



EUROPEAN  
STATISTICAL  
SYSTEM

## **IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS**

**Belgium**



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

<p><b>1. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The relevant authorities should amend the Belgian Statistics Act to institutionalise the role of Statistics Belgium as the National Statistical Institute in the coordination of European statistics at national level within the meaning of Regulation No 223/2009. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.1)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>Belgium has a very comprehensive statistical law (the Law of 4 July 1962 on public statistics) that governs the activities of Statistics Belgium in accordance with the European Statistics Code of Practice. However, the coordinating role of Statistics Belgium for the Belgian statistical system (BSS) for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics still needs to be strengthened. In practice, Statistics Belgium is already taking on this role, but it is not yet enshrined in Belgian national law.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.1:</b> Proposal for amending the law on public statistics</p> <p>Prepare proposal on amending the law of 4 July 1962 on public statistics to specify that Statistics Belgium acts as National Statistical Institute within the meaning of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and Council of 11 March 2009 on European statistics and that it is responsible for assuming all related tasks and responsibilities.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> June 2022</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 1.1:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.2:</b> Put the reform (revised Law on public statistics) to vote by the Belgian Parliament</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> September 2022</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 1.2:</b> Minister of Economy</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.3:</b> Vote the revised Law on public statistics</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> September 2022</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.3:</b> Belgian Parliament</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.4:</b> Publish the revised Law on public statistics in the Official Journal</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> January 2023</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.4:</b> Minister of Economy</p>

<p><b>2. Recommendation</b></p> <p>Statistics Belgium should coordinate the production of a quality policy statement and national guidelines to ensure the quality of European Statistics within the Belgian statistical system; their implementation should be systematically monitored and reviewed. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2 and 4.2)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>The BSS lacks harmonised approaches to ensure consistency and quality throughout production, and the use of guidelines for quality assurance in statistics is non-systematic. There is no national quality policy for the production of European statistics to be followed by all statistical authorities producing them.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.1: Drafting a quality policy and guidelines to ensure the quality of European statistics</b></p> <p>Description: In cooperation with the ONAs, Statistics Belgium will draft a quality policy and guidelines, in connection with the European Statistics Code of Practice and the GSBPM, for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. This policy and these guidelines will be published on Statistics Belgium's website.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 2.1:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.2: Drafting a note in collaboration with the ONAs proposing a strategy for the use of a monitoring tool</b></p> <p>Description: In cooperation with the ONAs, Statistics Belgium will draft and agree on a note in order to develop a strategy to verify the implementation of the 'quality' guidelines by using a monitoring tool.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 2.2:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.3: Development of a tool to monitor the implementation of the 'quality' guidelines</b></p> <p>Description: In cooperation with the ONAs, Statistics Belgium will develop and implement a tool to monitor systematically the implementation of the 'quality' guidelines.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 2.3:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>

### 3. Recommendation

Statistics Belgium and Other National Authorities should further enhance their cooperation, by establishing systematic exchanges and training on their respective statistical production, methods and quality standards, and support the development of competences and skills in statistics by encouraging the mobility of statisticians between their organisations. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.3)

#### Current situation:

General cooperation within the BSS has improved in recent years. However, coordination and cooperation in the field of quality management in the framework of European statistics should be strengthened. In this area, joint training, the sharing of knowledge between Statistics Belgium and ONAs on their respective production of European statistics, and staff exchanges, could help to develop the skills of the statisticians.

In the context of the work of the Interfederal Statistical Institute (ISI), good practices have already been put in place which have led to the development of a standard agreement on the temporary secondment of staff between the ISI partners.

In addition, knowledge and good practice sharing meetings between Statistics Belgium and the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy - DG Energy have been launched since mid 2022. Finally, meetings also take place between Statistics Belgium and FPS Home Affaires in which methodological issues are discussed.

These achievements should be perpetuated and further developed in terms of their recipients and scope.

Within the National Accounts Institute (NAI), the cooperation between the three partner institutions (National Bank of Belgium, Statistics Belgium, and the Federal Planning Bureau) is already very good. For example, this is the case as regards the cooperation on supply/use tables and input/output tables. However, there is room for improvement in terms of common training and the exchange of information on sources, methods, and quality standards. The mobility of statisticians among the three partners, but also with other ONAs, could certainly enhance the competences and skills of the statisticians. The secondment of staff exists already on an ad hoc basis for some well-defined projects (i.e. between regional statistical authorities and the National Bank of Belgium for regional accounts). This kind of mobility could be further developed in a more structured way.

#### **Improvement sub-action 3.1: Promote staff exchanges between Statistics Belgium and the ONAs, and between the ONAs – drafting an overview note of the recipients and their expectations**

Description: Statistics Belgium will consult all Belgian ONAs to find out their position on participating in this project of staff exchanges and their possible expectations of this, within the framework of the European statistics production of the partners involved, with regard to the implementation of a staff exchange policy between these institutions.

