



IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS CYPRUS



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

<p>1. Recommendation</p> <p>CYSTAT should review the division of responsibilities within the national statistical system with a view to optimising the use of the available capabilities for the implementation of the ES CoP. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.1 and 1bis.3)</p>
<p>Current situation:</p> <p>Apart from CYSTAT (the National Statistical Institute), the national statistical system of Cyprus comprises thirteen Other National Authorities (ONAs) developing, producing and disseminating official statistics. These are ministries, departments and services of the Republic or public corporations responsible for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. Most of these ONAs are responsible for a small fraction of European statistics only and their de facto responsibilities in several cases do not exceed those of providers of administrative data. Moreover, many ONAs rely on a minimum of qualified staff; often only one or two persons are working on European statistics. Consequently, at the onset of actively pursuing its coordination role, it has become apparent to CYSTAT that the full implementation of the ES CoP by all ONAs will overburden the national statistical system and will require resources well beyond what is currently available and what will be available in the future. A leaner and more centralised organisation with fewer but stronger ONAs would be beneficial and could make CYSTAT's coordination efforts more effective.</p>
<p>Improvement sub-action 1.1: Revision of ONAs list</p> <p>CYSTAT will review the list of ONAs in the National Statistical System of Cyprus (NSS), with a view to reduce their number, in order to optimize statistical production responsibilities within the NSS. Consultations with the ONAs will have to take place before any decisions are made by CYSTAT.</p>
<p>Deadline: Q1 2025</p>
<p>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.1: CYSTAT</p>
<p>Improvement sub-action 1.2: MoUs with those ONAs removed from list</p> <p>For ONAs that will be removed from the list as a result of revising the list of ONAs, memoranda of understanding (MoUs) will be signed, ensuring that the production and transmission of the European statistics required remains unaffected and the terms for data transmission to CYSTAT and data quality are determined. Furthermore, with the signing of the MoUs the responsibility for transmitting the data to Eurostat as well as the responsibility for the quality of the data provided, will be transferred to CYSTAT. ONAs removed from the list will become administrative data providers.</p>
<p>Deadline: Q1 2026</p>
<p>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 1.2: CYSTAT and ONAs</p>
<p>Improvement sub-action 1.3: Publication of revised list of ONAs</p> <p>Once the MoUs with administrative data providers (previously ONAs) have been signed, the updated, final list of ONAs will be published on CYSTAT's web portal and on Eurostat's website, complying with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics and the provisions of the Official Statistics Law of 2021 of the Republic of Cyprus.</p>
<p>Deadline: Q1 2026</p>
<p>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.3: CYSTAT</p>

2. Recommendation

After consultation with the Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics, CYSTAT should draw up a roadmap and an action plan for coordinating the systemwide implementation of the ES CoP. CYSTAT should take an active approach in its implementation and conduct regular monitoring. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2 and 1bis.3)

Current situation:

The first meeting of the Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics was held in September 2022 when the provisions and requirements of the new Official Statistics Law and the ES CoP were presented. Currently, ONAs follow their own procedures regarding quality and thus, central monitoring procedures regarding the compliance of ONAs with quality requirements are not yet in place. Process quality guidelines have been shared with the ONAs. CYSTAT envisages to proceed with the establishment of such procedures and to provide further relevant training to ONAs, as well as to focus co-ordination on strengthening ONAs independence.

Improvement sub-action 2.1: Action Plan for the Implementation of the ES CoP in the NSS

CYSTAT will draw up an action plan with regard to the implementation of the ES CoP in the national statistical system, including actions such as the training of ONAs, sharing good practices and monitoring procedures regarding the implementation of the ES CoP. The action plan will also incorporate a roadmap setting the timeframe for the foreseen actions. The action plan will include only the ONAs part of the final revised list.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 2.2: Monitoring the Implementation of the ES CoP in the NSS

CYSTAT will regularly monitor the implementation of the ES CoP in the NSS, as determined in the action plan for the implementation of the ES CoP. A relevant report will be compiled on an annual basis for internal use (within the NSS) and relevant actions will be discussed and decided upon within the framework of the Committee on the Coordination of Official Statistics.

