



# Administrative Data and Its Benefits to Statistics

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Administrative Data for Migration Statistics  
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# What we will cover:

- What is administrative data?
- How can administrative data be used for official statistics?
- What are the benefits of using administrative data for statistics?
- Why is cooperation necessary to the National Statistical System and what is the value of National Statistical Plans?
- Why does user engagement matter?

# What do we mean by “administrative data”?

Administrative data is collected by a **government department** or other public agency primarily for **administrative** (not research or statistical) **purposes**.

Administrative data is collected for the purposes of **registration, transaction and/or record-keeping**, usually during the delivery of a service.



*For more, see: Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems*

# Types of administrative data (UNSD)

There are different types of administrative data. UNSD has divided them into 3 broad groups:

- Data reported to administrative authorities by individual persons /legal entities for legal compliance or to access government services
  - Examples: birth/death certificate, school enrollment, firms' start-up, and permits.
- Data recording decisions made by administrative authorities
  - Examples: penal records, immigration status records, and social welfare payment records.
- Data generated by administrative authorities to support planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of administrative programmes.
  - Examples: Breakfast and lunch distribution for students at public schools, health and educational reforms, and government reports on child nutrition by region.

# Other useful definitions to know


Data holder	The institution that collects and stores the administrative data (e.g., school records – the Ministry of Education is data holder)
National Statistical System	Group of agencies and organisational units of the public sector that jointly collect, process and disseminate statistics identified as official statistics in the national statistical programmes

# Some examples of administrative data

Birth and death registration happens in all countries, with varying levels of coverage.

Some is digital and some on paper. This information can for example be used for statistics on population size, birth and death rates, cause of deaths, life expectancy, and much more.

FORM 1 PARTICULARS OF BIRTH Regulation 7(1) Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953, ss.1(1) and 5.		
NHS Number	BIRTH	Entry No.
Registration district	Administrative area	
Sub-district		
1. Date and place of birth	CHILD	
2. Name and surname		
4. Name and surname	FATHER	
5. Place of birth		
6. Occupation		
7. Name and surname	MOTHER	
8. Place of birth		
9. (a) Maiden surname		
10. Usual address (if different from place of child's birth)		
11. Name and surname (if not the mother or father)	INFORMANT	
13. Usual address (if different from that in 10 above)		
14. I certify that the particulars entered above are true		
15. Date of registration	16. Signature of registrar	
17. Name given after registration, and surname		







# To produce statistics, we need data sources

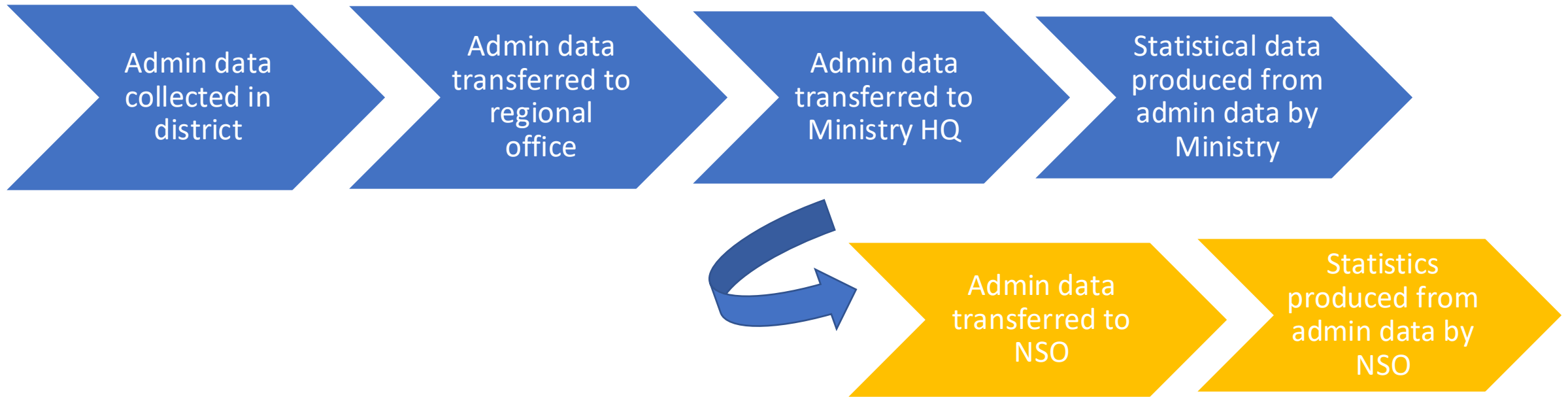
- National Statistical Offices (NSOs) have in many countries **traditionally focused on using censuses and surveys** for statistics production.
- There are many advantages to these sources, but data collection is time **intensive and costly**.
- Data collected for administrative purposes are alternative data sources that have been used for statistics systematically in some countries/for some sectors. There is, however, also a large, unused potential in many others.





# Example: General process

## From administrative data to statistics

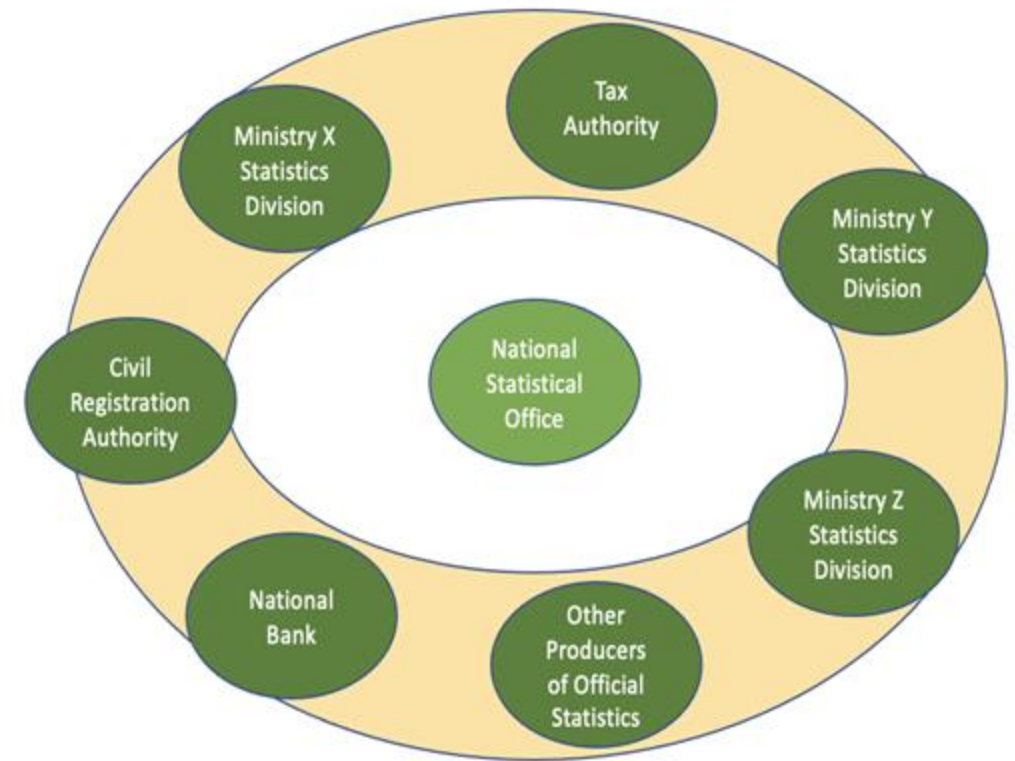


These are just two very simplified ways. All countries are organised differently, and this can look different depending on where you go.

Many ministries have the legal mandate to produce statistics (and they do it) instead of the NSO and also publish them.

# The National Statistical System (NSS)

- The NSS can be the group of agencies and organisational units of the public sector that jointly collect, process and disseminate official statistics on behalf of a national government.
- Official Statistics are produced in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and identified as such in the national statistical programmes.
- It is the responsibility of each country to define the scope and shape of its NSS.



One simplified NSS example:

# Centralised vs. Decentralised NSS

- Centralised system: NSS with one statistical agency, often referred as the National Statistical Office (NSO) responsible for the largest part of official statistics.
- Decentralised system: NSS with an NSO and several other autonomous institutions dealing with sectoral statistics (agriculture, education, labour, etc.).

Ideally, independently of the system, all members of the NSS adhere to common *technical and methodological* guidelines under the coordination of the NSO.

# Cooperation - What's what?

There are formalised and non-formalised ways of engaging across actors of the National Statistical System

Cooperation can happen through signed agreements and with top-level management involvement (formal) as well as through building relationships with staff in other institutions, meetings and joint work at technical level (informal).

Both forms of engagement and cooperation are important in working with administrative data. Ideally both are pursued by the NSS institutions in parallel.

# Data Stewardship

Definition UNECE 2022:

Data stewardship is a collection of methods and mechanisms of data management encompassing acquisition, storage, protection, aggregation, deidentification, and procedures for data release, use, and re-use, to **ensure that the data assets are of high quality, easily accessible, and used appropriately.**

Data Stewardship is an approach to Data Governance that **goes beyond the NSS** and may apply to the entire national data ecosystem



# Data stewardship

- Data stewardship is associated with four 'pillars': governance, collaboration, methods and access
- One of other key aspects the NSO can contribute to a data stewardship approach is its expertise, policy and practices in quality assessment and assurance of data.
- National data strategies are a foundation to support the role of data steward. They set the ground rules, expectations and aspirations for how data are to be organised and used within Government.

# What is needed for a country to use administrative data successfully for statistics production?

- Trust within the data eco system (and from population)
- Public understanding and approval of the benefits of using administrative sources for statistical purposes
- Legal frameworks
- Strong and consistent cooperation between all parties
- Certain level of data quality
- Agreements on aligning concepts and definitions
- Measures to ensure confidentiality and data security
- IT infrastructure

# What are potential benefits of engaging within the NSS around the admin data?



You can get more (and better quality) information faster

Potential for more frequent and more disaggregated statistics for better evidence-based policies



The quality of your own records may improve

When working with admin data for statistics, the quality of the original data improves through double checks and feedback loops



You can improve public-private dialogue, fostering collaboration between public and private sector

When discussing based on evidence/statistics, as opposed to just beliefs, it is easier to reach agreements over common aspects.

# Identifying data sources – National Statistical Strategies/Plans



- Why do you think a statistics strategy/national statistics plan could be useful?
- Do you know if your country has a statistics strategy?
- And were you involved in the development?

# What is a national statistics strategy

- A statistical strategy provides guidelines and a roadmap to strengthen the NSS. It shows which statistics are needed and how they will be collected and published
- It is a political document or programme, and its drafting requires involvement from other public entities as well as approval and active contribution from decision-makers
- It aims to mainstream statistics into the national policy and planning process. It also aims to produce information that responds to the needs of the various users
- A well-known example is the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)





# Engaging with users of official statistics

- Official statistics are there to be used. Conversely, statistics that are not used should not be compiled (UN Handbook 2021).
- From the UK Code of Practice for Statistics:
  - “Users of statistics and data should be at the centre of statistical production; their needs should be understood, their views sought and acted upon, and their use of statistics supported”

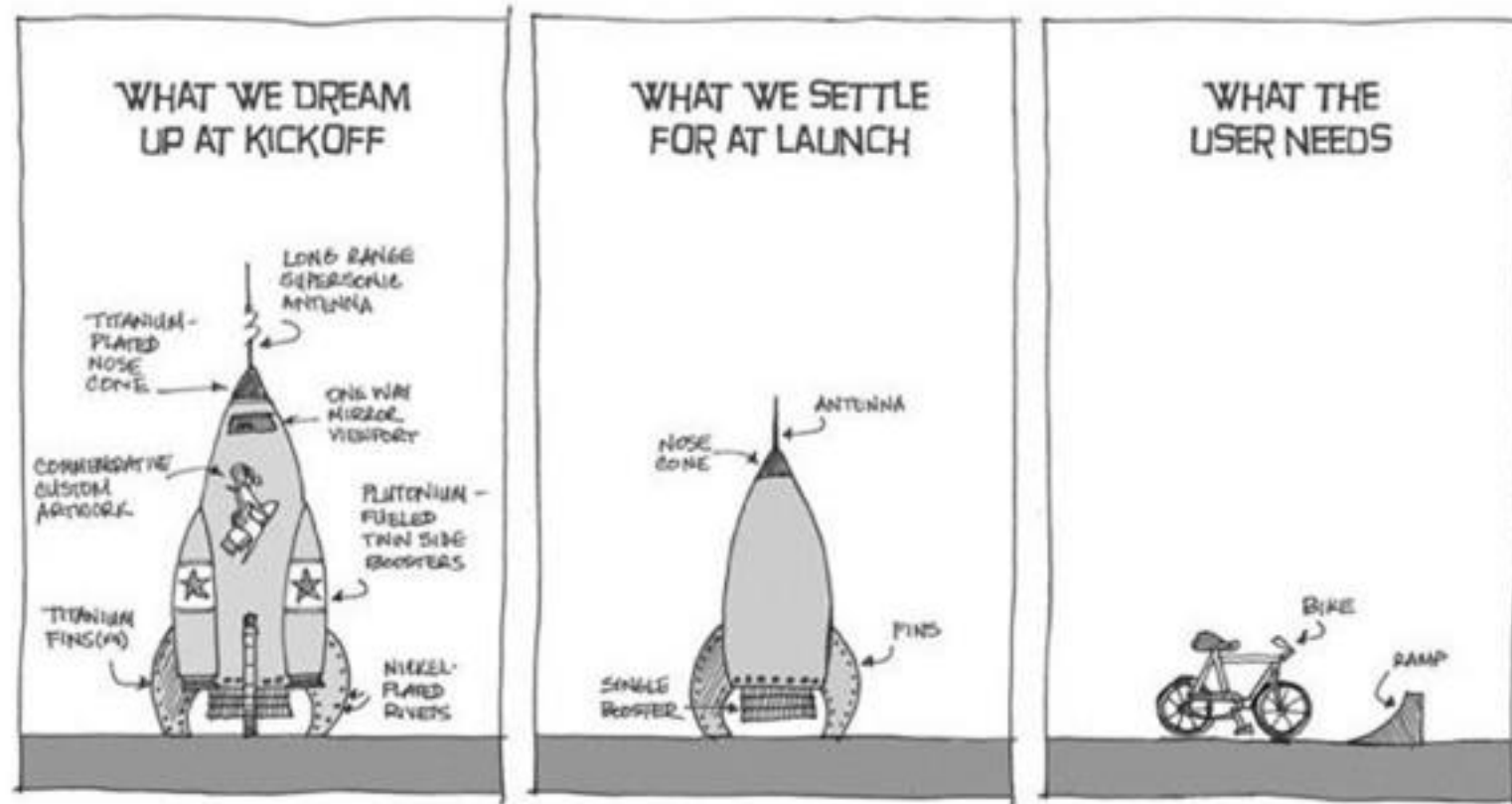
# Why user engagement?

The users are the reason why we exist

We need to understand their needs



# User needs – why are they important and how to find out about what they are



Source: Roisin Markham @CreativeDynamix

# Why user engagement is important

- We need to engage with users and potential users of statistics to help us:
  - Prioritize our work based on what users want
  - Ensure we are responsive to emerging and urgent needs
  - Shape new and existing statistical products and services
  - Build trust and maximize use of our statistics
  - Gather and share feedback and expertise
  - Identify and fill gaps in knowledge and evidence
  - Understand what level of quality is needed (ensure statistics are fit for purpose)
- Other reasons?

# Engaging with users can:

- Help prevent misuse of statistics (*Principle 4 of the FPoS*)
  - Increase awareness and knowledge of official statistics and data
  - Increase effective, efficient and multiple use of statistics and data
  - Assist users in their decisions and choices
  - Break down barriers between people and data
- 
- NSS stakeholders should incorporate **data literacy** in their work programmes - continuously work to promote statistical and data literacy in the community - Make it more visible!
    - This is a key component of user engagement!



**Thank you**

Developed by the UN Statistics Division