**Deadline:** 2023

**Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.1:** Statistics Belgium / ONAs

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.2: Training of staff on European statistics produced by Statistics Belgium and the ONAs – development of a summary note on training needs and opportunities</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will consult all Belgian ONAs to find out their position on participating in this project and their possible expectations of this, within the framework of the European statistics production of the partners involved, with regard to the implementation of a training programme for the statisticians in these institutions.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.2:</b> Statistics Belgium / ONAs</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.3: Promote staff exchanges between Statistics Belgium and the ONAs and between the ONAs – drafting a standard agreement of temporary secondment</b></p> <p>Description: In collaboration with the ONAs, Statistics Belgium will draft a standard agreement of temporary secondment to be used on a voluntary basis.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.3:</b> Statistics Belgium / ONAs</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.4: Training of staff on European statistics produced by Statistics Belgium and the ONAs – development of an initial training programme</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium and the interested ONAs will draw up an initial training programme, within the framework of the European statistics produced by Statistics Belgium and the other partners involved, for their statisticians. This will include all concrete aspects related to this programme: the subjects covered, the institution providing the training, the training schedule, the registration procedures, etc.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.4:</b> Statistics Belgium / ONAs</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.5: Training of staff on European statistics produced by Statistics Belgium and the ONAs – implementing an initial training programme &amp; evaluation</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium and the interested ONAs will agree on the resources needed to implement the training program. The first training modules, as agreed in the initial training programme (cf. improvement sub-action 3.4.), will be delivered. Statistics Belgium and the interested ONAs will conduct an evaluation (including registration procedures, training contents, trainers, type of training (physical/online), impact/added value to the job, etc.).</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.5:</b> Statistics Belgium / ONAs</p>

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.6: Promote staff exchanges between the National Bank of Belgium, the Federal Planning Bureau, and Statistics Belgium, especially for specific projects on the production of European Statistics within the scope of the NAI for which an institution has no (or less) expertise</b></p> <p>Description: The National Bank of Belgium and the Federal Planning Bureau will participate in the action points defined by Statistics Belgium at the global level (cf. improvement sub-action 3.3 – Promotion of staff exchange). However, particular attention will be paid to exchanges between the three partners of the NAI, given their intense cooperation for the compilation of certain European statistics under the competence of the NAI (in particular national accounts). In this respect, a specific staff exchange agreement will be tailored to the needs of the NAI partners. The staff secondments between the three partners will be further facilitated as regards access, conditions, duration, etc.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.6:</b> National Bank of Belgium / Federal Planning Bureau / Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.7: Once the document from improvement sub-action 3.6 is agreed by the partners, the staff exchanges will be implemented on a voluntary basis for the participants.</b></p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.7:</b> National Bank of Belgium / Federal Planning Bureau / Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.8: Reinforcing methodological exchanges between FPS Home Affairs and Statistics Belgium in the scope of European Migration Statistics – drafting a note on the consistency of migration statistics</b></p> <p>Description: FPS Home Affairs and Statistics Belgium will reinforce, formalise, and extend the methodological exchanges on European Migrations Statistics in order to support the development of competences and skills in statistics and to identify possible improvements of existing statistics. The informal working group will be formalised. The frequency of meetings will increase. Both will draft a note on the consistency of migration statistics between different actors. The main results will be made public.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.8:</b> FPS Home Affairs / Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.9: At least once a year, FPS Home Affairs and Statistics Belgium will organise a meeting to discuss methodological issues in the context of European Migration Statistics.</b></p> <p>Description: FPS Home Affairs and Statistics Belgium will meet at least once a year to discuss methodological issues on European Migrations Statistics in order to share knowledge and to identify possible improvements.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> At least once a year from 2023 onwards</p>

<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 3.9:</b> FPS Home Affairs / Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.10: Promotion and support of the quality framework for European statistics of Statistics Belgium for the producers within Statistics Flanders where appropriate within its own legal and institutional framework.</b></p> <p>Description: Flanders Statistics Authority intends to develop the necessary tools for awareness-raising, transfer, and support to ensure knowledge sharing of the quality framework for European statistics that will be developed by Statistics Belgium, in cooperation with the ONAs (cf. improvement sub-action 2.1.). The 'quality framework for European statistics' will therefore be integrated into the quality framework of Statistics Flanders. The tools used for awareness-raising, transfer, and support are those that are used for the quality framework of Statistics Flanders as a whole.</p> <p>This quality framework for Statistics Flanders and the associated tools for awareness-raising, transfer, and support will be further developed in the coming years in collaboration with the partners of the network Statistics Flanders. For awareness-raising, objectives will be added to the multi-annual statistical programme for Statistics Flanders that are approved by the network and the Flemish Government, as well as to the annual planning and follow-up of projects within that programme. They will be supplemented with, for example, seminars, articles in the internal newsletter, and bilateral (product-related) discussions with partners from the network. For knowledge sharing, various initiatives will be undertaken, such as training courses, a quality manager who can provide support, and the sharing of best practices.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 3.10:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>

#### 4. Recommendation

The federal, regional and community authorities should ensure adequate resources for Statistics Belgium, and the Other National Authorities under their responsibility, to address the forthcoming increase in statistical needs and new policy priorities, which involve developing methodologies to use new data sources. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

##### Current situation:

The exploration and use of new data sources, the production of new statistics to meet the growing economic, social and environmental demands, and more detailed data or faster monitoring tools needed in order to manage crises (e.g. health or demographic crises) require an initial investment in resources. The new challenges cannot be met effectively with ever decreasing resources, as internal efficiency gains are not sufficient to compensate for the additional resources needed. Yet this is the observation that has been shared for many years within Statistics Belgium and several ONAs.

For example, it can be seen that Statistics Belgium has experienced a net decrease in staff of -160 over the last eight years, i.e. one third of its staff.