Deadline: Q4 2026 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.2: CYSTAT

3. Recommendation

CYSTAT and all Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics should strengthen the culture and sharing of good practices within the national statistical system by enhancing cooperation between all its members and by developing a common identity, thus making it clear to users that they are part of the national statistical system. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1bis.2 and 10.4)

Current situation:

Strong bilateral relationships exist between CYSTAT and the ONAs reviewed. ONAs can turn to CYSTAT for support and guidance and have good relationships with relevant officers and the management of CYSTAT. However, it is evident that there are limited interactions between ONAs themselves, hampering benchmarking, the exchange of good practices and development of a common culture within the national statistical system as a whole. This lack of cohesion within the national statistical system hinders the development and enhancement of skills and benefits from efficiency gains through common developments and solutions, such as common training, a common release calendar and/or publication of their statistics under a common umbrella. At the same time, it is evident that users do not seem to be aware of which authorities are part of the national statistical system and it is not clear where to go for which data. Data can be centrally accessed through CYSTAT's website. However, the ONAs lack a common identity or branding, which would visually reinforce the data from the national statistical system and make it clear to users.

Improvement sub-action 3.1: Action Plan for the Implementation of the ES CoP in the NSS

CYSTAT will draw up an action plan with regard to the implementation of the ES CoP in the national statistical system, including actions such as the training of ONAs, sharing good practices and monitoring procedures regarding the implementation of the ES CoP. The action plan will also incorporate a roadmap setting the timeframe for the foreseen actions. The action plan will include only the ONAs who are part of the final revised list.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 3.2: Enhance transparency of the NSS – ONAs websites

Based on the revised list of ONAs, the ONAs shall increase the transparency and visibility of their statistics on their websites, including, amongst others, the addition of explanatory information regarding the NSS, the Official Statistics Law of 2021, the provisions of the Code of Practice (incl. professional independence) and their statistical activities according to the common programme of statistical activities of the NSS. This will be done through dedicated sections on their websites, containing statistical data, relevant methodological documents, reference metadata and quality reports.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 3.2: ONAs

Improvement sub-action 3.3: Establish rules of operation for the Committee on Coordination of Official Statistics

The Committee should meet on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly) in order to:

- Encourage the presentation of each ONAs work programme and progress in quality assurance
- Facilitate the sharing of good practices among CYSTAT and the ONAs
- Organize training sessions by CYSTAT on statistical themes such as data collection methods and procedures, methodological issues etc.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 3.3: CYSTAT, ONAs

Improvement sub-action 3.4: Creation of a common release calendar on CYPSTAT's web portal
A common release calendar will include information on release dates of official statistics by all ONAs with relevant links to each ONA's website and will be available centrally on CYPSTAT's web portal. This will ensure that (a) users have access to all information from a single point and (b) that they know which authority produces each set of official statistics.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 3.4: CYPSTAT, ONAs

Improvement sub-action 3.5: Development of a common identity for the national statistical system and its output

The common identity will promote cohesion within the national statistical system via, for example, standardized tables and output, a common release calendar etc. This will be achieved through the development of a brand manual and a common logo used by all ONAs on their publications of official statistics, along with their own logos. A common identity will help ONAs benefit from efficiency gains and visually reinforce the data produced by all ONAs by making it clearer to the users that they are part of the national statistical system.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 3.5: CYPSTAT, ONAs

4. Recommendation

The Other National Authorities reviewed (the Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior, the Health Monitoring Unit in the Ministry of Health, the Deputy Ministry of Tourism) should draw up the necessary documentation of their processes and methods. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism and the Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior should formalise their quality assurance procedures in order to inform users about data quality. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 8.4, 4.3 and 1bis.2)

Current situation:

As the Official Statistics Law is relatively new, the concerned parties have not yet introduced all requirements in practice, including those stemming from the ES CoP. Among the Other National Authorities reviewed, there is a lack of detailed descriptions of their processes, which makes it difficult to objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of their work routines. This hampers the continuous improvement of the process quality. However, the Health Monitoring Unit stands out as the only ONA that has formalised its quality assurance procedures and consistently reports on data quality.

Improvement sub-action 4.1: Training on the documentation of processes and methods

CYPSTAT will offer training to the reviewed ONAs regarding the documentation of processes, based on the GSBPM model.

