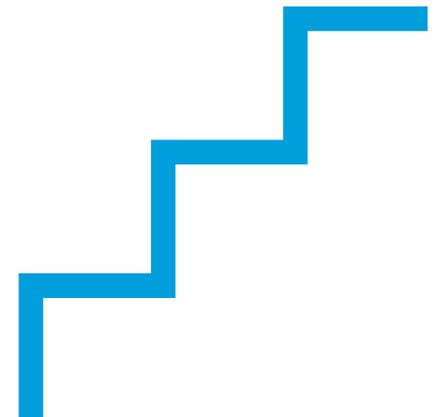# United Nations | DESA Statistics Division

**DA Tranche 14 Project: Concluding Session
Capacity Building Workshop for the Africa Region:
Data Ethics, Governance, and Quality in a Changing Data Ecosystem**

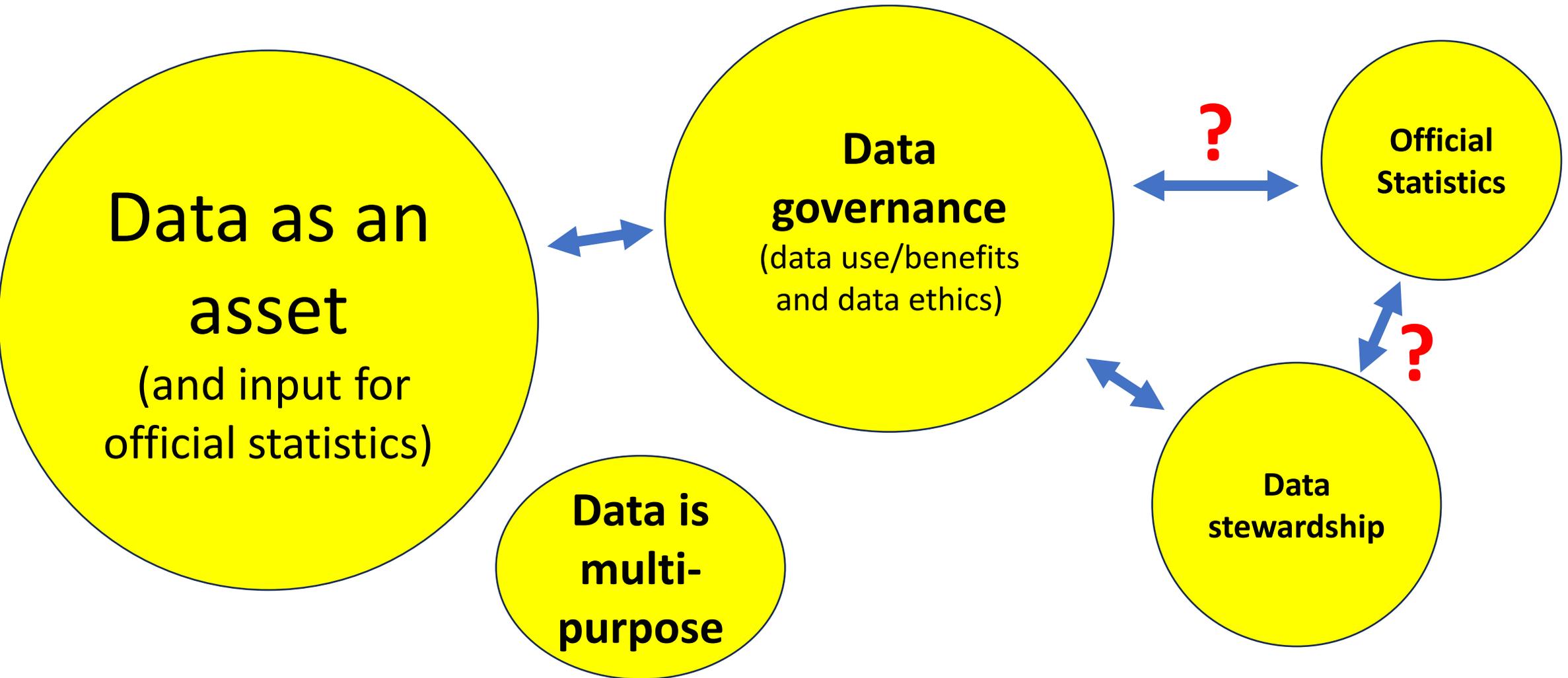Session 6: Roadmap for Transforming Official Statistics in a Fast-Changing Data Ecosystem

Building a Resilient Statistical System in a Dynamic Data Environment

Nairobi, Kenya, 2-4 September 2025

**Keping Yao
Statistics Division, Development Data and Outreach Branch
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

Some basic thoughts about the <u>data ecosystem</u>..

