



**GOVERNANCE
STATISTICS**
PRAIA CITY GROUP

GOVERNANCE NOW A DOMAIN IN THE REVISED CLASSIFICATION OF STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES (CSA 2.0)

WHAT'S NEXT FOR GOVERNANCE STATISTICS?

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The updated Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA 2.0) explicitly refers to Governance as a standalone domain of official statistics, on par with Economic statistics and Demographic and Social statistics. The CSA 2.0 also recognizes Human Rights as a new cross-cutting domain of statistics. How can the CSA 2.0 be leveraged by national statistical offices (NSOs) around the world to enhance statistical production in these areas? And how can the Praia Group on Governance Statistics steer a strong, coordinated effort to help consolidate these new statistical domains? We asked statisticians across the world, experts from the international statistical community and development partners to share thoughts and suggestions.

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National Statistical Offices

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Regional and international organizations

Dr. Nabil M. BenShams, Director General, Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-STAT); Mr. Marc Cebreros, Human Rights Officer, UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR); Mr. Nicolas Fasel, Chief Statistician, OHCHR; Ms. Francesca Grum, Assistant Director, Chief of Demographic and Social Statistics, UNSD; Mr. Ronald Jansen, Assistant Director, Chief of Data Innovation and Capacity Branch, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD); Ms. Tiina Luige, Secretary to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE); Ms. Ilaria Di Matteo, Chief of Section, UNSD; Ms. Angela Me, Chief of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Dr. Salah Al Muzahmi, Director of Research & Development Indicators, GCC-STAT; Ms. Mariana Neves, Governance Statistics Specialist, United Nations Development Program (UNDP).



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

“The Statistical Commission endorsed the revised Classification of Statistical Activities as an international standard classification [...] and welcomed in particular the explicit inclusion of the topic of governance statistics and human rights in the classification.”

UN Statistical Commission, Report on the 54th session (28 February – 3 March 2023)

2023 is a watershed moment for governance statistics

The painstaking work carried out by the Praia Group since its creation in 2015 to develop a statistical framework on Governance has borne fruit in a significant way. In March 2023, the UN Statistical Commission endorsed an updated Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA 2.0) which includes Governance as a new domain of official statistics. The statistical areas in this new domain follow the general structure outlined in the Handbook on Governance Statistics developed by the Praia Group and endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2020. This new classification effectively means that Governance is no longer an ‘experimental’ area of statistics but sits on par with economic, demographic and social statistics in the official statistical nomenclature. The endorsed CSA 2.0 also recognizes Human Rights as a new cross-cutting domain of statistics, relevant to governance statistics as well as other domains.

“The inclusion of governance statistics as a new domain of official statistics not only underscores the significance of this field but also represents an opportunity for NSOs to increase their investments in this area and to enhance the quality of these statistics.”

Mr. Vebjørn Aalandslid, Senior Adviser, Statistics Norway, Chair of the Praia Group Task Team on Participation in Political and Public Affairs

Structure of the Revised Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA 2.0)

Subject-matter domains:

1. Demographic and social statistics
2. Economic statistics
3. Environment statistics¹
4. Governance statistics²
 - 401 Non-discrimination and equality
 - 402 Participation
 - 403 Openness
 - 404 Access to and quality of justice
 - 405 Responsiveness
 - 406 Absence of corruption
 - 407 Trust
 - 408 Safety and security
5. Cross-cutting statistics
 - 502 Human rights

Other domains:

1. Statistical infrastructure and methodology
2. Strategic and managerial activities

¹ Aligned with the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES, 2013)

² Aligned with the Handbook on Governance Statistics (Praia Group on Governance Statistics, 2020)

These are critical breakthroughs, as governments now have a framework to dedicate resources for statistical programmes on Governance, and Human Rights, and to use official governance statistics in the design and monitoring of their national plans and strategies. The revised CSA also provides renewed urgency for the Praia Group to implement its mandate to “contribute to establishing international standards and methods for the compilation of statistics on the major dimensions of governance”. Meanwhile, international development partners can now refer to this framework to dedicate technical assistance to governance statistics specifically, as part of their support to official statistics at national, regional and global levels.