Deadline: Q1 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.1: CYPSTAT

Improvement sub-action 4.2: Training on quality and metadata reports

CYPSTAT will offer training to the reviewed ONAs regarding quality and metadata reporting.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.2: CYSTAT
<p>Improvement sub-action 4.3: Documentation of the methods and processes in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics in the Deputy Ministry of Tourism</p> <p>The methods and processes in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics will be described in detail in an internal document. This will enhance the transparency and reliability of the work carried out, while also providing the opportunity to objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented procedures. This will also ensure the continuity and sustainability of the functions performed, irrespective of other factors.</p>
Deadline: Q4 2026
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.3: Deputy Ministry of Tourism
<p>Improvement sub-action 4.4: Documentation of the methods and processes in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics in the Asylum Service</p> <p>The methods and processes in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics will be described in detail in an internal document. This will enhance the transparency and reliability of the work carried out, while also providing the opportunity to objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented procedures. This will also ensure the continuity and sustainability of the functions performed, irrespective of other factors.</p>
Deadline: Q4 2027
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.4: Asylum Service
<p>Improvement sub-action 4.5: Documentation of the methods and processes in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics in the Health Monitoring Unit</p> <p>The methods and processes in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics will be described in detail in an internal document. This will enhance the transparency and reliability of the work carried out, while also providing the opportunity to objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented procedures. This will also ensure the continuity and sustainability of the functions performed, irrespective of other factors.</p>
Deadline: Q4 2025
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.5: Health Monitoring Unit
<p>Improvement sub-action 4.6: Development of a quality assurance plan in the Deputy Ministry of Tourism</p> <p>A quality assurance plan will be devised, whereby all appropriate procedures which are needed to monitor the quality of the statistical products as well as assess it against the European Statistics quality criteria will be comprehensively described. Where applicable, this will also entail the implementation of additional quality measures and will ensure the appropriate dissemination of metadata.</p>
Deadline: Q4 2026
Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.6: Deputy Ministry of Tourism

Improvement sub-action 4.7: Development of a quality assurance plan in the Asylum Service

A quality assurance plan will be devised, whereby all appropriate procedures which are needed to monitor the quality of the statistical products as well as assess it against the European Statistics quality criteria will be comprehensively described. Where applicable, this will also entail the implementation of additional quality measures and will ensure the appropriate dissemination of metadata.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.7: Asylum Service

5. Recommendation

The Deputy Ministry of Tourism, in consultation with CYPSTAT, should ensure that its statistical function complies fully with the ES CoP in a sustainable manner. This should include formalisation of the statistics function's professional independence and elimination of all non-compliance issues. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1.3 and 1.4)

Current situation:

The Deputy Ministry of Tourism (DMoT) is aware of the ES CoP and strives to meet its requirements. This includes professional independence, which is assured in practice. However, the Deputy Ministry operates under the control of the Deputy Minister of Tourism while, from a legal perspective, the Permanent Secretary of the Deputy Ministry is the officer responsible for the exercise of the administration. While European methodologies are observed during data collection and processing, procedures are not formalised, e.g. documented procedures are not in place for planning, monitoring and improvement of the quality of the statistical processes and there is no internal document delegating decision-making powers regarding European Statistics to the Statistical Head of the ONA. According to the findings of the peer review, there are also a number of gaps in the Deputy Ministry of Tourism's compliance with the ES CoP, such as the fact that there is no revision policy or release calendar, despite the importance of tourism statistics for Cyprus. Moreover, a quality policy and methodological information on statistical products are not publicly available.

Improvement sub-action 5.1: Formalisation of the statistics function's professional independence

Drafting of an internal document, delegating decision-making powers regarding European Statistics to the Statistical Head of the ONA, thus ensuring the statistics function's professional independence within the DMoT. This document will assign responsibility to the Statistical Head of the ONA for (a) ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner and (b) deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures and on the content and timing of statistical releases.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.1: Deputy Ministry of Tourism

Improvement sub-action 5.2: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Deputy Ministry of Tourism

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Maintaining a release calendar on DMoT's website in sync with the common release calendar for the national statistical system (when available)

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.2: Deputy Ministry of Tourism

Improvement sub-action 5.3: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Deputy Ministry of Tourism

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Drafting and publishing a revision policy regarding statistical products

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.3: Deputy Ministry of Tourism

Improvement sub-action 5.4: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Deputy Ministry of Tourism

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Preparing a report detailing the methods and processes in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.4: Deputy Ministry of Tourism

Improvement sub-action 5.5: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Deputy Ministry of Tourism

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Implementing quality assurance procedures

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.5: Deputy Ministry of Tourism

Improvement sub-action 5.6: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Deputy Ministry of Tourism

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Publishing quality policy and methodological information on statistical products

