

# Statistical Monitoring Systems to Inform Policy Decision-Making, and New Data Sources

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## **Paper Abstract:**

Statistical monitoring to inform policy decision-making is becoming increasingly important at the regional, national, European and international levels. Recent examples include the United Nations strategy for sustainable development – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and the German government’s strategy on well-being and quality of life. Both these and other policy strategies and initiatives that are more restricted in scope are increasingly being linked to statistical indicators. The majority of these indicators are provided or demanded from national statistical agencies. This is because official statistics provide a guarantee of objectivity, neutrality and a scientific basis. They also provide reliable, high-quality information on a wide variety of societal, economic and ecological phenomena and trends, often with a high degree of functional and territorial detail.

This article presents an overview of emerging requirements for statistical indicators, as well as applications and publications on new data sources (often referred to as Big Data) that are relevant to official statistics. Especially the United Nations and European Union are applying new methods and approaches to analyse new data sources for use in official statistics. Depending on the degree to which the data sources are structured, which varies, different methods may be used at all stages of the process of statistical data production. Referring to selected pilot studies conducted predominantly in the context of official statistics, this article presents various examples of new data sources and how they are being used to produce statistical indicators, most of which are also new.

Generally speaking, Big Data represent a promising data source for official statistics. Nevertheless, some challenges still have to be met before they can be mainstreamed in official statistics.