The NAI from its side has no personnel of its own. The production of European statistics is fulfilled by employees of Statistics Belgium, the National Bank of Belgium, and the Federal Planning Bureau. Therefore, the resources available to produce European statistics by the NAI have been determined over time by the development of the total budget of these three institutes and the priorities within each of these institutions (since each of these institutes also performs other tasks). For example, future challenges related to new statistical needs on environmental accounts and the development of methodologies for exploring and using new data sources in that context can only be met with additional resources.

The current highly skilled staff of the “Energy Monitoring cell” of the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, responsible for the European Energy statistics for Belgium, is just sufficient to provide the data currently required by Regulations 1099/2008 and 2016/1952. However, there is no time available to carry out the new tasks required by Regulation 2022/132, amending Regulation 1099/2008, including the establishment of a complete hydrogen balance from the reference year 2024. The current low skilled staff of the “Energy Monitoring cell” is currently sufficient and may decrease in the light of new ways of collecting data. However, a minimum of two low skilled staff members is needed for the coding of the remaining surveys and the maintenance of the databases.

To provide another example, following the revision of Regulation 862/2007, FPS Home Affairs has numerous new statistical obligations. In this framework, a project of reinforcement of the Statistics Unit staff and IT was developed and submitted to the EU in the framework of AMIF. A definitive approval is expected in July 2022.

Flanders Statistics Authority, being part of a larger entity of the Flemish Government, in particular the Department of Chancellery and Foreign Affairs, can use its own budgets for its statistical activities and its coordinating and supporting role within the network of Flanders Statistics Authority. For IT and personnel costs, the budgets of the Department have to be used. Due to general headcount targets within the Flanders civil service, only the outflow due to retirement can be compensated by permanent, appointed personnel, and no additional staff can be appointed. In order to address the forthcoming increase in statistical needs and new policy priorities that will involve developing methodologies to use new data sources, Flanders Statistics Authority's designated budgets should be maintained or if possible increased.

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 4.1: Increase the absolute number of highly skilled staff of Statistics Belgium</b></p> <p>Description: Each year, when the staffing procedure of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy is discussed and decided upon, Statistics Belgium will formulate its proposal in order to increase the absolute number of more highly skilled staff. In addition, requests for additional staff appropriations will be systematically introduced at the annual budgetary meetings at federal authority level. These requests will always contain an overview that includes a description of the current use of resources (including an overview of the evolution of Statistics Belgium's human resources over the last years) and a description of the new challenges demanding new resources. Key positions that are permanently vacant and require urgent replacement will also be highlighted.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Yearly from 2022 onwards</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 4.1:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 4.2: Drawing up a note describing all the future developments foreseen at the European and international levels in official statistics in the scope of the NAI</b></p> <p>Description: The Federal Planning Bureau and the National Bank of Belgium as a member of the NAI will draw up a note describing all the developments foreseen in official statistics in the NAI's scope. This note will be transmitted to the NAI Board of Directors to inform them of the numerous future challenges. This document will include a state-of-play on the current use of resources and will describe future needs for additional resources.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2023</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 4.2:</b> Federal Planning Bureau / National Bank of Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 4.3: Drawing up a note on the need for additional resources in the context of the production of the Environmental Accounts by the Federal Planning Bureau</b></p> <p>Description: The Federal Planning Bureau as member of the NAI will, in consultation with the regional statistical authorities, draw up a note describing the baseline measurement of the production of environmental accounts and future obligations, and will communicate it to the NAI Board of Directors in order to make them aware of the additional resources needed to address future challenges in the production of these accounts.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2023</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 4.3:</b> Federal Planning Bureau</p>

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 4.4: Increase at least by one the absolute number of highly skilled staff within the “Energy Monitoring cell” of the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy</b></p> <p>Description: The current highly skilled staff of the “Energy Monitoring cell” of the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, responsible for the European Energy statistics for Belgium, is just sufficient to provide the data currently required by Regulations 1099/2008 and 2016/1952. However, there is no time available to carry out the new tasks required by Regulation 2022/132, amending Regulation 1099/2008, including the establishment of a complete hydrogen balance from the reference year 2024 onwards. Furthermore, the increasing need for monitoring new non-statistical Energy Regulations is also challenging. In that context, each year, when the staffing procedure of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy is discussed and decided upon, the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy will formulate a proposal in order to increase the absolute number of highly skilled staff of the “Energy Monitoring cell”, responsible for the European Energy statistics for Belgium.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Yearly from 2023 onwards (increase by one by 2024 at the latest and stabilisation afterwards)</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 4.4:</b> The General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 4.5: Ensuring that a minimum absolute number of two low skilled staff members for the “Energy Monitoring cell” of the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy will be maintained over time.</b></p> <p>Description: The current low skilled staff of the “Energy Monitoring cell” is currently sufficient and may decrease in the light of new ways of collecting data. However, an absolute minimum of two low skilled staff members is needed for the coding of the remaining questionnaires and the maintenance of the databases. In that context, each year, when the staffing procedure of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy is discussed and decided upon, the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy will formulate its proposal in order to stabilise the absolute number of low skilled staff of the “Energy Monitoring cell”, responsible for the European Energy statistics for Belgium.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Yearly from 2023 onwards</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 4.5:</b> The General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 4.6: Monitor the project of reinforcement of the Statistics Unit of FPS Home Affairs via AMIF</b></p> <p>Description: FPS Home Affairs will monitor the use of resources allocated to its Statistics Unit via the specific project funded by AMIF.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Each year from 2022 onwards until the end of the project (3 years, possibly renewed once).</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 4.6:</b> FPS Home Affairs</p>

**Improvement sub-action 4.7: Maintain or increase the resources of Flanders Statistics Authority when the Flemish Government is drawing up the annual budget and headcount targets**

Description: Each year, Flanders Statistics Authority will make sure that, while the Flemish Government will draw up the annual budget and headcount targets, resources will be maintained or increased in order to address the forthcoming increase in statistical needs and new policy priorities that will involve developing methodologies to use new data sources. In order to have a good basis for the discussion with the supervising authority, a document will be produced that will include a description of the current use of resources and the new challenges demanding new resources.