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.6: Deputy Ministry of Tourism

6. Recommendation

The Ministry of the Interior should ensure that the statistics on asylum and migration can be produced and disseminated in a professionally independent manner. To this end, an independent statistics section, which is responsible for the production and dissemination of official statistics, including decisions on the date and time of statistical releases, the content and timing of press releases and contacts with users and the media, should be clearly delineated and formalised within the organisation. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicators 1.3 and 1.4)

Current situation:

The statistical function of the Asylum Service of the Ministry of Interior is not visible in the organisation of the Service. The organisational and operating regulation does not contain any detailed instructions on the execution of statistical tasks and does not establish approval routes for professional decisions.

Statistical duties have no dedicated organisational position within the service. At the time of the peer review visit, the Asylum Service as such had no appointed head and was directly managed by the permanent secretary of the Ministry. There is only one person, a statistics expert, working full time on asylum statistics, but this person is seconded to the Asylum Service from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) under a fixed-term contract. Apart from that, one employee of the Asylum Service contributes to statistics-related matters and, based on her long-term experience, she also acts as the manager responsible for official statistics duties throughout the organisation, but on a part-time basis. The same person is heavily involved in the physical supervision of asylum applicant reception centres in Cyprus and also fulfils other administrative tasks related to the applications of asylum seekers.

In this operational environment, the professionally independent functioning of statistical duties is hardly sustainable, neither from the perspective of organisational management pathways, nor from the perspective of human resources. The peer review team was informed that an organisational reform is foreseen to rearrange the different responsibilities within the Asylum Service in the Ministry of the Interior. In the framework of this planned reform, a clear delineation of statistical duties and their proper positioning in the organisation is essential.

Improvement sub-action 6.1: Delineation of statistical duties of Asylum Service

Drafting of an internal document delegating decision-making powers regarding European Statistics to the Statistical Head of the ONA, thus ensuring the statistics function's professional independence within the Asylum Service. This document will assign responsibility to the Statistical Head of the ONA for (a) ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner and (b) deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures and on the content and timing of statistical releases.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.1: Asylum Service

Improvement sub-action 6.2: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Asylum Service

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Maintaining a release calendar on the Asylum Service website in sync with the common release calendar for the national statistical system (when available)

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.2: Asylum Service

Improvement sub-action 6.3: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Asylum Service

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Drafting and publishing a revision policy regarding statistical products

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.3: Asylum Service

Improvement sub-action 6.4: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Asylum Service

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Preparing a report detailing the methods and processes in the development, production and dissemination of European Statistics

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.4: Asylum Service

Improvement sub-action 6.5: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Asylum Service

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Implementing quality assurance procedures

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.5: Asylum Service

Improvement sub-action 6.6: Elimination of all ES CoP non-compliance issues for the Asylum Service

The statistics function should address all ES CoP non-compliance issues, including:

- Publishing quality policy and methodological information on statistical products

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.6: Asylum Service

7. Recommendation

CYSTAT should systematically explore the full potential of the administrative data available within the country to serve statistical purposes. In this context, CYSTAT should prioritise and accelerate its actions on signing Memoranda of Understanding with holders of administrative data, taking into account data accessibility and the data's potential for statistical use. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.6, 8.7, 9.4 and 10.3)

Current situation:

The broader use of administrative sources in the production of official statistics is one of the strategic goals of CYSTAT. In this context CYSTAT keeps an inventory of the administrative data sources it utilises, which is updated on an annual basis. Furthermore, CYSTAT currently arranges administrative data transmissions partly through the Government Data Warehouse (GDW), a central data repository, and partly on bilateral channels with holders of databases and registers. Although the number of administrative data sources used for statistical purposes has increased, CYSTAT has no clear overview of the full range of available administrative datasets that could be of use for statistical purposes.

For cases where administrative data are not yet available through the GDW, CYSTAT makes direct contact with the responsible ministries, departments or public organisations. Except for a few sources of essential importance (Ministry of Finance, Central Bank of Cyprus, Treasury of the Republic) there are as yet no written agreements (Memoranda of Understanding) which would determine detailed conditions and lay down guarantees for administrative data transmission. Negotiations have speeded up with several data holders, in parallel but without any prioritisation. As such processes are demanding and the relevant human resources at CYSTAT are limited, a roadmap summarising these future activities could prove useful.