“The UN Statistical Commission’s decision to make Human Rights a cross-cutting area of official statistical activities opens new grounds and opportunities to strengthen the national and international statistical systems through further collaboration between the statistical and human rights communities.”

Nicolas Fasel, Chief Statistician, UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)

How did Governance make its way into the revised Classification?

The CSA was established in 2005 by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) as a regional classification. Over time, its use widened and it became a global reference used by both national and international agencies. In 2020, the CES Bureau established a Task Team to update the Classification and include new, emerging areas of international statistical work – such as governance statistics, climate-change related statistics and geospatial statistics – and to convert it into an internationally agreed global classification.

“In both the regional consultation we carried out with members of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and the global consultation held in parallel by the UN Statistical Division (UNSD), many responding countries and organizations welcomed the evolution of the classification and expressed their support for adding a new domain on Governance.”

Ms. Tiina Luige, Secretary to the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

This comes at a time when countries are already investing in the area of governance statistics given their international commitment to report on 24 indicators under Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Above and beyond SDG 16 indicators, government leaders across the world are increasingly seeking rigorous and timely data on Governance, an area which many recognize as ‘the fourth pillar of sustainable development’ given its importance in driving efforts to meet economic, social and environmental goals. Governments see the importance of evidence-informed policies as needs increase and resources are scarce.

“We welcome the integration of Governance as a new domain in the revised Classification as it mirrors the importance of these statistics for societies nowadays.”

Ms. Mari Ylä-Jarkko, Deputy Director General, Statistics Finland, Information and Statistical Services



**HOW CAN NSOs LEVERAGE THE
CSA 2.0 TO KICKSTART, OR
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PRODUCTION ON GOVERNANCE?**



HOW CAN NSOs LEVERAGE THE CSA 2.0 TO KICKSTART, OR CONSOLIDATE, STATISTICAL PRODUCTION ON GOVERNANCE?

The necessity and importance of measuring the quality of governance systems is widely recognized, especially at a time when countries are facing multiple crises with wide-ranging repercussions such as declining trust in government, disengagement from political life and rising inequalities, among others. To fully understand the impacts of these crises and to navigate their way out of them, countries need timely, reliable and internationally comparable statistics on how governance systems are responding.

“The Ghana Statistical Services started producing statistics on Governance in 2014, at the request of the President’s Office: they needed data to track the performance of public institutions in providing public services, in fighting corruption, and in promoting democratic participation at the local level.”

Mr. John Foster Kwabena Agyaho, Head of Price Statistics Unit and Coordinator of Ghana Maiden Corruption Survey, Ghana Statistical Services

Now that governance statistics have a solid foundation within the official statistical system, NSOs may consider taking the following possible steps:

1. Integrate Governance in statistical legislation and regulatory frameworks

“At INEGI, we began our work on governance statistics in 2009. A specialized unit was established, and the pillar of ‘government, crime and justice statistics’ was included in the statistical legislation. Based on this experience, Mexico promoted the inclusion of a new domain on governance statistics in the CSA 2.0 to help other countries define their work in this area.”

Adrian Franco, Vice-President of INEGI Mexico, National Subsystem on Governance, Crime and Justice statistics

- The CSA 2.0 can be used to inform revisions in the national statistical legislation, and related regulations, orders and decrees on statistics. This in turn can help formalize the inclusion of Governance and Human Rights in statistical programmes and in the organizational setup of the NSO. The integration of Governance in the statistical law can also facilitate the inclusion of institutions with a mandate on Governance into the National Statistical System, such as National Electoral Commissions, National Human Rights Institutions, Oversight Institutions for Access to Information and National Equality Bodies, among others.

2. Integrate Governance in the organizational structure and budgets of NSOs

“The CSA is aimed at providing an analytical classification. While it is not intended to prescribe the organizational structure of a statistical office or a statistical production process in any thematic area, some NSOs may well decide to use it for this purpose.”

