

SUMMARY OF THE SIDE EVENT 12

“DATA AND STATISTICS: A KEY INSTRUMENT TO GUIDE DECISION MAKING”

2 July 2025, Seville

10:30-12:00 Room 12

ID number for the event: 1968254

On 2nd July, INE Spain organized a side event on “Data and statistics: a key instrument to guide decision making” focused on the role of data and statistics in advancing sustainable development, in the context of the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development.

The session was chaired by Ms. Elena Manzanera Díaz, President of the National Statistics Institute of Spain, who made an introduction to the topic. She mentioned the key role that quality, timely, and granular data have for informed decision-making, effective governance, and the accountability of the public institutions. Availability of data is key to monitor and assess our performance towards the 2030 Agenda objectives and to leave no one behind.

Ms. Manzanera pointed out that meeting the demands of the 2030 Agenda global indicators framework poses an unprecedented challenge for statistical offices and the 2030 Agenda explicitly calls for enhancing capacity building to support national plans to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, at local, national, regional, and global level.

She commended the progress made through the Cape Town Global Action Plan and the recently adopted Medellín Framework for Action, which provides clear priorities for strengthening statistical capacities across the data ecosystem and presented this side event as an opportunity to underline the shared responsibility of all the stakeholders to support these efforts. Finally, she claimed it is essential to guarantee financial support to the statistical systems.

The event was organized around 2 sessions. In the first session, Dr. Elsa Dhulli, Director General of the Albanian Institute of Statistics gave the audience a keynote speech on the implementation of the *Medellin Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development*, its relevance for future-proofing decision making in the context of measuring the 2030 agenda and the way forward on its implementation at global level.

On the second session, a panel of experts discussed on “Investment in data and statistics capacity for a better decision making”. The session was chaired by Ms. Elena Manzanera Díaz and counted as panellists with Ms. Miosotis Rivas (Chief of the Caribbean Subregion at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), Mr. Benjamin Rothen (Ambassador, Head of International and National Affairs at the Swiss Federal Statistics Office) and Ms. Clara Van Del Pol (Director of Statistics, Standards & Data at UN Tourism).

The experts shared their perspective and experience on this topic, focusing on innovative models or partnerships implemented in their institutions, that effectively enhance statistical capacity and enriches decision making.

Ms. Rivas presented an innovative UN-Government partnership to promote statistical literacy and evidence-based decision making in Trinidad and Tobago: “Masterclass in Data and

Statistics for Decision Making". It aims to improve the value and quality of data in Trinidad and Tobago through an improved and modernised legislative environment for data and statistics that meets international standards. It also contributed to the establishment of a coordinated national statistical system that delivers timely and quality economic, social, and environmental statistics. She mentioned that Artificial Intelligence presents both opportunities and risk for Small Island Developing States, such as Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Benjamin Rothen reflected on new ways of data visualization to respond to user's needs and presented the strategy followed by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) by means of the project "The Trusted Data Observatory" to confront problems related to misinformation, disinformation and the proliferation of fake news in the current societies.

Ms. Van der Pol presented the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism as an example of the Cape Town and Medellin Framework values, particularly collaboration and managing the data ecosystem. She raised the importance of innovation by integrating across statistical domain and data sources, effectiveness in responding to evolving user needs, and trust. She highlighted the three dimensions of sustainable tourism: economic, social, and environmental, as well as its international, national, and subnational scale. Moreover, she mentioned that full global implementation of the framework requires training, technical support, and the necessary resources.

After their presentations, the chair posed some questions to the four speakers. There was a debate about what are the main challenges for official statistics in ensuring both the quality and timeliness of data, especially when integrating diverse data sources from across the data ecosystem, and what solutions are proving effective. Also they discussed about what should be the most critical systemic reforms or investments in order to meet evolving data needs for sustainable development, and they also expressed their opinion about the roles and responsibilities of international organizations in the context of implementing global frameworks like the Medellin Framework.

Finally, Ms. Manzanera concluded the side event by raising an additional issue: the importance of coordination between the designers of global initiatives and the statistical community, as in the case of the "Beyond GDP" initiative. She commented some of the works that statistical offices have done in this area, such as the "2030 Agenda indicators", the "Indicators on Quality of Life", the "Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism", and the recent adoption of the "2025 System of National Accounts" by the United Nations, which includes the measurement of natural capital and renewable natural resources as a new category of economic assets for the GDP, and also new chapters on the Measurement of Well-being and Sustainability. These are good and relevant examples of the contributions of the statistical community in global initiatives, and it is essential to emphasise the importance of the coordination among all the stakeholders.