Improvement sub-action 7.1: Draft Roadmap summarizing future activities for Administrative Sources

CYSTAT will compile a roadmap containing the list of administrative sources which CYSTAT intends to sign MoUs with. The timeframe for each process of signing will be determined prioritizing based on the necessity of establishing an MoU in order to receive data of good quality in a timely manner. Additionally, the roadmap will be revised whenever needed in order to take into account emerging needs or other relevant developments.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 7.2: Monitoring the implementation of the roadmap on Administrative Sources

The implementation of the planned actions determined in the roadmap for Administrative Sources will be monitored on a yearly basis, a relevant progress report will be compiled and actions will be taken accordingly.

Deadline: Q4 2025 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.2: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 7.3: Establishing a procedure for identifying and gaining access to new administrative sources.

CYSTAT will establish a formal procedure, according to which, new administrative sources may be identified and actions may be taken to gain access to new administrative data deemed useful for the production of official statistics. To this end, CYSTAT intends to utilise the procedure recently established in the framework of budget approval for all government departments, according to which, in case they apply to the Ministry of Finance for budgeting provisions for IT systems and databases, they need to demonstrate to the Directorate of Budget and Fiscal Control that the Statistical Service has been appropriately consulted and involved in the process. This procedure has been established following a circular issued from the Ministry of Finance (no. 1717, dated 8/11/2022), to all ministries, departments, services, public corporations and local government authorities.

Deadline: Q4 2025 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 7.3: CYSTAT

8. Recommendation

CYSTAT should work with providers of administrative data to implement more modern and secure data transmission channels wherever feasible. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 5.5 and 8.7)

Current situation:

For access to administrative data, CYSTAT collaborates closely with the Department of Information Technology Services (DITS), which is the authority responsible for managing the Government Data Warehouse (GDW), a central repository of integrated government data. For cases where administrative data have not yet been made available through the GDW, CYSTAT contacts data holders directly. The data transmission channels from the various administrative data holders are diverse in terms of technology. Datasets are usually acquired using USB drives, portable disks or other similar media in an encrypted format. More contemporary and manageable solutions are desirable.

Improvement sub-action 8.1: Identify contemporary data transmission channels

CYSTAT will examine and revisit the mode of data transmission from administrative data owners to CYSTAT. This will be done in the framework of developing the new Statistical Data Warehouse of CYSTAT, a project underway in 2024. The best available options will be identified and described in a relevant requirements specification document.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 8.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 8.2: Implement contemporary data transmission channels

CYSTAT will implement contemporary data transmission channels based on a relevant analysis identifying the best available options. Implementation of the selected options is expected to take place in the framework of the project of developing the new Statistical Data Warehouse of CYSTAT, a project underway in 2024.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 8.2: CYSTAT

9. Recommendation

CYSTAT should invest in accessing privately held data sources to reduce the response burden, create new products, increase accuracy and attain efficiency gains. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 2.4, 8.7 and 9.4)

Current situation:

As a major achievement in legislation, Article 14 of the Official Statistics Law of 2021 (Law No 25(I)/2021) provides for the right to access and use all administrative records and private records, including data necessary to produce official statistics, promptly and free of charge. The provisions of the Official Statistics Law regarding access to privately held data grant CYSTAT a remarkable alternative to traditional data collection methods, but this opportunity has not yet been explored.

The identification of possible data sources held by private entities that could be of use for statistical purposes is an area for further improvement. CYSTAT could benefit from existing ESS practices and resources that are available for reference.

Improvement sub-action 9.1: Establishment of an internal task force to investigate the potential of using privately held data in the production of official statistics in Cyprus

An internal task force will be established at CYSTAT with the purpose of identifying the areas of official statistics where there is potential of using privately held data sources either to improve efficiency, reduce response burden and increase accuracy in the production of existing statistical products or in order to create new statistical products. The Task Force will need to also take into account existing practices regarding the use of privately held data in the ESS (other MS and Eurostat) and relevant resources. The deliverable from the work of this task force will be a report summarizing its findings, including an action plan for any suggested actions.

Deadline: Q1 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 9.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 9.2: Implementing the Action Plan regarding gaining access to privately held data in the production of official statistics in Cyprus

The action plan from the report of the relevant internal task force, will be implemented based on the suggested roadmap.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement action sub-9.2: CYSTAT

10. Recommendation

CYSTAT should explore potential opportunities for developing new statistical products, including through data linking and data integration techniques. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 9.6, 9.4 and 9.5)

Current situation:

CYSTAT, the Other National Authorities developing, producing and disseminating official statistics and other public authorities already possess a wide range of information with possible interrelations, but these relationships are not explored more deeply. Emerging user needs could be served by taking into account the potential wealth of data already available. However, currently there is a lack of central storage of data and metadata at CYSTAT, which effectively hinders data linking and integration.