Ronald Jansen, Assistant Director, Chief of the Data Innovation and Capacity Branch, UN Statistics Division

- Often, the production of governance statistics is assigned as an additional responsibility to staff who are already attached to other units and have limited time to devote to this new area. This arrangement can compromise the quality of governance statistics and may not be sufficient for establishing strong partnerships with governance data-producing agencies within the statistical system.
- The CSA 2.0 places governance statistics at the same level as economic, demographic and social statistics. This reflects the understanding that governance statistics should adhere to the same quality standards as other established statistical programs. This revised nomenclature can help facilitate constructive conversations around the place of governance statistics within the organizational structure of NSOs, as well as around the allocation of necessary resources and expertise to ensure public trust in governance statistics from the outset.

“The CSO 2.0 is helping to raise the profile of our Governance, Public Safety and Justice Unit and the statistics we produce. We are currently reviewing our Statistics Act and will refer to the CSA 2.0 to propose a dedicated Department on Governance, Public Safety and Justice, on par with other existing Departments on Social statistics.”

Solly Molayi, Chief Director, Social Statistics, Statistics South Africa

- The integration of Governance in the regular statistical operations of an NSO requires dedicated annual budgetary allocations. Since Governance is a domain that lies at the core of national sovereignty – covering issues such as trust in public institutions, public safety and social cohesion – several see the strategic necessity of funding governance statistical production from public resources, so as to not be dependent on external actors for the steady production of such critical information.

“Governance surveys in Colombia are like the ‘Cinderella of official statistics’: they are not always a top priority and their financing is sometimes at risk. The CSA 2.0 will help us call attention to the fact that the need for this statistical information is now officially recognized by the international statistical community, and therefore we need to find adequate and predictable resources for it.”

*Alejandro Ramos Hernandez, Social Capital Coordinator, National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)
- Colombia*

3. Expand statistical production on Governance

- For countries that have yet to start producing statistics on Governance, the CSA 2.0 can be used as a conversation starter with relevant government agencies.

“In the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) Member States, Safety and Security statistics are essential for foreign investors to select optimal business and residential locations. These statistics are typically sourced from law enforcement agencies. The CSA 2.0 can serve as a robust framework to enable NSOs in our region to collaborate with law enforcement agencies to enhance the production and dissemination of these statistics.”

Dr. Nabil M. BenShams, Director General, Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat)

- For NSOs that are already collecting governance data for international reporting on SDG 16, the CSA 2.0 gives renewed impetus to the integration of this data collection work as part of their routine production.

“With the current progress in methodological development on measuring SDG 16, now is the time to lay solid foundations for SDG 16 monitoring at country level. The international statistical framework on Governance provided by the CSA 2.0 can help countries institutionalize SDG 16 data collection in the longer-term.”

Mariana Neves, Governance Statistics Specialist, UNDP Global Policy Centre on Governance

- Meanwhile, countries also have international human rights reporting obligations and the CSA 2.0 can encourage NSOs to contribute high-quality evidence to State party reports to international human rights monitoring mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and the United Nations Treaty Bodies¹.
- However, merely releasing governance statistics in the public domain is no guarantee that those who need them will know what to do with them. NSOs and their partners need to develop the data literacy competencies of potential users of governance statistics, such as senior policymakers in a President's Office, national anti-corruption commissions or parliamentary committees on governance-related issues.

“We have a responsibility to familiarize government officials with governance statistics, which are still new to them. And we need to think not only about planners and policymakers in central-level government ministries and agencies, but also about government officials at the subnational level, who are best placed to act on this information in their specific province or even district.”

Mr. Alejandro Ramos Hernandez, Social Capital Coordinator, National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) Colombia

4. Enhance the standardization of governance statistics

“Here in Finland, we have been producing statistics on Governance for a long time, but we will use the CSA 2.0 to develop further our future statistical production in this area, in line with the eight subdomains listed in the Classification. Now that we have a common understanding of the thematic scope of Governance statistics, we need harmonized methodologies to start producing comparable statistics on each subdomain.”

Ms. Mari Ylä-Jarkko, Deputy Director General, Statistics Finland, Information and Statistical Services

- Several NSOs are already producing statistics relating to various dimensions of Governance, but these statistics differ in terms of the underlying concepts and the labels used to describe them. The heterogeneity and limited comparability of this country-level information is a problem.

“We will know how well, or poorly, our countries are performing – in providing access to justice, in delivering public services, or in any other thematic area of interest – only when we all apply the same standards and we start producing internationally comparable statistics. In Ghana, we started using the SHaSA survey module on Governance, Peace and Security developed for the African continent precisely for this purpose: to be able to compare Ghana's performance to that of our neighbours.”

Mr. John Foster Kwabena Agyaho, Head of Price Statistics Unit and Coordinator of Ghana Maiden Corruption Survey, Ghana Statistical Services

¹ See OHCHR, [Human Right Indicators: A Guide for Measurement & Implementation](#)

- By referring to the statistical framework on Governance already laid out in the Handbook on Governance Statistics, the CSA 2.0 encourages NSOs to draw on the conceptual and measurement frameworks already developed for each dimension of Governance, in the Handbook. These frameworks, and the nomenclatures already proposed for each dimension, can serve as useful starting points for NSOs interested in further operationalizing the Governance domain of the CSA 2.0.
- The conceptual and measurement frameworks developed for each dimension of Governance can be used to classify the methodological material used by NSOs and other data producers, as well as data and metadata, indicators and other data products. They can also be used to structure information about statistical activities such as data collection, processing, dissemination, capacity development, statistical events, working groups, training courses and the like.
- The CSA 2.0 can be particularly helpful when used as a standardized structure for the dissemination of statistical information on Governance on websites of statistical organisations, for instance to classify publications and datasets by governance subdomain.

“At Stats New Zealand, we have been using the CSA as a filter in our internal Concept and Classification Management System, to help structure internal document repositories. We are now in the process of looking at how the new CSA 2.0 can be integrated into the system, which will make governance statistics more visible in our internal repositories.”

Mr. Andrew Hancock, Chair, UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications, and member of the Task Team on the Revision of the CSA

5. Enhance national statistical coordination on Governance

“In South Africa, now that we can refer to an official classification that recognizes the domain of Governance statistics, we plan to engage with more data-producing institutions – such as Legal Aid South Africa, the Electoral Commission and the Department of Correctional Services – to build a governance data ecosystem that provides comprehensive governance statistics to South Africans.”

Mr. Solly Molayi, Chief Director, Social Statistics, Statistics South Africa

- The CSA 2.0 can empower NSOs to coordinate the activities of the national statistical system on various dimensions of Governance. Stronger coordination in the area of Governance can help ensure that the data collected for administrative purposes also meet the statistical production needs of NSOs. Coordination is also critical to enhance comparability between the various data outputs produced by different organizations, and across different government levels.

“One of the greatest problems we faced when we started producing statistics on Governance was the lack of comparability of data across levels of government and between institutions operating in a given sector. To address this challenge, we established a network of M&E focal points across more than 30 ministries and agencies working in the area of Governance, and we held quarterly meetings with them to harmonise definitions and reporting formats, and to explore how various data outputs could be meaningfully related to each other.”

Ms. Renice A. Bunde, Assistant Manager, Governance, Peace and Security Statistics, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

- Institutional partnerships between relevant agencies and the NSO may be needed when bringing together registers from different agencies as part of a unified system to produce statistics on any given dimension of Governance. Creating these partnerships may require modifying all stages of statistical production (data collection, data processing, quality control, dissemination) used by each agency and NSOs may find it helpful to outline commonly agreed procedures in formal agreements or memoranda of understanding (MoUs).

“New partnerships between national statistical offices and national human rights institutions (whose independence is measured by SDG indicator 16.a.1) are needed to improve the availability, quality and use of data for the SDGs, leaving no-one behind, and advancing human rights.”

Nicolas Fasel, Chief Statistician, UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)



**HOW CAN THE PRAIA GROUP
LEVERAGE THE CSA 2.0 TO AMPLIFY
GOVERNANCE STATISTICAL
PRODUCTION WORLDWIDE?**



HOW CAN THE PRAIA GROUP LEVERAGE THE CSA 2.0 TO AMPLIFY GOVERNANCE STATISTICAL PRODUCTION WORLDWIDE?

Now that governance statistics have a solid foundation within the official statistical system, the Praia Group may consider taking the following possible steps:

1. Continue to work in earnest on the development of international statistical guidance, standards and instruments to measure all dimensions of Governance

“We need easy access to a toolbox of methodologies on the various dimensions of Governance, including guidance on the use of administrative data to compile governance statistics. We would also welcome some guidelines on how to adapt these methodologies to the specific context of Gulf countries.”

Dr. Nabil M. BenShams, Director General, Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat)

- NSOs need readily available methodologies on all dimensions of Governance. The CSA 2.0 reinforces the urgency for the Praia Group to continue to work in earnest on the development of international statistical guidance, standards and instruments to measure all dimensions of Governance, under the framework of a Human Rights-Based Approach to Data.

“One way forward to help identify the next priority areas for methodological development may be to take a step back from the existing 8-dimensional framework, and to focus instead on key policy areas common across countries. There may be a need to combine some dimensions and sub-dimensions together to develop methodologies that meet the specific data needs of distinct policy communities.”

Ms. Angela Me, Chief, Research and Trend Analysis Branch, UNODC

- Created in November 2021 under the auspices of the Praia Group, a Task Team on Non-Discrimination and Equality (led by the NSOs of Peru and Finland and supported by UNDP and OHCHR) and a Task Team on Participation in Political and Public Affairs (led by the NSO of Norway and supported by UNDP and UNWomen) are currently developing internationally harmonized survey modules on these two dimensions, as well as Guidance on the use of administrative data sources to produce statistics on these two dimensions.
- Similar methodological work on other dimensions of Governance could be fast-tracked if a pre-existing regional effort to develop harmonized methodologies can be leveraged and used as a basis for discussion and experimentation by Praia Group members in other regions. This may be the case for the dimension of Trust, for example, for which there already exists a survey module developed for OECD member countries.

2. Build a strong community of producers and users of governance statistics

- To support the development of international standards, the Praia Group has an important role in documenting methodological experimentation by NSOs around the world. To this end, the Praia Group may wish to create an international network of Governance Statistics Focal Points in NSOs across the

world. In addition to documenting relevant national experiences, this network could also be used to gather feedback on ongoing methodological work from NSOs operating in diverse contexts. It could also help connect peers interested in learning from each other in any given thematic area, and would facilitate the dissemination of various tools and guidance developed by the Praia Group among those best placed to use them.

“Similarly to our network of UNODC Focal Points on Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, a network of Governance Statistics focal points appointed by NSOs around the world could be established. This would help ensure that the latest national experiences in producing statistics on various dimension of Governance are well captured by the Praia Group, and feed into relevant methodological, capacity-building or advocacy workstreams of the Group.”

Ms. Angela Me, Chief, Research and Trend Analysis Branch, UNODC

- The CSA 2.0 may also present an opportunity for the Praia Group to broaden its engagement beyond the statistical community, when developing new methodologies and standards, to also include potential data users among policymakers, civil society and relevant watchdog institutions. This would be particularly important when launching global reviews of draft methodologies for, to ensure that the data produced by these new methodologies meet the information needs of their intended users.

3. Mobilize resources for a strong, coordinated effort to help consolidate this new statistical domain

- The integration of Governance as a new domain in the CSA 2.0 further underlines the critical need for the Praia Group to mobilize resources to effectively implement the three pillars of its [Plan of Work 2020-25](#). Financial, technical and other in-kind resources are required, notably to support the piloting, at country level, of the new methodological instruments being developed by Task Teams, to strengthen the capacities of national statistical offices and relevant government agencies to use those instruments, and to expand advocacy activities and community-building among members of the Group and, beyond, with the broader community of governance data stakeholders.



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