**Deadline:** Yearly from 2023 onwards

**Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 4.7:** Flanders Statistics Authority

## 5. Recommendation

Statistics Belgium and the Other National Authorities should ensure that the skills, competences and expertise of its staff meet its strategic and operational needs, by developing a training system and adequate career management. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1, 7.5)

### Current situation:

A fundamental strength of the BSS is its human capital, which is highly motivated, results oriented, and willing to further improve personal competences, despite the pressure caused by the reduction in human and budgetary resources in recent years. However, the skills and competences of human resources must be continuously adapted in a changing environment. In this context, staff training has a crucial role to play.

There are many training opportunities within Statistics Belgium: an internal training programme (mainly methodological) for Statistics Belgium's statisticians has been running for three years. Statistics Belgium's employees also have the possibility to register in the numerous training courses offered by the IFA (training office for federal civil servants), and participation in the European training programme (ESTP) is highly recommended. From a managerial point of view, training is therefore encouraged, development objectives are integrated into the annual evaluation process of each employee of Statistics Belgium, and numerical targets, in terms of training participation rates, are monitored via both internal and external KPIs (as part of the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy). It will now be necessary to bring all these initiatives together in a coherent training and career management programme for Statistics Belgium's staff.

As regards the NAI, the working conditions, status of the staff, and training opportunities are quite different from one partner to another. For instance, the NBB does not make any difference between the NAI-related activities and those applied for its activities as the central bank. The human resources procedures are the same for the staff working on NAI activities as for any staff member. The NBB is very aware of the need for competent staff and invests a lot to create highly skilled staff in leading domains (such as IT, statistics, and microdata approaches). Statisticians working on NAI topics have the same opportunities as all other NBB staff members. They have access to all the training offerings organised by the bank and to the training initiatives proposed by Eurostat. The same applies to Statistics Belgium.

In the fall of 2018, a process audit of the Flanders Statistics Authority by Audit Flanders took place. In May 2019, Audit Flanders found that there was a gap between the available competences of the Flanders Statistics Authority employees and the competences required in a modern statistical organisation. One of the recommendations was to develop an HR strategy that should result in the necessary staffing and competences to guarantee that the assignments in terms of the development, production, and dissemination of statistics about Flanders can be fully carried out. In 2021, a project with an external HR specialist started to guide and support the Flanders Statistics Authority team in developing and implementing an HR strategy. Besides that, the corona crisis has strongly emphasised the importance of data for the government. This has contributed to the development of a supported data strategy within the Flemish government. One of the priority action areas concerns increasing data literacy within the Flemish government, more specifically knowledge and skills for data science.

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 5.1: Draft, develop and deploy an integrated training policy for the staff of Statistics Belgium to support adequate career management</b></p> <p>Description: Based on several sources of training that already exist (ESTP, IFA, internal training programme, specific individual or collective training) and the increased use of new sources of online training, Statistics Belgium will draw up and deploy an integrated training policy in support of its career management. Statistics Belgium will carry out communication and awareness-raising actions regarding this integrated training policy among its staff.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 5.1:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 5.2: Mapping the necessary competences within Flanders Statistics Authority</b></p> <p>Description: In collaboration with a consultant, the Flanders Statistics Authority maps out the necessary behavioural and technical competences for Flanders Statistics Authority. This is based on GAMS0, GSBPM, the Strategic objectives 2022-2024 for Flanders Statistics Authority, and the workshops with staff members and coordinators.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> January 2023</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 5.2:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 5.3: A programme for the development of the necessary competencies in Flanders Statistics Authority</b></p> <p>Description: The necessary behavioural and technical competences, once defined, will be used in further trajects around staff training needs and capacity building. These will be summarised in a programme that can be adapted and refined over the years. The priorities are also determined in this programme.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2023</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 5.3:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 5.4:</b> Implementation of the programme for the development of the necessary competencies in Flanders Statistics Authority</p> <p>Description: Implementation of the programme for the development of the necessary competencies.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024–2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 5.4:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 5.5: Development of a data science training offer</b></p> <p>Description: The Flanders Statistics Authority, in collaboration with partners, develops a document describing a data science training offer for employees of the Statistics Flanders network. This training offer should cover the following 2 objectives: 1) giving employees with no prior knowledge on data science the necessary awareness and basic knowledge about data science to identify data science opportunities and assess their feasibility; 2) providing employees in management positions the know-how on how to start with and organise data science in their organisation. The document produced should determine the priority with which each of the courses in the training offer should be implemented.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2023</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 5.5:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 5.6: Implementation of a data science training offer</b></p> <p>Description: The Flanders Statistics Authority, in collaboration with its partners from the Flemish knowledge institutes, organises data science courses for employees of the Statistics Flanders network. Courses will be organised one by one, based on the priority identified for each course in improvement sub-action 5.5. Courses for which there is a large demand will be organised repeatedly.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 5.6:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 5.7: Feasibility study of a data science e-learning community</b></p> <p>Description: The Flanders Statistics Authority, in collaboration with partners, evaluates the need for organising a community around available e-learning courses for data science. This community would consist of data science experts and employees of the government interested in learning about data science. The community will take a mainly digital form (e.g. a Microsoft Teams Community or similar) in which people can ask for and share recommendations for high-quality courses for a specific data science topic. If a clear need is detected for such a community, the Flanders Statistics Authority will implement and organise the community.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 5.7:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>