Improvement sub-action 10.1: Create Infrastructure for Data linking and Integration

In the framework of the new project for the development of a Statistical Data Warehouse and Statistical Metainformation System at CYSTAT (underway in 2024) all data and metadata kept by CYSTAT will be centrally stored and data linking/integration will be facilitated with the use of the appropriate tools.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 10.1: CYSTAT and the Department of Information Technology Services (DITS)

Improvement sub-action 10.2: Linking CYSTAT's datasets and Administrative Sources

CYSTAT will explore the possibility and implement accordingly the following:

- a) Linking of the three main Registers maintained by CYSTAT (Business Register, Census of Population Register, Agricultural Register)
- b) Development of a Dynamic Population Register (linking of the Census of Population Register with various administrative and internal sources)
- c) Linking household surveys (incl. relevant administrative sources)
- d) Linking of business/enterprise surveys (incl. relevant administrative sources)

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 10.2: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 10.3: Develop new statistical products

CYSTAT will develop new statistical products, utilizing the technical infrastructure of the new Statistical Data Warehouse and Statistical Metainformation System, which will enable data-linking and data integration techniques not previously available to CYSTAT.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 10.3: CYSTAT

11. Recommendation

CYSTAT should enhance its quality monitoring procedures by implementing a comprehensive assessment of process and output quality throughout all statistical operations, including the use of administrative data. This should involve actively engaging middle and senior management in addressing the results of the assessment. The key findings of quality assessments and the annual statistical programme evaluation should be disseminated in a timely and informative manner. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 4.4, 8.4, 1.5, 15.6 and 15.7).

Current situation:

Monitoring of quality is carried out by the CYSTAT survey managers mostly in the data collection phase and for European Statistics products for which there is a legal obligation to produce quality reports. Quality monitoring is not systematic and does not regularly involve all levels of the hierarchy. Although quality guidelines are in place, quality indicators are not yet regularly reported and monitored. The publicly available information on quality indicators remains rather limited. At the same time, the evaluation reports of the annual statistical programme are too general and short, and sometimes are published with considerable delay.

Improvement sub-action 11.1: Determine quality indicators to be monitored for CYSTAT and ONAs

CYSTAT will establish a regular procedure where main quality indicators will be monitored for all stages of the statistical production. For this purpose, the quality indicators to be monitored for CYSTAT and ONAs must be determined, as well as the source of information for each of the selected indicators. The procedure will cover CYSTAT and ONAs, although for ONAs a different set of indicators, more relevant to their statistical production process, will be determined. The source of information for the quality indicators could be the Statistical Metainformation System which will be developed at CYSTAT (underway 2024) or other sources of relevant information such as quality reports, the evaluation of the Annual Programme of Statistical Activities etc.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 11.2: Update Quality Guidelines for Statistical Processes

CYSTAT will revise the Quality Guidelines for Statistical Processes to include a description of the quality indicators that will be monitored for CYSTAT and the ONAs. The Guidelines will then be communicated to CYSTAT staff and ONAs.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.2: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 11.3: Implement assessments of statistical processes and output
CYSTAT will establish a procedure of regularly assessing statistical processes and output.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.3: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 11.4: Inform senior management about the results and actions to address weaknesses identified

The formal assessment procedure for statistical processes and output will incorporate a step of informing senior management of any issues identified and the suggested actions to address any weaknesses.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.4: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 11.5: Quality Monitoring Report

CYSTAT will redesign the evaluation report published on the web portal regarding the implementation of the Annual Programme of Statistical Activities, in order to include additional quality indicators and more information overall. The timing of the publication of the report will be set to not exceed the year following the year of reference. The report will be publicly available.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.5: CYSTAT

12. Recommendation

CYSTAT should review and detail its confidentiality policy, taking into account best practices in the European Statistical System, with an emphasis on the confidentiality of digital data (i.e., archiving and data retention as well as pseudonymisation of data). (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 5.4 and 5.5)

Current situation:

CYSTAT has established an organisational structure to protect data confidentiality and privacy. The five-member, interdepartmental Statistical Confidentiality Committee acts as an advisory body to the Director of CYSTAT and its primary mandate is to implement the specific provisions of Article 17 of the Official Statistics Law, on the possibility of access to confidential data for scientific and research purposes. The Data Protection Officer provides training, issues guidelines and consults users and respondents on the limits and rules applied to preserve statistical confidentiality and data protection. The Information Systems Security Officer oversees CYSTAT's Information Security Management System. The IT Security Committee is responsible for IT Security Policies.