Data as an asset

(and input for official statistics)

Data is multi-purpose

Data governance

(data use/benefits and data ethics)

?

Official Statistics

?

Data stewardship

This workshop addressed the following

1. **Governance and Coordination of NSS**

2. **Data Governance and Stewardship in the Changing National Data Ecosystem**

3. **Modernizing Legislation for Official Statistics to Remain Relevant (delineation of NSS and key elements)**

4. **Data Governance, Quality Assurance, and Novel Data Sources**

5. **Modern Statistical Production Architecture (GSBPM)**

Main provisions of a modern statistical law:

- **Scope of the Law and delineation of the National Statistical System (NSS)**

- **Role and mandate of the NSO in leading and coordinating the NSS and beyond**

- **National Chief Statistician (CEO of the NSO)**

- **User engagement (Statistical Advisory Council)**

- **Coordination instruments (statistical programmes)**

- **Data sources and confidentiality (beyond censuses and surveys)**

- **Precedence of statistical legislation over other legislation**

- **Other provisions**

UNECE
Generic Law on Official Statistics
Loi générique sur la statistique officielle
Модельный закон об официальной статистике

for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
pour Europe orientale, du Caucase et d'Asie centrale
для Восточной Европы, Кавказа и Центральной Азии

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Items on the agenda for the Modernization of official statistics (and beyond)

1. **Data governance** (overarching concept/framework)

2. **National statistical laws and regulations**

3. **Data stewardship** (practical functions)

4. **National Strategy for the development of (official) statistics**

5. **National quality assurance framework and tools**

6. **Generic Statistical Business Process Model**

7. **Data interoperability standards such as SDMX (used as a statistical standard)**

➢ **Some relate only to official statistics (5 and 6), but most have to be viewed and pursued in the context of a larger data ecosystem and depend on national data strategies/objectives**

➢ **The role pursued or assigned to the NSO will differ in countries.**

Concluding Roundtable Discussion on the Way Forward

1. How do you think the changing data ecosystem and your country's data strategy/vision (if existing) will impact the role of the NSO in your country?

2. What do you think are the 3-4 biggest challenges or opportunities for the NSO in your country over the next 5 years?

3. How should official statistics/the NSO address these challenges/take advantage of these opportunities? (How do you see the way forward?)

4. What support could be provided by the UN Statistical Commission and its Working Groups on data governance and data stewardship?

5. How do you think data governance could support digital transformation in NSOs and the whole society?

Working Group of Statistical Commission on Data Governance

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/groups/Data_Governance/

At its 56ᵗʰ session in 2025, the Commission "supported the establishment of a working group of the Commission on data governance, focusing on data governance within official statistics while also considering the Commission's broader mandate as the apex forum for discussions, knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices on statistics and data of the UN system." (Decision 56/103(d))

A survey will be circulated to all NSOs to gather concise information on countries' current practices, opportunities, perceived challenges, and needs related to data governance and the coordination of national statistical systems.

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Data Governance Knowledge Repository

https://unstats.un.org/wiki/spaces/DataGovernance/pages/268664858/Data+Governance

- This repository offers insights and best practices for <u>integrating data governance principles to support digital transformation</u>, policy-making, national data ecosystems and statistical systems, citizen engagement, and global cooperation. It is regularly updated with new materials and case studies.

- We invite you to share your experiences or additional resources by contacting us at statistics-handbook@un.org

Options for NSOs in the larger data ecosystem

1. Do nothing (not engaged)

   a) The NSO **decides not to react** to the expansion of the national data ecosystem.
   b) This option is not recommended as there is a high risk that it could lead to the NSO becoming marginalised and losing relevance.

2. Observe and wait for opportunities (passive engagement)

   a) The NSO **decides to observe** the development of the national data ecosystem, without engaging unless clear opportunities present themselves.
   b) Potential of missed opportunities to influence how the national data ecosystem evolves, particularly in terms of legal and institutional frameworks, as well as data standards.
   c) Potential of increased difficulties accessing and using data from other actors
   d) NSO may have no other option due to resource constraints.

Options for NSOs in the larger data ecosystem

3. Influence and shape (active engagement)

a) The NSO realises the importance of engaging with the national data ecosystem, and **allocates specific resources**

b) Build partnerships and ensure the NSO is present when important discussions take place and decisions are made.

c) Often part of cross-government data or digitalisation initiative.

4. Lead (pro-active engagement)

a) The **NSO seeks and is given the or a leading role** in shaping the national data ecosystem.

b) Significant costs in terms of resources.

c) Potential risks to reputation and increased confusion as to the role and mandate of the NSO.

d) Several successful examples, but opinions are split.

Thank you.