistics are described in the statistical metadata. Metadata are an integral part of all statistical processes; they are managed at all stages of the process. According to the Statistics Law, Statistical Institutions publish reference metadata on the Official statistics portal (Section 20, Paragraph one). Structural metadata (classifications, data structure, etc.) are part of Statistics Latvia corporate IT systems and tools. Process metadata (usually fixed and stored within IT systems/tools) are documented, maintained and archived. Standardised forms are used for requesting execution of process/sub-process, the metadata is obligatory part of such request forms (for example, a request for sampling or seasonal adjustment). Project's metadata are stored in project folders.
Improvement sub-action 13.1: Statistics Latvia will develop its own comprehensive metadata standard for data and metadata management, including standardisation of metadata for integrity and consistency and for maintaining the flow of data and metadata throughout the data lifecycle, which will be linked to the Single Integrated Metadata Structure.
Deadline: Q4 2024
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.1: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 13.2: In order to centralise the institutional data and metadata management function, Statistics Latvia plans to establish a structural unit responsible for developing and implementing comprehensive institutional data and metadata management, standardising data and metadata throughout the data life cycle and creating functional solutions for these processes.
Deadline: Q4 2024
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.2: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 13.3: Statistics Latvia will review published experience and best practice from other countries to develop guidelines on how to complete the Single Integrated Metadata Structure reports for all statistical products.
Deadline: Q4 2026
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.3: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 13.4:

Statistics Latvia will introduce guidance into the metadata system on completing SIMS reports for all statistical products.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.4: Statistics Latvia

14. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should further develop its procedures regarding public reactions to criticism and misuse and implement a more active stance on public reactions. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1.7)

Current situation:

The most important issue before addressing actively any presumed criticism or misuse, is to decide if this is what it seems and secondly, if this is substantial enough to have the potential to damage the reputation of the organisation or official statistics.

As stated in the guidelines drafted by Eurostat Task Force on Strategic Communication '*Rules of engagement for handling disinformation*', NSIs are advised to refrain from getting involved directly in public debate and from direct confrontation with those misusing information. Statistics Latvia follows those principles laid down in guidelines - when choosing to respond, it is important to determine at the same time the extent to which Statistics Latvia will continue to respond to someone's false or misleading argument. It is crucial to 'pick your battles' and set a cut-off point for making further counter claims. A lot of news is likely to die out in the news cycle and there is no need to take more actions to counter it.

In cases where Statistics Latvia is affected by disinformation, misuse of statistics and ungrounded criticism in public debate, Statistics Latvia should refrain from activities that can distract statisticians from their core activity: providing users with high-quality statistics.

Improvement action 14.: Based on the manual drafted by Eurostat Task Force on Strategic Communication *Rules of engagement for handling disinformation*, Statistics Latvia will revise its Communication Strategy determining the procedure when and how to react to criticism to and misuse of official statistics.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement action 14: Statistics Latvia

15. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should improve the procedures related to corrections of errors to make changes more transparent to users. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 6.3)

Current situation:

Statistics Latvia corrects errors in published statistics as soon as possible. If the size of error may substantially change the trend, pattern or conclusions drawn from statistics, it is marked to warn users about the changes that have been made. In statistics, where regular data revisions are already planned, the significance of the error is evaluated. If an error is detected but does not have a significant impact on the interpretation of the data, the error is corrected during the next data revision. Error correction in published information is described in the QMS process 7.6. *Correction of errors in published information*. Statistics Latvia has developed technical options that allow informing users on revised data and corrections of data.

Statistics Latvia recognises that the current internal guidance on informing data users of errors and changed values could be more detailed.

Improvement sub-action 15.1:

Statistics Latvia will analyse in detail existing practices and review error correction protocols with a view to developing guidelines and promoting common practices in the future so that users of statistical data receive information on corrections.
Deadline: Q1 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.1: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 15.2: According to review of error correction protocols of published statistics, Statistics Latvia will develop error correction guidelines for published statistics.
Deadline: Q2 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.2: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 15.3: Statistics Latvia will promote the revision and error correction protocol among its staff and provide training to employees involved in dissemination of statistics.
Deadline: Q4 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.3: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 15.4: Statistics Latvia will continue discussions with ONAs on procedures regarding error correction and sharing best practices.
Deadline: Q4 2026
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 15.4: Statistics Latvia, ONAs (all included in the list of ONAs)