A document entitled "Guidelines for the Protection of Confidential Data" is publicly available, and it outlines specific actions and precautions at stages of handling statistical data. However, the current rules are rather general and mostly cover the processing and physical handling of paper questionnaires. The document does not contain rules on pseudonymisation of identifiable statistical units in databases and does not determine how electronically recorded unit-level datasets should be handled after use.

Improvement sub-action 12.1: Compile Data Archiving and Retention Policy

CYSTAT will compile a Data Archiving and Retention Policy, covering the storage and archiving of electronic/digital data. The approved policy, will be communicated to all CYSTAT staff for implementation.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action action 12.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 12.2: Revise the Guidelines for the Protection of Confidential Data

The Guidelines for the Protection of Confidential Data will be revised, in order to account in detail, for the confidentiality of digital data in addition to the processing and physical handling of data on paper. Provisions regarding the pseudonymization of micro-data will have to be incorporated and references to IT Security Policies will be made where appropriate. The revision of the guidelines will take into account best practices in the European Statistical System.

In addition to the above, it is foreseen that more detailed guidelines will be included, regarding statistical disclosure control, taking into account the specificities and requirements of the various statistical domains, both nationally and at ESS level.

The revised guidelines, will be published on CYSTAT's web portal.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 12.2: CYSTAT

13. Recommendation

CYSTAT should increase its efforts to document and standardise its processes, including the implementation of modern statistical disclosure control methods and tools. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 10.4 and 5.4)

Current situation:

In 2018, CYSTAT made efforts to collect information for a number of selected statistical activities according to the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), but exhaustive process documentation is still lacking in most cases.

The production of statistics in CYSTAT is still largely silo-based, with thematic units driving all statistics production processes, from data collection to dissemination. Applied methods for statistical disclosure control remain basic. While CYSTAT has already invested in the standardisation of data collection and dissemination systems, as well as in generic tools for some statistical sub-processes such as sampling and statistical modelling, further standardisation of processes and procedures would bring efficiency gains.

Regarding statistical disclosure control, no systematic approach is used in CYSTAT to protect data confidentiality in its output tables.

Improvement sub-action 13.1: Document statistical processes

CYSTAT will develop a Statistical Data Warehouse and a Statistical Metainformation System (SMS) which will provide the possibility to centrally collect information on the statistical production processes for all statistical tasks. The tool will facilitate the production of reports based on the collected information. This will also contribute to business continuity within CYSTAT, since the information will be centrally stored and managed.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 13.2: Revise the Guidelines for the Protection of Confidential Data

The Guidelines for the Protection of Confidential Data will be revised, in order to account in detail, for the confidentiality of digital data in addition to the processing and physical handling of data on paper. Provisions regarding the pseudonymization of micro-data will have to be incorporated and references to IT Security Policies will be made where appropriate. The revision of the guidelines will take into account best practices in the European Statistical System.

In addition to the above, it is foreseen that more detailed guidelines will be included, regarding statistical disclosure control, taking into account the specificities and requirements of the various statistical domains, both nationally and at ESS level.

The revised guidelines, will be published on CYSTAT's web portal.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.2: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 13.3: Analyse Metadata

CYSTAT will analyse the information gathered for statistical processes through the Statistical Metainformation System (SMS) in view of opportunities for standardisation. Results will be summarised in a relevant report.

Deadline: Q2 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.3: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 13.4: Initiate Activities for the Standardisation of Statistical Processes

The procedure for standardising statistical processes will be initiated after metadata information have been analysed.

Deadline: Q4 2027

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 13.4: CYSTAT

14. Recommendation

CYSTAT should develop a forward-looking human resources policy, taking into account possible new demand and data requirements. This policy should also enable an upgrade of staff qualifications as well as more flexible working conditions. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 3.1)

Current situation:

Human resources in CYSTAT are unbalanced in terms of levels of education and workload. Many staff members, especially the Statistical Officers, work on multiple statistical areas and are confronted with a heavy workload without assistance. This situation is not sustainable in view of the ever-growing demand for data and indicators, but also the need to develop and apply new methods, and could thus potentially hamper innovation and motivation. Long commuting distances are another element of demotivation, especially as options for teleworking and working from local offices are lacking.