## 6. Recommendation

The federal, regional and community authorities should establish an appropriate institutional environment with administrative and other data holders to be able to exploit the full potential of the data, have access to the data and be informed of any changes. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.2, 2.4 and 10.3)

### Current situation:

The legal framework for the communication of existing data from Statistics Belgium differs depending on the supplier and may consist of a legal basis, an authorisation by a sectoral committee of the former Belgian Privacy Commission, protocols, or a non-formal gentlemen's agreement. Usually, no formal agreements are made regarding the supplier's information obligation in case of changes to the data flow. Especially when starting a new flow for the communication of data, there are discussions with the supplier about the available data. Afterwards, there is only ad hoc contact with a supplier about possible new data if a concrete need has been formulated.

Within the NAI, the use of administrative data for the production of European statistics is already widely spread. Still, there is room for improvement in terms of streamlining access to and exploitation of this data. Privately held data is currently used less, but as it has great potential, awareness of this should be promoted among the members of the Director's Board of the NAI.

In 2021, FPS Home Affairs signed a protocol with Statistics Belgium on the exchange of data on international protection. It was extended in 2022 to cover temporary protection. Besides that, metadata related to modifications made in the National Register are transmitted on an ad hoc basis from the National Register to the Immigration Office.

In Flanders, the Flanders Statistics Authority has had, since 2016, a legal framework with a mandate for data collection and access to data.

'Access to all administrative data at all levels', as stated in the confidentiality commitment for statistics, has been legally further embedded in the adopted amendments in the statistics decree (2 July 2021) in Flanders. In the adopted primary legislation, more emphasis is placed on data acquisition, data linking, and the dissemination of data to government agencies, universities, colleges, and research institutions.

Besides that, the Flanders Statistics Authority mainly uses aggregated data to produce its statistics, apart from the own data collection via probability based surveys in the Flemish region and the demographic data from Statistics Belgium. However, the uses of micro data (surveys, administrative data, and organic data) are many times greater than those for aggregated data. Nowadays, apart from the data exchange between Statistics Belgium and the Flanders Statistics Authority for demographic data, the Flanders Statistics Authority has no systematic and structured exchange of administrative micro data or privately held data with partners at either the federal or regional levels, nor within the network of Statistics Flanders.

### Improvement sub-action 6.1: Organisation of structural consultations with the holders of administrative data

Description: Statistics Belgium will organise a bi-annual bilateral meeting with each supplier of data used for the production of European statistics. For this purpose, an overview will be made of all existing data flows. If necessary, one meeting will be organised per flow with a supplier in case there are several data flows. During the meeting, at least the following items will be discussed: possible future changes to the existing data flow, possible new data that may be available to be used for the production of European statistics, and the formalisation of a consultation or information obligation by

the supplier in case of possible changes to the data flow (see improvement sub-action 6.2.).
<b>Deadline:</b> every 2 years from 2024 onwards
<b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 6.1:</b> Statistics Belgiu
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.2: Formally enforcing that suppliers of the administrative data used for the production of European statistics must inform Statistics Belgium of any changes in an existing flow.</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will put the formalisation of the information obligation of any changes in an existing flow on the agenda of the bilateral consultation (see improvement sub-action 6.1.) and will take steps to formalise it. As a function of the legal framework by which data are communicated to Statistics Belgium, an SLA, amendment, or protocol should be submitted for signature to the supplier.</p>
<b>Deadline:</b> every 2 years from 2024 onwards
<b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 6.2:</b> Statistics Belgium
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.3: Generalise the practice that, in the context of the production of European statistics falling within the scope of the NAI, protocols between these NAI partners and administrative data suppliers will stipulate that the data in question may also be used by another partner for the compilation of other European statistics.</b></p> <p>Description: The National Bank of Belgium, the Federal Planning Bureau, and Statistics Belgium will, in the context of the production of European statistics falling within the scope of the NAI, include a clause in the protocols between these NAI partners and administrative data suppliers which stipulate the possibility to reuse the data for the compilation of other European statistics by another partner. A generic document defining the NAI 'circle of trust' and providing standardised wording for the clause will be drafted. This clause will be included in each protocol that will be signed between one of the partners and any data supplier.</p>
<b>Deadline:</b> 2024
<b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 6.3:</b> National Bank of Belgium / Federal Planning bureau / Statistics Belgium
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.4: Drafting a note to raise awareness of the NAI Board of Directors concerning the potential of privately held data for the production of European statistics within the scope of the NAI, taking into account the discussion at the European level on the Data Act and on a possible revision of Regulation 223/2009.</b></p> <p>Description: The National Bank of Belgium, the Federal Planning Bureau, and Statistics Belgium will draft a note to raise awareness of the NAI Board of Directors concerning the future possible importance and usefulness of privately held data for the production of European statistics within the scope of the NAI.</p>
<b>Deadline:</b> 2024