16. Recommendation
Statistics Latvia should provide information on the changes to publication dates and reasons for any deviation. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 13.4)
Current situation: Statistics Latvia has a calendar on the Official statistics portal that provides users with information about the content of and the date/time statistics will be released, for one year in advance. Advance notice to users is given on any changes in planned dates by adding a label <i>Rescheduled</i> to the planned table title and also separately in section <i>Rescheduled</i> . The peer review team noted that information about the reasons for the delay is not available. However, such user need was not identified during user experience research, which was carried out prior to designing the calendar. The reason for changes will be provided to users on the product specific page that is accessible through the calendar.
Improvement sub-action 16.1: Review and classify the reasons for changes of publication dates in the calendar on the Official statistics portal in order to use these labels in public announcements.
Deadline: Q1 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 16.1: Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 16.2: Statistics Latvia will provide the reason for changes of publication dates in the calendar on the Official statistics portal on the product specific page that is accessible through the calendar.
Deadline: Q2 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 16.2: Statistics Latvia

17. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should increase transparency regarding all custom-designed analyses and paid services it provides. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 15.3)

Current situation:

Statistics Latvia offers paid services and prepares statistical data upon request, if the preparation of the requested statistics is not specified in the Official Statistics Programme. Information on provision for such services, including paid services, is available on Statistics Latvia's website. The production units of the Statistical Office, analysing the information on the received data requests, can make a decision on the preparation and publication of additional data on the Official statistics portal. The procedure of answering to user's requests for custom-designed data analyses is specified in the 7.4. *Processing requests for statistical information*.

Statistics Latvia also publishes information on the number of custom-designed analyses and media requests in its annual reports (available: <https://www.csp.gov.lv/en/annual-reports>).

Improvement and expansion of the information provided on the institution's website about the paid services provided by Statistics Latvia could help promote such services to potential data users and increase their transparency.

Improvement action 17:

Statistics Latvia will increase transparency in information services area by providing more detailed information on the possibilities of developing custom-designed data analyses, e.g. by publishing on its official website more detailed information on statistical topics of such analyses and by providing a summary on already prepared custom-designed analyses in its annual report.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement action 17: Statistics Latvia

18. Recommendation

Statistics Latvia should invest in better understanding and meeting the needs of a wider range of users by creating a comprehensive communication strategy aimed at systematically identifying and reaching new users that represent Latvian society and expanding user engagement. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 11.1, 11.2 and 3.1)

Current situation:

The [Communication Strategy of Statistics Latvia](#) sets out the communication objectives and principles to be pursued and the activities to be carried out to achieve them. The Communication Strategy also defines the key user groups and their basic needs. Statistics Latvia agrees that there is a need to periodically review and report on the progress of the activities set out in the Communication Strategy and that the results of the review should be used to revise the existing Communication Strategy of Statistics Latvia. Experts of different statistical domains communicate with data users to understand their needs and preferences for statistical information. Statistics Latvia sees an opportunity to continue organising training sessions and workshops in order to engage with users, understand their needs and help them to better understand statistical data.

Improvement sub-action 18.1:

Review of communication activities, products, tools and channels.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 18.1: Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 18.2:

Statistics Latvia will revise its Communication Strategy to make it more comprehensive and reach a wider range of users.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 18.2: Statistics Latvia

19. Recommendation

All Other National Authorities (ONAs) should improve their service to users by disseminating their statistics and related metadata through the Official statistics portal and/or by linking published statistics on their websites under a clearly identifiable heading, thus making the European statistics available to a broader audience. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 15.1 and 15.5)

Current situation:

According to the Statistics Law, Statistical Institutions publish official statistics and metadata on the Official statistics portal (Section 20, Paragraph one). The methods and procedures used to produce and disseminate official statistics are described in the statistical metadata. The Statistical Institutions publish methodological information and metadata on the Official statistics portal, all database tables have links to the relevant metadata available in the Metadata section.

Two ONAs publish their data and metadata on the Official statistics portal:

- The State Plant Protection Service;
- The Ministry of Agriculture.

Three ONAs publish part of their data and metadata in Official statistics portal and are in the process to disseminate the full scope of their data on the Official statistics portal:

- The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control;
- The State Ltd 'Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre';
- The Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics.

Two ONAs are currently publishing their data on their own websites and were not able to allocate their human resources for redesigning their dissemination process due to the migration crisis provoked by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine:

- The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs;
- The State Border guard.

Improvement sub-action 19.1:

The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control disseminates data and metadata, publishes a dissemination calendar on the Official statistics portal.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 19.1: The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 19.2:

The State Ltd 'Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre' disseminates data and metadata, publishes a dissemination calendar on the Official statistics portal.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 19.2: The State Ltd 'Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre', Statistics Latvia

Improvement sub-action 19.3:

The Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics disseminates data and metadata, publishes a dissemination calendar on the Official statistics portal.

Deadline: Q2 2025

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 19.3: The Institute of Agricultural Resources and Economics, Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 19.4: The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs disseminates data and metadata, publishes a dissemination calendar on the Official statistics portal.
Deadline: Q4 2025
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 19.4: The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, Statistics Latvia
Improvement sub-action 19.5: The State Border guard disseminates data and metadata, publishes a dissemination calendar on the Official statistics portal.
Deadline: Q4 2024
Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 19.5: The State Border guard, Statistics Latvia