Improvement action 14: Development of a HR policy

CYSTAT will develop an HR Policy which will include elements such as training and skills development of employees, flexible working conditions, planning for alignment and change, staff recruitment planning, etc.

Deadline: Q4 2026

Responsible institution for improvement action 14: CYSTAT

15. Recommendation

CYSTAT should develop a more proactive communication strategy to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of its products to meet the needs of different user segments. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 11.3 and 15.1)

Current situation:

Even though a new web portal for CYSTAT went live in 2021 with features such as an annual release calendar, standardised press releases, infographics visualisations and an online database offering APIs, it is considered that there is more room for improvement in what regards the promotion of statistical products at national level and the accessibility and attractiveness of the disseminated statistical products.

Improvement sub-action 15.1: Compile a Communication Strategy

CYSTAT will draft a Communication Strategy detailing its strategic objectives, goals and actions, in what regards internal and external communication.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 15.2: Improve web portal attractiveness

CYSTAT will upgrade its web portal and the online database system to the newest version which offers a more user-friendly interface.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.2: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 15.3: Upgrade the web portal infrastructure to support Interactive Publications/Visualizations

CYSTAT will develop an infrastructure to enable the production of electronic articles, interactive publications and interactive visualizations.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.3: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 15.4: Expand Social Media Presence

CYSTAT will continue to expand its social media presence, in order to be able to reach different user segments. CYSTAT will launch an Instagram page, targeting a younger audience and posting both in Greek and English, in order to reach a wider audience. Additionally, the frequency of the posts will increase, with the aim to cover all CYSTAT press releases issued through the web portal and additional topics of interest.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.4: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 15.5: Design new products based on available information

CYSTAT will create new products (such as infographics, compendiums of statistical indicators etc.) which will merge information from various statistical themes, in order to provide users with more statistics relevant to their needs.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.5: CYSTAT

16. Recommendation

CYSTAT should ensure that all its releases and publications are clearly associated with CYSTAT only. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1.6)

Current situation:

In some instances, statistical releases are not published under the CYSTAT logo only but concurrently under the logo of the Ministry of Finance. This should be avoided, as it could create confusion among users.

Improvement action 16: Publish Statistical Releases with CYSTAT logo only

CYSTAT will ensure that all its statistical releases (publications, press releases, tables of data etc.) bear the logo of CYSTAT only, so that it is clear to users that CYSTAT is the sole authority responsible for the decisions governing the development and dissemination of the statistics it produces.

Deadline: Q4 2024

Responsible institution for improvement action 16: CYSTAT

17. Recommendation

Building on already existing initiatives and on experience throughout the European Statistical System, CYSTAT should invest further in fostering statistical literacy. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 15.6 and 15.7)

Current situation:

Generally, CYSTAT has several activities aiming at improving statistical literacy. It organises educational school visits and organises the European Statistics Competition in Cyprus, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus Statistical Society. CYSTAT is represented in the Cyprus Statistical Society, which is involved in discussions with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth to enrich the curriculum with respect to the teaching of statistics in secondary education. Discussions are ongoing between CYSTAT and the University of Cyprus regarding the possibility of CYSTAT providing a course on Official Statistics.

Nevertheless, it is evident that stakeholders and the media would be interested in more guidance on statistical matters, i.a. in the form of dedicated training sessions.

Improvement sub-action 17.1: Organise Training/Informational Sessions with User Groups

CYSTAT will organise training sessions and/or informative sessions with user groups such as students, journalists, governmental officials, stakeholders, social partners and others, in order to promote statistical literacy. Additionally, visits from CYSTAT to schools (or vice-versa) will be organized. It is envisaged that at least one such session will be organized by CYSTAT up to the end of 2025 and annually afterwards, while at least 2 school visits will be organised per year.

Deadline: Q4 2025 (annually afterwards)

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 17.1: CYSTAT

Improvement sub-action 17.2: Draft a Plan for implementing statistical literacy activities

CYSTAT will examine options for promoting statistical literacy, also taking into account existing initiatives at international and EU level and compile a plan of selected actions to be implemented.

Deadline: Q4 2025

Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 17.2: CYSTAT