<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 6.4:</b> Federal Planning Bureau / National Bank of Belgium / Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.5: Ensuring an efficient exchange of data between FPS Home Affairs and Statistics Belgium in the frame of the recently signed protocol.</b></p> <p>Description: The FPS Home Affairs will ensure the efficient exchange of data with Statistics Belgium in the framework of the protocol signed recently between both institutions. It will consider a possible extension of the existing protocol if necessary.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 6.5:</b> FPS Home Affairs / Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.6: Ensuring an efficient exchange of data between the FPS Home Affairs and the National Register</b></p> <p>Description: In the framework of a general project at the level of the FPS Home Affairs — on the one side the management of requests or projects made to or for the National Register, and on the other side the metadata flow received from the National Register to ensure a real follow-up of projects and a smooth transmission of metadata — both will be modernised. Practically, concerning data, a more efficient project management methodology (in particular centralising and standardising requests) will be implemented in order to ensure a smoother collaboration, shorter delays of implementation when developing new functionalities, and an increase of quality of data. Concerning metadata, the transmission of them will be automatised.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 6.6:</b> FPS Home Affairs</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.7: Enhance the adoption of secondary legislation for statistical and scientific purposes by Flanders Statistics Authority</b></p> <p>Description: Flanders Statistics Authority has the ambition to take up a stronger role in data acquisition, data linking, and data dissemination for statistical and scientific purposes. The first step with the adoption of primary legislation has been taken (2 July 2021). In 2022, a project was started to amend the secondary legislation to determine the general organisational and technical measures which have to be taken to guarantee the quality, confidentiality, and security of data and to ensure statistical confidentiality. The goal is the adoption of the amendments in secondary legislation by the Flemish Government by the end of 2023.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2023 adoption of the amendments in secondary legislation by the Flemish Government</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 6.7:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.8: Systematically and structurally increase the access to micro data by the Flanders Statistics Authority</b></p> <p>Description: The Flanders Statistics Authority has the ambition of taking up a stronger role in data acquisition, data linking, and data dissemination for statistical and scientific purposes. The first step with the adoption of primary legislation has been taken (2 July</p>

<p>2021) with, among other amendments, a role for the Flanders Statistics Authority as a Trusted Third Party (TTP) for statistical and scientific purposes and the set-up of a Statistical Data warehouse (S-DWH). In 2022, a project was started to amend the secondary legislation to further determine the general organisational and technical measures which have to be taken to guarantee the quality, confidentiality, and security of data and to ensure statistical confidentiality related to the role of the TTP and the SDWH.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.8.1: Data Acquisition</b></p> <p>Description: Data acquisition requires strong business cases that prove added value for all involved parties. To create such business cases requires the ability to build long-lasting partnerships with those parties. Therefore, the Flanders Statistics Authority has hired a data manager who will be charged to build those relationships and produce the business cases.</p>
<p><b>Deadlines:</b></p> <p>2023: Exploration of exchange of micro data with public and private data owners</p> <p>2024: Formulation of an action plan</p> <p>2025–2027: Gradual implementation of the action plan taking into account priorities</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 6.8.1:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.8.2: Data linking</b></p> <p>Description: Data linking can be developed based on already available data combined with new data sources. For this last part there is a dependency with the data acquisition action.</p>
<p><b>Deadlines:</b></p> <p>2023: Based on the S-DWH SAS platform, develop data linking procedures and use-cases</p> <p>2024 and further on: Continuous development of new data linking use cases</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 6.8.2:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.8.3: Data dissemination</b></p> <p>Description: Based on the S-DWH SAS platform, put aggregated files available to the public for general purposes or to researchers for specific purposes. Examine and define the architecture of a remote access platform.</p>
<p><b>Deadlines:</b></p> <p>2023: Making files available</p> <p>2024: Preparation and roll out of the remote access platform</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 6.8.3:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>

<p><b>7. Recommendation</b></p> <p>Statistics Belgium, the Federal Public Service Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy – DG Energy, the Federal Public Service - Home Affairs and the Flanders Statistics Authority should ensure the availability of appropriate IT tools to enable the full exploitation of the possibilities offered by innovative data sources and privately held data for the development, production and dissemination of official statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1, 10.2 and 10.4)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>All the directorates of the FPS Economy rely on a common IT department, including Statistics Belgium and the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, which have no IT department and no dedicated IT budget of their own. Parts of the IT infrastructure used by Statistics Belgium and the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy are systematically shared with other directorates. For example, Statistics Belgium does not have a systematic view on the contracts signed by the IT department, nor can Statistics Belgium take decisions on its own IT tools. However, statistical software is rather specific and access to new sources of data, such as big data, require a specific IT environment and tools.</p> <p>The FPS Home Affairs, from its side, has no modern data warehouse. At the same time, the main statistical tool (SAS) is not fully integrated to facilitate the statistical use of existing resources.</p> <p>The Flanders Statistics Authority is currently moving towards a Statistical Datawarehouse (S-DWH) allowing the storage of classical structured micro data (rectangular datasets with mainly numerical data) in a secured way, and which has the possibility to either prepare a pseudonymised and/or anonymised selection of data and make this available to authorised users either by secured access to the data or by delivering the data in file format to the user. However, innovative data sources are often unstructured (language, image, etc.) and in some cases require further adaptation of the S-DWH.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 7.1: Drafting a note identifying the IT tools needed to process new data sources</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will identify the IT tools that will be needed to process new data sources in the future for the production of official statistics.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2023</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 7.1:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 7.2: Initiation of an internal discussion with the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy in order to define and implement an action plan to obtain the necessary IT tools</b></p> <p>Description: Based on sub-action 7.1., Statistics Belgium will define and implement an action plan together with the persons in charge of the acquisition of IT tools at the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, in order to obtain the necessary tools for the development of official statistics.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> from 2024 onwards</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 7.2:</b> Statistics Belgium / FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and energy</p>

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 7.3: Developing a modern DWH within FPS Home Affairs including an integration of the main statistical tool (SAS)</b></p> <p>Description: The FPS Home Affairs will integrate the main statistical tool of the Statistics Unit in the DWH being developed at the level of the FPS.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 7.3:</b> FPS Home Affairs</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 7.4: Taking steps by Flanders Statistics Authority to move from a S-DWH 1.0 towards a S-DWH 2.0</b></p> <p>Description: The availability of a Statistical Datawarehouse based on SAS VIYA technology that is logically managed by Flanders Statistics Authority, but technically hosted on a platform managed by the Flemish Government, allows the storage of classical structured micro data. Regarding the acquisition, storage. and handling of innovative data sources and privately held data, the Flanders Statistics Authority is conducting an exercise to integrate those data sources as much as possible into the same central IT infrastructure and processes. Therefore, an analysis will be conducted to evaluate the technical architecture and tooling necessary to integrate innovative data sources and privately held data as much as possible into the SAS data warehouse environment or, if necessary, into a separate environment that can interact with the central environment.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 7.4.1:</b> Acquisition of innovative data sources and privately held data</p>
<p><b>Deadlines:</b></p> <p>2023: Analysis of available sources and potential partnerships</p> <p>2024: Formulation of an action plan</p> <p>2025–2027: Gradual implementation of the IT platform based on use cases coming from the work of the data science hub implementation and agreements on privately held data</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 7.4.1:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 7.4.2:</b> Storage of innovative data sources and privately held data</p>
<p><b>Deadlines:</b></p> <p>2023: Analysis of available IT tools</p> <p>2024: Formulation of an action plan in line with the acquisition plan</p> <p>2025–2027: Gradual implementation of the IT platform based on use cases coming from the work of the data science hub implementation and agreements on privately held data</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 7.4.2:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 7.4.3:</b> Handling of innovative data sources and privately held data</p>
<p><b>Deadlines:</b></p> <p>2023: Analysis of available IT tools</p>

2024: Formulation of an action plan in line with acquisition and storage plans
2025–2027: Gradual implementation of the IT platform based on use cases coming from the work of the data science hub implementation and agreements on privately held data
<b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 7.4.3:</b> Flanders Statistics Authority

<b>8. Recommendation</b>
Statistics Belgium and the Federal Public Service Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy should develop a standardised framework for data security, data protection and confidentiality measures, with clear agreements on the share of responsibilities between related organisations, units and persons. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 5.5)
<b>Current situation:</b>
Although Statistics Belgium is one of the directorates of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, it has its own information security policy. This policy is currently limited to the processes and tools that are managed by Statistics Belgium. Furthermore, there is no contract or formal agreement between Statistics Belgium and the IT department of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy. Regarding information security, there is no policy for the processes and tools that are managed at the level of the Federal Public Service.
<b>Improvement sub-action 8.1: Drafting a note identifying the shortcomings of Statistics Belgium's current information security policy</b>
Description: Statistics Belgium will identify how to complete its information security policy for the tools and processes that are managed at the level of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy in the context of the production of official statistics.
<b>Deadline:</b> 2024
<b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 8.1:</b> Statistics Belgium
<b>Improvement sub-action 8.2: Enrichment of Statistics Belgium's information security policy for the processes and tools that are managed at the level of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy</b>
Description: For the processes and tools that are managed at the level of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, in close collaboration with staff at the IT department and from the department of the President of FPS in charge of information security, Statistics Belgium will identify risks and develop an action plan in order to improve its information security policy.
<b>Deadline:</b> 2026
<b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 8.2:</b> Statistics Belgium / FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy
<b>Improvement sub-action 8.3: Implement an action plan to improve its information security policy for the processes and tools that are managed at the level of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy</b>

Description: For the processes and tools that are managed at the level of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, in close collaboration with staff at the IT department and from the department of the President of FPS in charge of information security, Statistics Belgium will implement an action plan in order to improve its information security policy.

**Deadline:** from 2027 onwards

**Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 8.3:** Statistics Belgium / FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy

## 9. Recommendation

Statistics Belgium should enhance the visibility of all European statistics produced within the Belgian statistical system by setting up a well-branded official statistics web portal, including a list of the European statistics and a link to their publication. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 15.2)

### Current situation:

Access to European statistics on the website of Statistics Belgium is somewhat complicated and incomplete, which leads to an excessive loss of time in searching for the required information. Therefore, it is recommended that a web portal, containing a list of all the European statistics produced within the framework of the BSS and links to their publication, be created. This would improve the visibility of all the European statistics produced and make it easier for users to find them.

### Improvement action 9: Create a web portal for all European statistics produced within the BSS

Description: Statistics Belgium will create a wiki, in collaboration with the ONAs, as a clear portal for all European statistics produced within the BSS, and using the logo of the European Statistical System (ESS) on the wiki. The wiki will provide short descriptive information on the institution and the statistics produced within the ESS, as well as a direct link to the most recent results. When publishing the results, Statistics Belgium and the ONAs will put the mention "Published within the framework of the European Statistical System", as well as a link to the wiki.

**Deadline:** 2024

**Responsible institutions for implementation of action 9:** Statistics Belgium / ONAs

<p><b>10. Recommendation</b></p> <p>Belgium should develop a more proactive dissemination strategy to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of its products, in order to meet the needs of different user segments. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 11.3, 15.1)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>Since the last peer review, Statistics Belgium has improved its services and the dissemination of its products. However, Statistics Belgium should further pursue its efforts in that direction and develop a proactive dissemination strategy to better meet the needs of its users. In addition, when releasing statistical results, Statistics Belgium should make them more attractive and accessible to the media and users.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 10.1: Measuring user satisfaction continuously through surveys and by reviewing the services provided</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will create a continuous user satisfaction follow-up through easily accessible surveys and the reviewing of the services provided, in an in-depth format.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> from 2025 onwards</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 10.1:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 10.2: Drafting of a note setting out a new communication approach</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will draft a note in which a dissemination and communication strategy tailored to the different user personas and their perspectives will be described, in order to better meet the needs of all types of users.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2023</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 10.2:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 10.3: Implementation of the dissemination and communication strategy</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will implement the dissemination and communication strategy, monitor its outcomes, and adjust the strategy and actions in line with the objectives set.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024 and onwards</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 10.3:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>

<p><b>11. Recommendation</b></p> <p>Statistics Belgium should standardise the release of European statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 6.5, 6.6, 13.2)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p>

<p>Statistics Belgium announces its publication dates in advance, but the exact publication time is not available, which could translate into a lack of transparency and even into impartiality. Major revisions or methodological changes are not signalled to users in advance on the website. Thus, Statistics Belgium should further improve its dissemination practices to standardise the release of statistics.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 11.1: Reviewing the publication calendar by adding the exact publication time</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will publish the exact publication time of results in its publication calendar on its website.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 11.1:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 11.2: Adding a follow-up system to the release calendar by which revisions or methodological changes are announced in advance.</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will add a follow-up system to its release calendar in order to communicate in advance planned revisions or methodological changes.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 11.2:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>

<p><b>12. Recommendation</b></p> <p>Statistics Belgium should improve its website further to standardise the provision of information related to the methodology and quality of European statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 15.1, 15.6 and 15.7)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>Not all European statistics are accompanied by the relevant metadata informing about methodology and quality, thus creating difficulties for users. Statistics Belgium should further improve the provision of information related to the methodology and quality of the European statistics that are produced.</p>
<p><b>Improvement action 12: Standardise the information on the methodology and quality of European statistics published on Statistics Belgium's website</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium will standardise the information on the methodology and quality for European statistics that are produced, creating specific web pages to answer frequently asked questions, and using the existing format to update the entire website. The process of documenting and standardising all information will start in 2023 and will be ongoing until the end of 2027.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of action 12:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>

<p><b>13. Recommendation</b></p> <p>Statistics Belgium and the Other National Authorities should review their pre-release access arrangements and document them appropriately on their websites, to ensure harmonised adherence to the ES CoP. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 6.7)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>Ensuring transparency and equal access to information to all users is fundamental for maintaining the independence and credibility of the BSS. While arrangements for pre-release access to European statistics are usually published on the websites of the statistical authorities, there is a need to review the pre-release access arrangements and to document them further on the websites of Statistics Belgium and the ONAs.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 13.1: Drafting and publishing of a pre-release policy for Statistics Belgium</b></p> <p>Description: Ensuring further transparency, Statistics Belgium will draft a pre-release and embargo policy and will publish it on its website.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 13.1:</b> Statistics Belgium</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 13.2: Drafting and publishing of a list of entities with pre-release access under embargo</b></p> <p>Description: Statistics Belgium and the NAI will formalise and publish on their respective websites a list of government organisations, institutions, and news organisations which have pre-release access under embargo for their specific official statistics.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 13.2:</b> Statistics Belgium / National Accounts Institute</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 13.3: Drafting of a note presenting all the statistics currently produced by the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, their date of submission to Eurostat, their dissemination channels and the eventual pre-release access arrangements</b></p> <p>Description: The General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy will produce a note presenting all the statistics they currently produce, the date of submission of the statistics to Eurostat (considered as the date of publication), and their dissemination channels (brochures, publication on websites, mailing list, ad hoc mailings, ...). This note will finally present and justify the eventual limited and controlled pre-release access arrangements.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for implementation of sub-action 13.3:</b> The General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy</p>

**Improvement sub-action 13.4: Publication on the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy website of the list of statistics produced by the General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, together with the existence of pre-release access arrangements**

Description: The General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy will publish a list of statistics produced by the General Directorate Energy on the website '<https://economie.fgov.be/fr/themes/energie/lenergie-en-chiffres>', together with their date of submission to Eurostat, the existence (if any) of limited and controlled pre-release access arrangements, and their available dissemination channels for data users.

**Deadline:** 2025

**Responsible institutions for implementation of sub-action 13.4:** The General Directorate Energy of the FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy