



# Survey on the Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data



Survey on the  
**Implementation of  
the Cape Town  
Global Action Plan**  
for Sustainable  
Development Data

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# Contents

|   |   |            |
|---|---|------------|
|    | <b>Acknowledgments</b> .....  | <b>iv</b>  |
|    | <b>Abbreviations and Acronyms</b> .....   | <b>v</b>   |
|    | <b>Foreword</b> .....   | <b>vi</b>  |
|    | <b>Key messages</b> .....   | <b>vii</b> |
|    | <b>Introduction</b> .....   | <b>1</b>   |
|     | <b>1. Coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development</b> .....                   | <b>5</b>   |
|     | <b>2. Innovation and modernization of national statistical systems</b> .....                                | <b>10</b>  |
|    | <b>3. Strengthening of basic statistical activities and programs</b> .....                                  | <b>12</b>  |
|  | <i>COVID-19 impact and NSO readiness to implement the<br/>Cape Town Global Action Plan (CTGAP)</i> .....    | <b>15</b>  |
|   | <b>4. Dissemination and use of sustainable development data</b> .....                                       | <b>18</b>  |
|   | <b>5. Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data</b> .....                             | <b>22</b>  |
|   | <b>6. Mobilization of resources and coordination of efforts for<br/>statistical capacity building</b> ..... | <b>26</b>  |
|   | Financial needs in IDA countries .....  | <b>30</b>  |
|  | <b>Conclusions</b> .....  | <b>35</b>  |

# Acknowledgments

## **Survey on the Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data**

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The report was edited by Sile O'Broin, while graphic design and layout were carried out by Pietro Bartoleschi.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>API</b>      | Application Programming Interface                                       |
| <b>CAWI</b>     | Computer Assisted Web Interviewing                                      |
| <b>CTGAP</b>    | Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data           |
| <b>COVID-19</b> | coronavirus disease of 2019   |
| <b>ICT</b>      | information and communication technologies                              |
| <b>IDA</b>      | International Development Association                                   |
| <b>IT</b>       | information technology  |
| <b>NSDS</b>     | National Strategies for the Development of Statistics                   |
| <b>NSOs</b>     | national statistical offices  |
| <b>NSS</b>      | national statistical system   |
| <b>SDGs</b>     | Sustainable Development Goals   |
| <b>UN</b>       | United Nations  |
| <b>UNSD</b>     | Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs |

# Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has blighted the world for more than two years now. Amid all of the disruption it has caused, one of its most critical lessons has been that countries that have been able to marshal high-quality, timely, and disaggregated data have also been better equipped to respond to the crisis.

In many ways, the past two years have catalyzed innovation among national statistical systems, with many embracing public-private partnerships, mobile data, satellite imagery, and other technologies to better understand the effects of the crisis on health, jobs, migration, violence against women, and a wide range of other issues.

Yet the pandemic has shown us that, while there has been progress, the playing field among national statistical systems is deeply uneven. Even before COVID-19, many countries struggled to produce and use the data and statistics they needed to monitor and work towards the Sustainable Development Goals, which the health crisis has only exacerbated.

The pandemic presented only part of the picture of global development. With less than ten years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) is more relevant than ever. However, within it, many gaps have remained, particularly with regards to national statistical capacity in low- and middle-income countries, and financing of data and statistics.

This survey therefore has come at a critical time. It is a vital instrument in our ability to understand the reality of national statistical offices (NSOs) within the context of the pandemic and the wider sustainable development agenda and can help steer a course back on track towards the implementation of the CTGAP.

With more than one hundred NSOs surveyed between August and September 2021, this was the largest exercise ever carried out. It provided unique insights into the pressures and opportunities that NSOs have been facing on a wide range of issues – from funding to capacity development – and revealed the priorities of our national statistical partners.

The importance of these insights cannot be overstated. For the statistical community's response to the pandemic to be effective and to achieve the 2030 Agenda, solutions must be tailored to the unique realities of each country.

The international community remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting national statistical development. New joint solutions like the World Bank's Global Data Facility and the Bern Network's Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data have the potential to transform CTGAP progress, and the insights derived from this survey will help to tailor future support to the diverse needs of its partners.

# Key messages

- Despite the gradual progress made by national statistical offices (NSOs) towards the strategic areas proposed in the 2017 Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP), there were considerable capacity gaps in the CTGAP's implementation, particularly in the national statistical systems in less developed regions.
- While the fundamentals of functioning national statistical systems were in place in most respondent countries, almost half of them reported having statistical laws older than ten years, and a substantial percentage of these countries lacked data privacy and access safeguards, which highlighted the need for keeping statistical legal frameworks up to date in the context of a rapidly changing data ecosystem.
- The vast majority of respondents reported that coordination of statistical activities between NSOs and other partners within and outside the national statistical system has improved. However, many respondents—especially in low- and lower-middle-income countries—also pointed to an unfinished agenda, with significant opportunities for further improvements.
- To be able to better respond to the new data demands of the 2030 Agenda, over 80 percent of respondent NSOs identified the use of administrative data as a high priority area for expanding their capacity. In terms of funding needs and requirements, the importance of administrative and geospatial data emerged as top priorities.
- With regard to the adoption of open data principles and practices, most NSOs identified strengthening the compilation and dissemination of metadata as well as the development of an organization-wide open data strategy as top priorities, highlighting the need for enhanced capacity around data visualization, communication, and dissemination platforms and tools.
- Almost all NSOs in low- and lower-middle-income countries expressed the need for partners' support in enhancing their capacity to capitalize on new technologies, methods, and data sources to effectively establish new multi-stakeholder partnerships. In addition, more than two-thirds of them consider that data management, processing, and analysis are high-priority areas for training.



- With regard to the impact of the ongoing pandemic, the state of national statistical systems has not taken a significant turn for the worse despite the enormous strain COVID-19 has placed on NSOs through an unprecedented increase in demand for timely and disaggregated data and statistics, attesting the strength and resilience of these institutions.
- Nonetheless, the pandemic has highlighted data gaps and exacerbated inequalities among NSOs: more than one year after the COVID-19 crisis started, connectivity issues and inadequate remote data processing capabilities were still among the most common challenges faced by NSOs, with stark differences in information and communication technologies (ICT) readiness across countries with different income levels.
- Two-thirds of NSOs in International Development Association (IDA) countries experienced either moderate or severe delays in budget disbursement in the last fiscal year, which hampered the implementation of their work programs.
- Looking forward, nearly 70 percent of IDA countries prioritized the need to address funding shortages in business and agricultural census programs over the next three years. When applicable, most IDA countries also prioritize addressing current funding shortages in population and housing census programs. Health is identified as the top policy sector in need of both on-budget and off-budget support for statistics by NSOs in IDA countries, followed by social protection, education, and economic affairs.
- Two recently launched linked mechanisms—the **Global Data Facility** hosted by the World Bank and the **Bern Network’s Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data**—will use the measured progress and demand to contribute to the implementation of the CTGAP.

# Introduction

Since its launch in January 2017 at the first UN World Data Forum in South Africa, and its formal adoption by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 48<sup>th</sup> session in March 2017, the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) has provided a framework for planning and implementing the statistical capacity building activities needed to achieve the scope and intent of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to mobilize funding for the modernization of national statistical systems across the world.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world in early 2020, national statistical authorities and the international statistical community inevitably shifted their attention to the immediate challenge of ensuring the continuity of the most basic statistical operations, and to addressing new, urgent data demands. As a consequence, significant resources were diverted away from longer-term initiatives aimed at achieving the shared goals crystallized in the commitment and vision of the CTGAP.

Almost two years later, with the pandemic impacting the lives of billions of people, the statistical community has been taking stock of the lessons learned, and refocusing its attention on the longer-term objectives of developing statistical capacity. This renewed focus, however, has been taking place against a backdrop of profound systemic changes brought about by the pandemic. Data producers have been facing demands for new types of data from multiple stakeholders, while being required to continue fulfilling their core traditional mandates, and managing increasingly complex census and statistical survey programs. At the same time, the budgets of national governments and international donors have been under enormous pressure due to new, competing priorities created by the pandemic, and the fiscal crunch along with its catastrophic impact on economic activity across the globe.

In responding to the challenges of the pandemic, the statistical community has accelerated the data revolution underpinning many of the strategic areas of action envisaged in the CTGAP. For instance, web- and phone-based modes of data collection for surveys have been adopted by many countries that previously had little experience with them. Data from social media and other new sources, as well as administrative records, are now being used extensively to monitor different aspects of the pandemic. National statistical systems have clearly shown their resilience and capacity to adapt and innovate.

However, in taking stock of success stories and lessons learned from the statistical community's response to the pandemic, it has become clear that the divide between the well-resourced and the less well-resourced statistical systems, which had already been identified in the CTGAP<sup>1</sup>, has been exacerbated<sup>2</sup>.

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by the World Bank, the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNSD), and PARIS21, with the aim to inform actions by decision makers and international partners to implement, monitor, and finance the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP), and in support of the efforts to refocus the conversation on the longer-term goals set by the CTGAP, taking into consideration the new realities and challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

This survey follows four rounds of surveys of NSOs<sup>3</sup> that were implemented by the World Bank's Development Data Group and UNSD, in collaboration with the Regional Commissions of the United Nations, to monitor the evolving impacts of the pandemic on statistical operations<sup>4</sup>. The survey was launched with the purpose of seeing beyond the immediate crisis, and to ensure that the current constraints do not distract attention from the common goals enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of the CTGAP.

This report presents the survey results and provides new insights on the current financing and capacity development needs of NSOs, as well as on the new statistical priorities that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collected will also inform the implementation of two linked instruments that were announced at the October 2021 UN World Data Forum, namely, the **Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data**<sup>5</sup> and the **World Bank-hosted Global Data Facility**<sup>6</sup>. Ultimately, the report seeks to inform strategic decisions aimed to accelerate the production of the statistical data needed to enable the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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<sup>1</sup> [unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/cape-town-global-action-plan](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/cape-town-global-action-plan)

<sup>2</sup> See Fu and Schweinfest (2020), COVID-19 widens gulf of global data inequality, while national statistical offices step up to meet new data demands, World Bank and UNSD: [blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/covid-19-widens-gulf-global-data-inequality-while-national-statistical-offices-step-up](https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/covid-19-widens-gulf-global-data-inequality-while-national-statistical-offices-step-up).

<sup>3</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/survey-of-national-statistical-offices-nsos-during-covid-19](https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/survey-of-national-statistical-offices-nsos-during-covid-19)

<sup>4</sup> The first round of the NSO survey was fielded in April 2020, with additional rounds in July and October of that year, and the fourth one in May 2021.

<sup>5</sup> [smartdatafinance.org](https://smartdatafinance.org)

<sup>6</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/global-data-facility](https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/global-data-facility)

## The Survey of the implementation of Cape Town Global Action Plan

The survey was administered using the **Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) platform Survey Solutions**<sup>7</sup>. It was launched on August 6, 2021 and responses were received through September 15, 2021. It used the survey infrastructure and methods developed for the Survey of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) during COVID-19 and built on them to collect data that would inform action toward the fulfilment of the commitments of the CTGAP.

The link to the questionnaire was sent to 194 NSOs, from which a total of **101 responses** were received. Among these responses, 35 were from high-income countries, 28 from upper- and middle-income countries, and 38 from low- and lower-middle-income countries. Twenty-nine IDA countries were included among the 101 responses received.

The survey questionnaire was divided into **two parts**. The first part was aimed at monitoring advancements and innovations in **statistical capacity** at the country level, and to identify current NSO priorities along the Strategic Action Areas of CTGAP, while the second part focused on capturing the specific aspects of the demand for **financing for data and statistics in IDA countries**.

<sup>7</sup> [mysurvey.solutions](https://mysurvey.solutions)

The **first part** of the questionnaire included a section for each of the strategic action areas of the CTGAP (see page 4). This part included questions aimed at gauging the existence and key features of planning instruments to support the development and modernization of the National Statistical System (NSS), the perceived coordination capacity within the NSS, and with the wider data ecosystem, key ongoing efforts for NSO and NSS innovation and modernization (from both a regulatory and a technical perspective), priorities for and constraints to capacity development, areas of action around open data principles, data dissemination and privacy, issues around data stewardship, and partnerships.

The **second part** of the questionnaire was only administered to respondents from countries eligible for borrowing from the International Development Association (IDA)<sup>8</sup> and included information on the budgeting process and the current and expected budget situation, which are also relevant to Strategic Area 6 of the CTGAP. Some of the information is being made available by the **Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data**.

<sup>8</sup> [ida.worldbank.org/en/about](https://ida.worldbank.org/en/about)

# STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

## of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data



# 1 Coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development

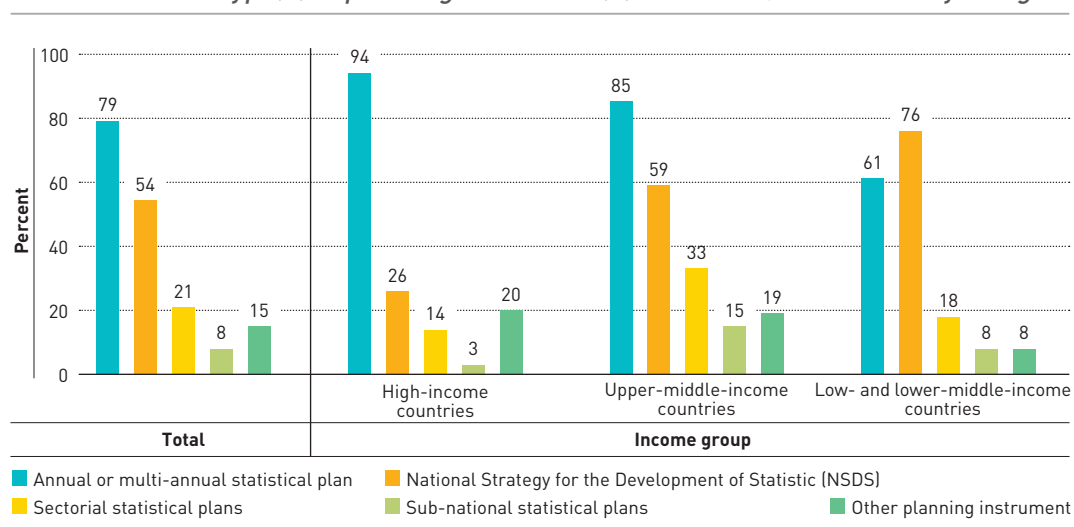


Objective 1.1 of Strategic Area 1 of the CTGAP emphasizes the role of national statistical offices (NSOs) in the coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development. On this topic, the survey offered a useful global snapshot of the current state of the governance of national statistical systems, exploring key features and the effectiveness of their planning instruments and legal and regulatory frameworks.

While the information presented here is not a substitute for any in-depth assessment, it provides useful insights into the differences and possible patterns across country groups, whether by level of income or by region.

**Figure 1: Adoption of instruments for statistical planning**

*Question: Which type(s) of planning instrument(s) is the NSS/NSO currently using?*



N=100



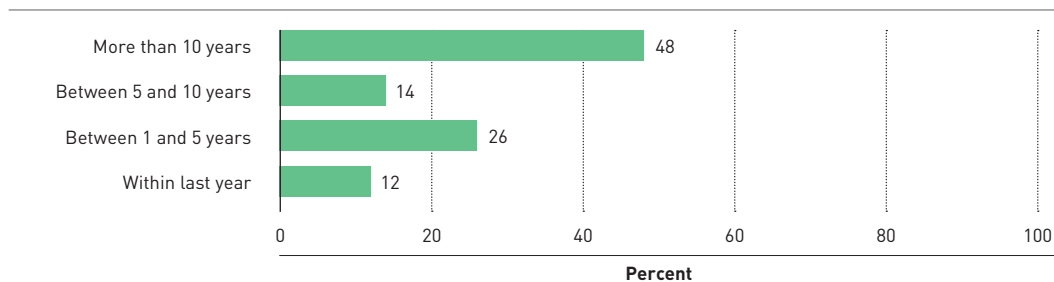
***The basics for functioning statistical systems were in place. Most countries have at least one statistical planning instrument.***

While only two countries in Sub-Saharan Africa reported not having any statistical planning instrument in place, there were important differences across country groups. For instance, annual or multi-annual statistical plans were the norm in high-income countries, whereas National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) were more frequent in low-income ones (see Figure 1).

All the countries that responded to the survey reported having a national statistical law. One interesting indication that emerged from the survey was that the age of the statistical laws was not correlated with income levels. Among the sample of 101 countries, 47 reported having statistical laws older than ten years (see Figure 2). The regional breakdown, however, uncovered that a majority of respondents from Latin America and the Caribbean (over 90 percent) and in the Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (over 80 percent) tended to have relatively older statistical legislation (see Figure 3).

**Figure 2: Age of the statistical legislation**

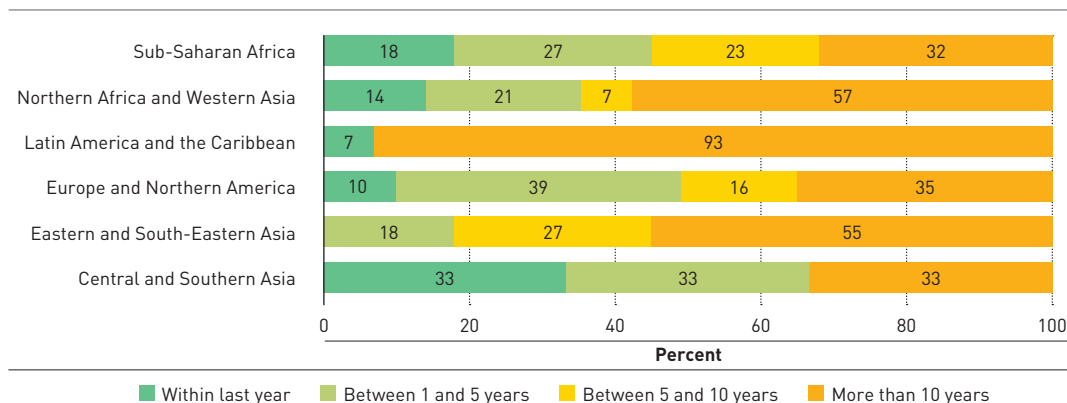
*Question: When did the statistical law come into force or was last significantly revised/updated?*



N=98

**Figure 3: Age of the statistical legislation, by region**

*Question: When did the statistical law come into force or was last significantly revised/updated?*



N=98



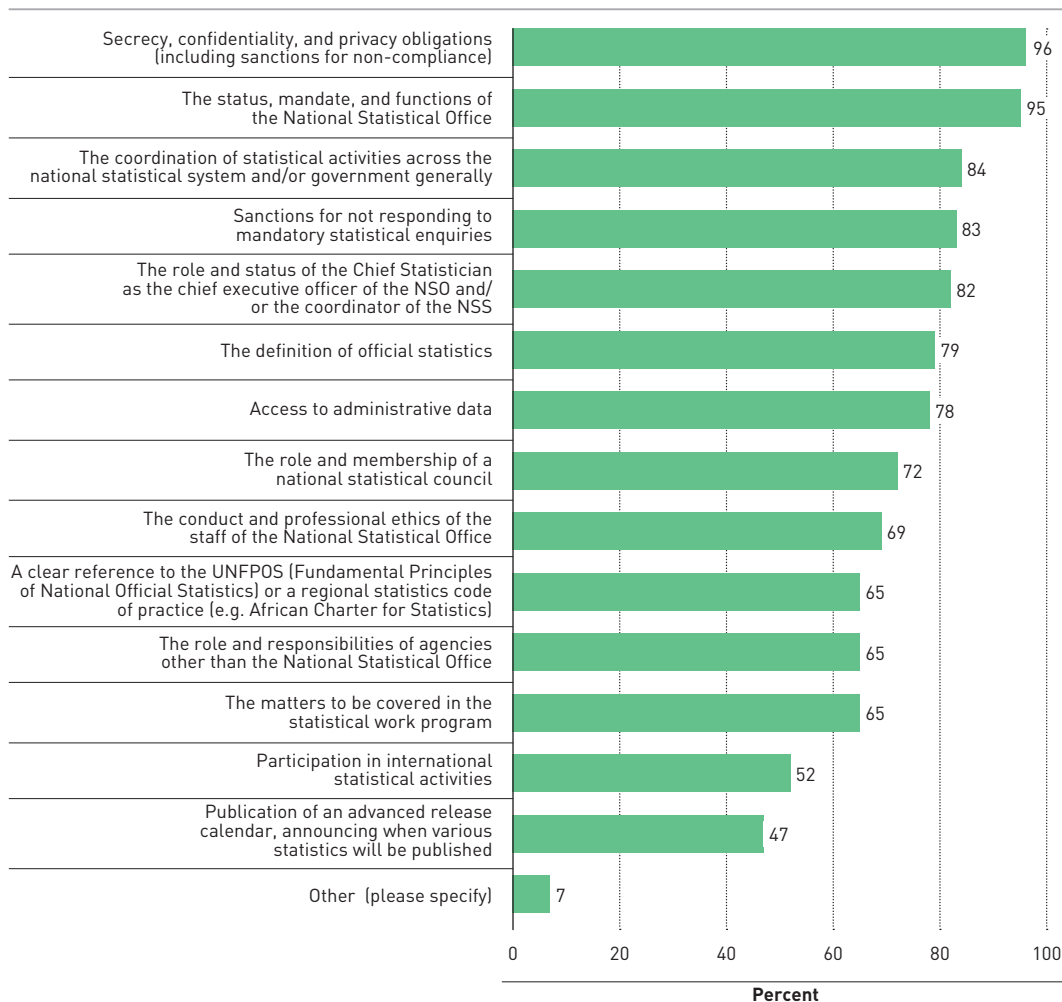
***In most countries, national statistical laws and regulations were focused on the role, responsibilities and accountability of the NSOs; however, only in a smaller group of countries did the statistical legal framework cover the role and responsibilities of agencies other than the NSO.***

In almost all the countries that responded to the survey, the statistical legal framework covered issues related to the protection of privacy and confidentiality, as well as the status, mandate, and functions of the NSO. Also, 84 percent of respondents indicated that the statistics law or related by-laws (regulations, decrees, and directives) cover the coordination of statistical activities across the NSS (see third bar from the top in Figure 4). However, only 65 percent of countries reported that their statistical legal framework covers the role and responsibilities of agencies other than the NSOs (see fifth bar from the bottom in Figure 4), and only 52 percent regulate the participation of the NSO in international statistical activities (see third bar from the bottom in Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Main aspects covered by the statistical legislation**

**Question:** Which of the following aspects of the National Statistical System are covered by the statistics law and/or any related by-laws (such as regulations, decrees, and directives)?



N=98



***The vast majority of respondents perceived that coordination of statistical activities between NSOs and other partners within and outside the NSS had improved. However, many respondents—especially in low- and lower-middle-income countries—also pointed to an unfinished agenda, with significant opportunities for further improvements.***

As shown in Figure 5, only six percent of the NSOs in low- and lower-middle-income countries considered that the coordination capacity of the NSO with partners inside the NSS over the last three years was satisfactory (either because it had improved, or because it was satisfactory already), as opposed to 43 percent of NSOs in high-income countries. Similarly, 18 percent of NSOs in low- and lower-middle-income countries, and 26 percent of NSOs in higher-middle-income countries, consider that coordination with partners in the wider data ecosystem remained unsatisfactory in the past three years (see Figure 6).

**Figure 5: Perception of the capacity of the NSO to coordinate with NSS partners, by income group**

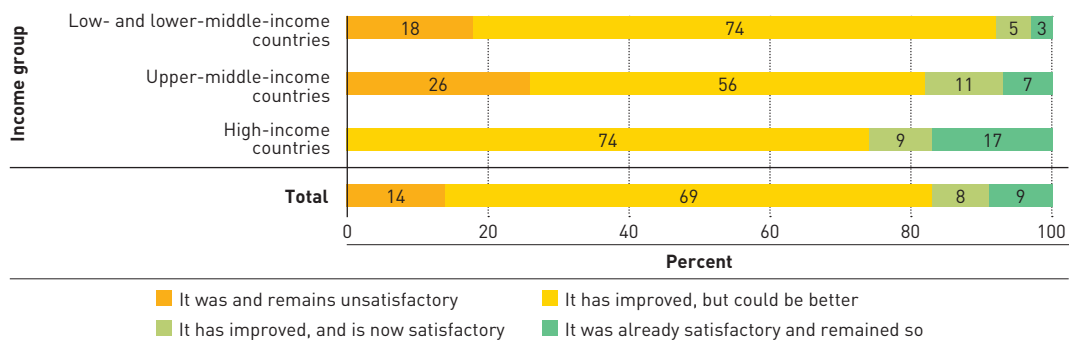
*Question: Thinking about the coordination capacity of the NSO with partners inside the NSS (for example, line ministries) over the last three years, which of the following statements would best describe it?*



N=100

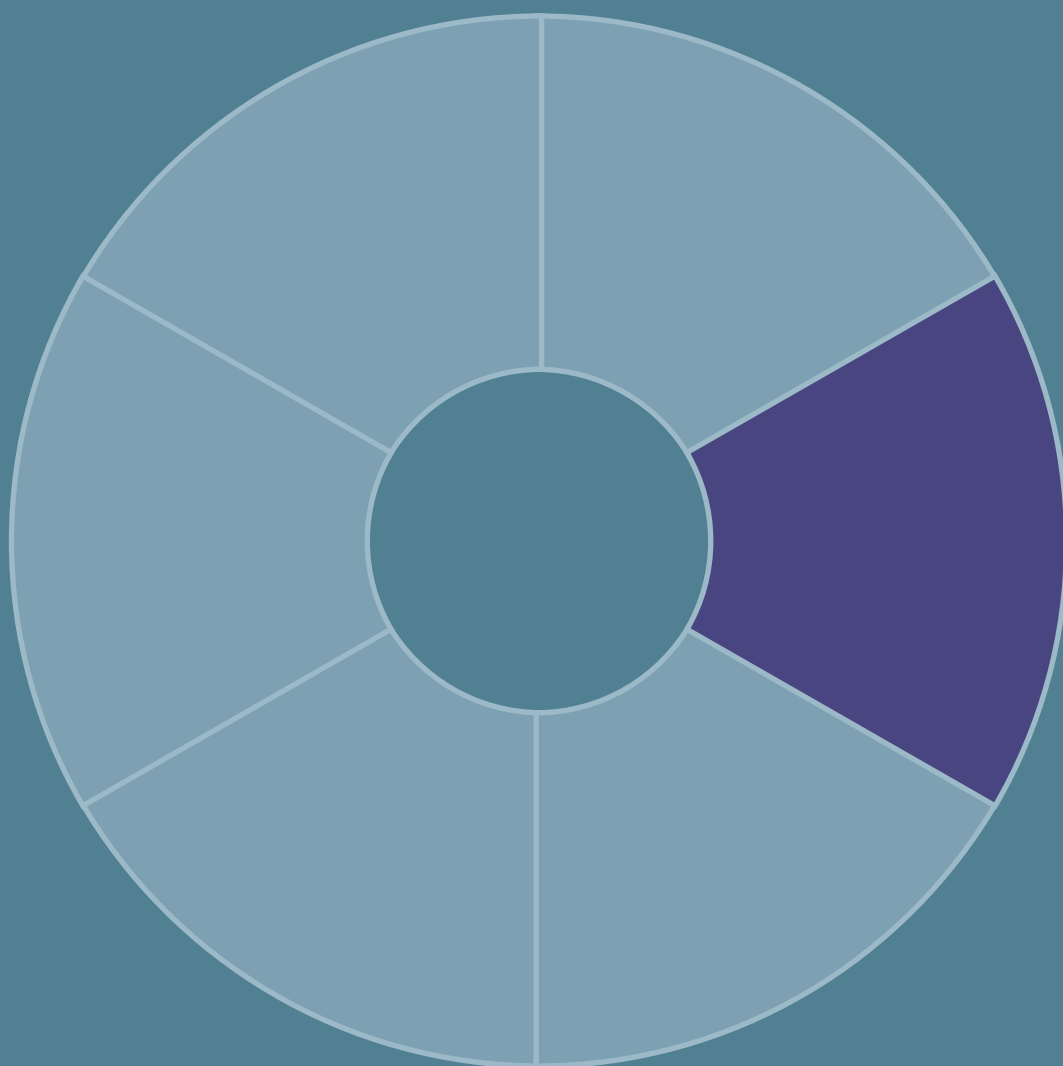
**Figure 6: Perception of the capacity of the NSO to coordinate with the entire data ecosystem, by income group**

*Question: Thinking about the coordination capacity of the NSO with partners in the wider data ecosystem over the last three years, which of the following statements would best describe it?*



N=100

# 2 Innovation and modernization of national statistical systems



Under Strategic Area 2, on innovation and modernization, the CTGAP places particular emphasis on enhancing the ability of national statistical systems to embrace open data policies and initiatives, and hence all aspects related to governing data access and dissemination, while preserving confidentiality, and trust of all actors in the system.

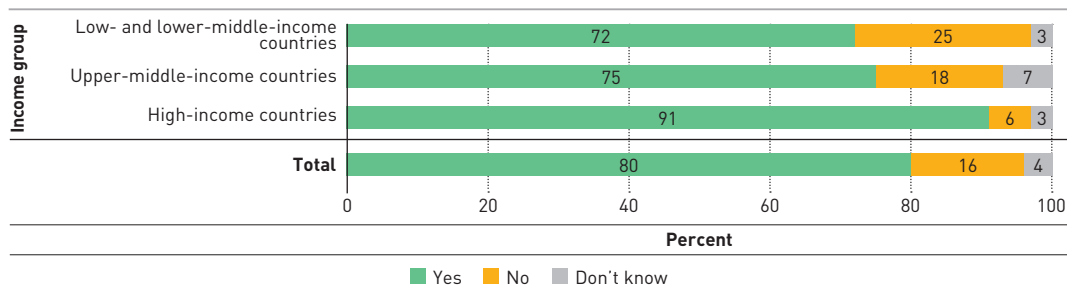


***The vast majority of national statistical legal frameworks (80 percent of respondents) included confidentiality policies that regulate data privacy and access. That left, however, a substantial percentage of countries where that was still not the case.***

The prevalence of countries that did not have a confidentiality policy that regulates data access was higher among countries with lower incomes, reaching 25 percent among low- and lower-middle-income countries. In some cases where such legal framework existed, it appeared to only cover relationships within the NSS, rather than with the broader data ecosystem. In particular, only about three-fourths of respondents from low- and lower-middle-income countries (72 percent) and from middle-income countries (75 percent) indicated that there was a data confidentiality policy regulating data privacy between the NSS and actors from the broader data ecosystem (see Figure 7) compared to 91 percent of high-income countries. And about two out of every three respondents in these groups of countries (63 and 68 percent respectively) confirmed the existence of a legal framework governing the collection, use, and sharing of data within the national data ecosystem, compared to 91 percent in high-income countries (see Figure 8).

**Figure 7: Existence of a legal framework for data protection, by income group**

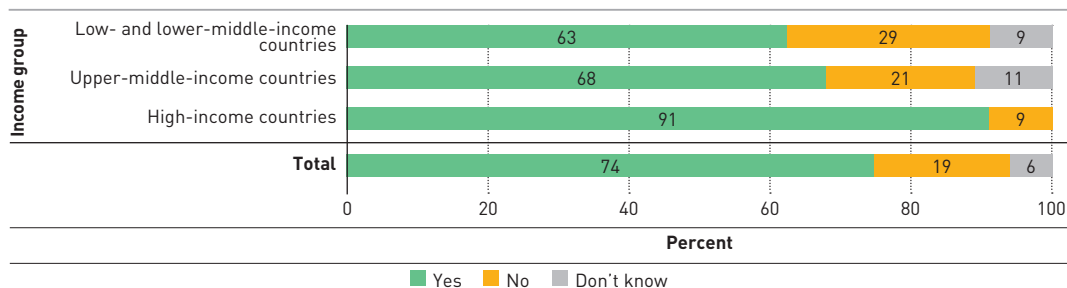
**Question: Does a privacy and data protection law or legal framework govern the collection, use, and sharing of data within the national data ecosystem (public and private third-party data)?**



N=99

**Figure 8: Existence of a data confidentiality policy, by income group**

**Question: Is there a data confidentiality policy regulating data privacy between different data actors from the country's data ecosystem and the NSS?**



N=98

# 3 Strengthening of basic statistical activities and programs



In addition to paying attention to systemic issues, the CTGAP emphasized the need to strengthen basic statistical activities and programs, with particular focus on addressing the monitoring needs of the 2030 Agenda (Strategic Area 3).



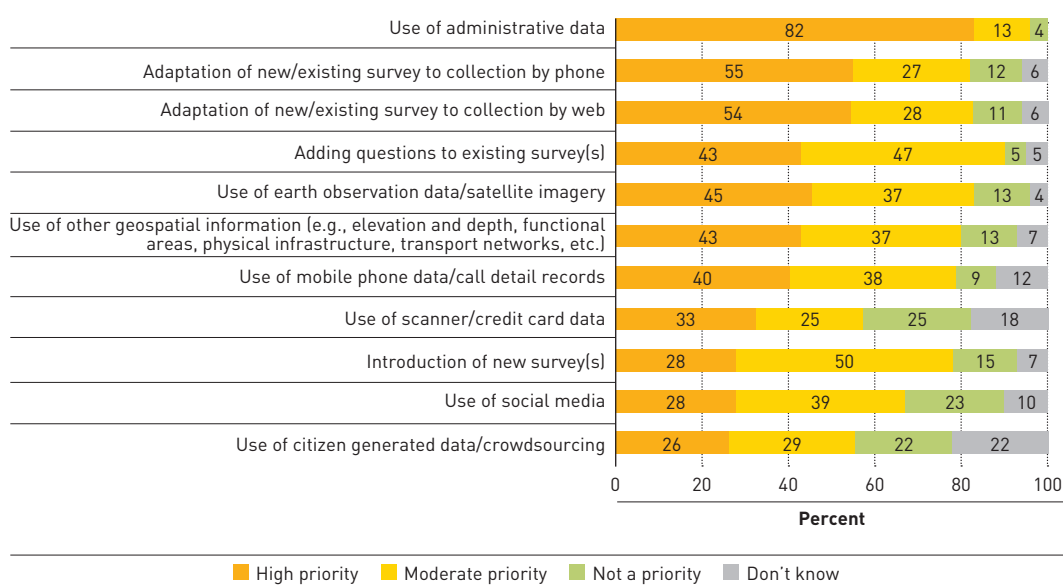
**The survey findings highlighted the importance NSOs attached to administrative data as the foremost area in need of expansion of capacity, with 82 percent of respondents identifying it as a high priority area.**

Surveys were the second domain ranked as a high priority, focusing on enhancing the capacity to collect data via phone and web surveys (55 and 54 percent, respectively), and on expanding the scope of existing surveys by adding extra questions (43 percent of respondents considered that as a high priority). A third domain emerging as a high priority was the use of earth observation data (45 percent) and other geospatial information (43 percent).

Areas that were considered a priority by a smaller share of respondents were concentrated among non-traditional data sources, such as scanner and credit card data (high priority for 33 percent of respondents), social media data (28 percent), and citizen-generated and crowd sourced data (26 percent). This likely reflected the need to focus first on strengthening basic statistical production programs, before investing in new methods where coverage and other key quality attributes remained still uncertain (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Priorities for capacity development**

**Question:** *In the next three years, does your NSO want to expand capacity in the following areas to respond to the new data demands of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development/SDGs and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic?*



N=98



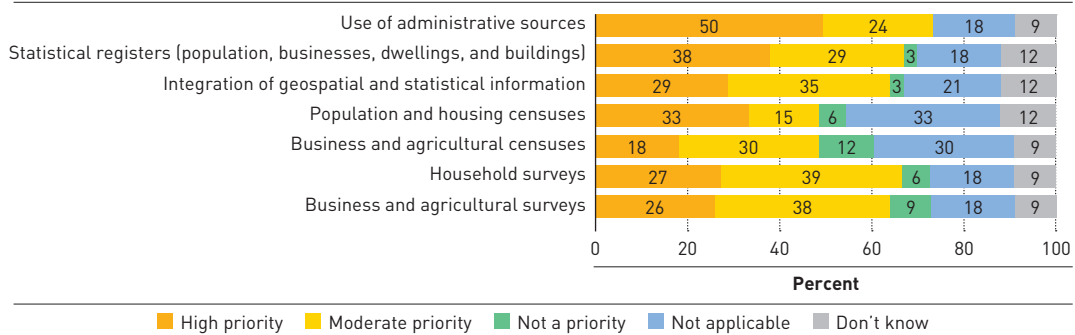
**Similar priorities emerged in terms of funding needs and requirements, with the importance of administrative and geospatial data at the top. Besides these top categories, substantial differences emerged between country income groups.**

Both census and survey programs were considered a high priority for funding in the next three years by 69 percent of respondents from low- and lower-middle-income countries (see Figure 10). In contrast, a majority of high-income countries identified statistical registers as a high priority for funding, whereas most of countries in this group ranked business and agricultural survey as a relatively lower priority.

**Figure 10: Funding priorities for statistical production, by income group**

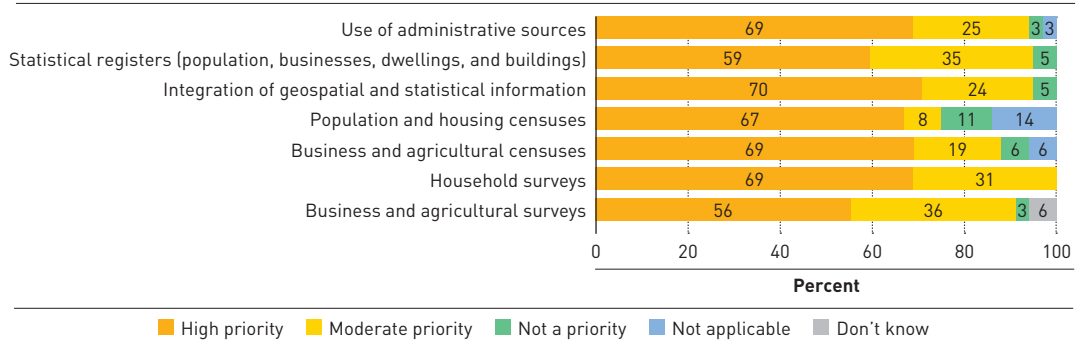
**Question: In the next three years, does your NSO require additional funds to cover the following statistical production programs?**

**High-income countries**



**N=35**

**Low- and lower-middle-income countries**

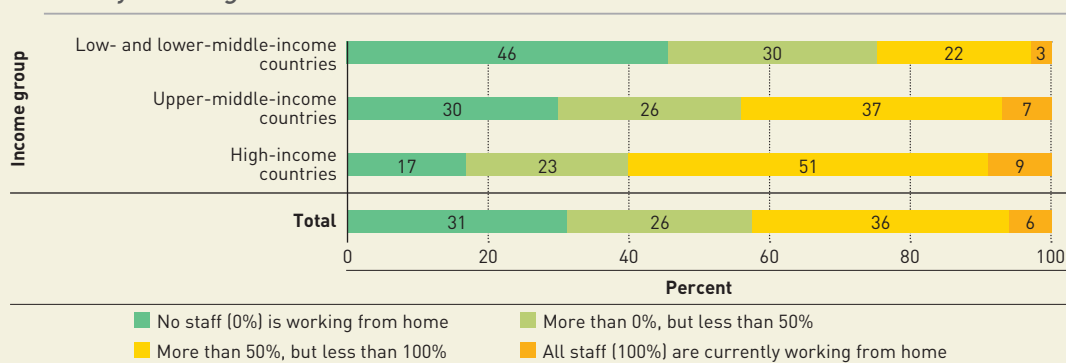


**N=36**

# COVID-19 impact and NSO readiness to implement the Cape Town Global Action Plan (CTGAP)

**Figure 11: Working from home status, by income group**

*Question: As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, some NSOs allowed their staff to work from home. Please indicate the estimated percentage of staff, who are currently working from home:*



N=99



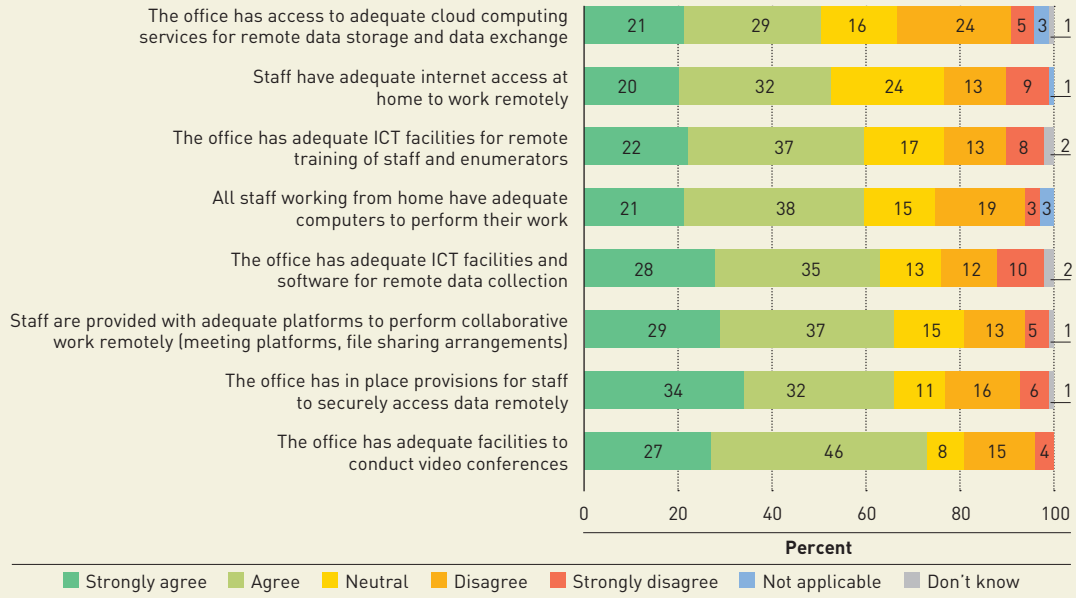
***The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the crucial role of information technology and infrastructure in ensuring the continuity of statistical operations during a time of crisis.***

With 69 percent of NSOs reporting that at least some staff are still working from home over a year after the crisis had begun (Figure 11), one of the most common challenges faced by NSOs is related to connectivity issues and the lack of remote data processing capabilities (see Figure 12). For instance, 22 percent of NSOs reported that their staff did not have adequate internet access at home to work remotely (“strongly disagree” or “disagree” categories, second bar in Figure 12); 22 percent did not have in place provisions for their staff to securely access data remotely (see second bar from bottom in Figure 12); and 29 percent lacked adequate cloud computing services for remote data storage and data exchange (see top bar in Figure 12).



**Figure 12: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) readiness during the COVID-19 pandemic**

*Question: Please indicate whether you agree with the following statements.*



N=98

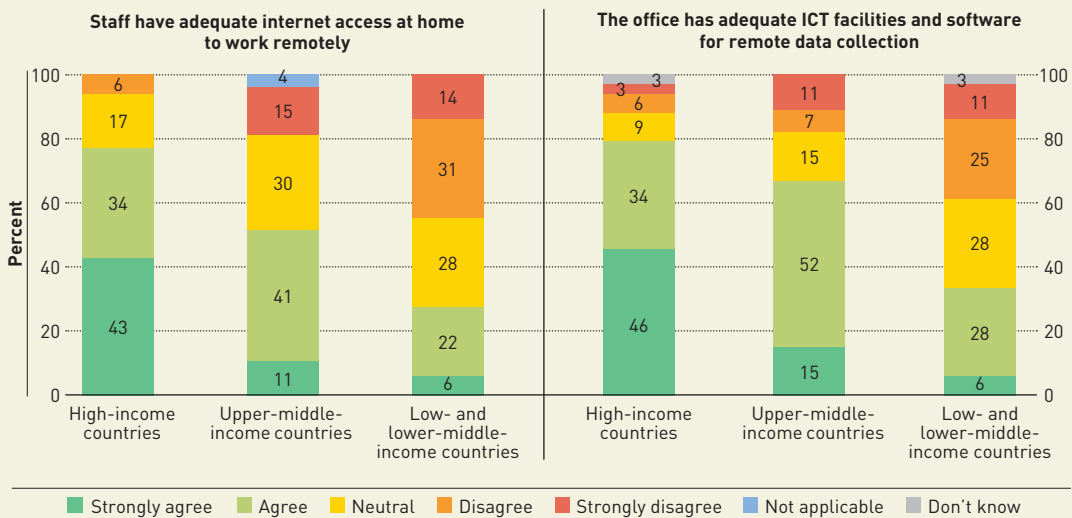


**Marked differences in ICT readiness of NSOs across income levels persist.**

For instance, issues around adequate internet access at home and adequate ICT facilities for remote training of staff and enumerators were more pronounced in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where more than one third of NSOs reported inadequate access (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13: ICT readiness during the COVID-19 pandemic: Home internet access and ICT for remote data collection, by income group**

*Question: Please indicate whether you agree with the following statements*



N=98

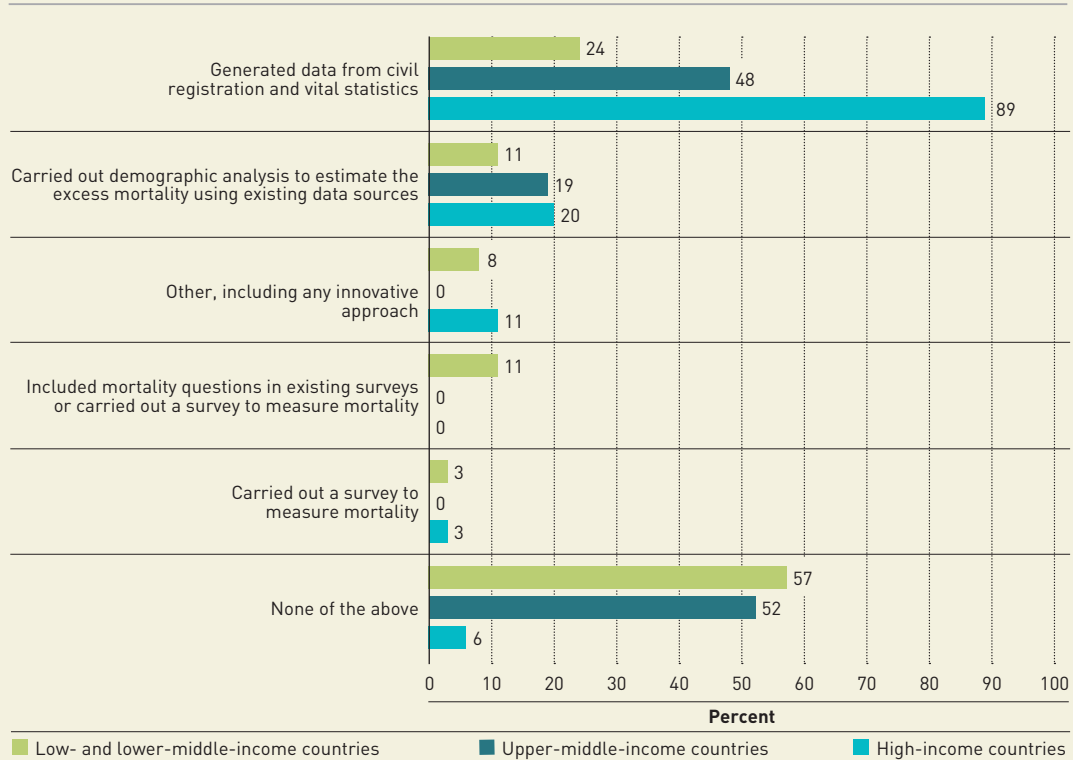


***The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted statistical production activities everywhere and caused sudden shifts in the demand for data and statistics by policy and decision makers.***

As national statistical systems struggled to keep their key data production programs running, they were also required to respond to new, urgent data needs from policy and decision makers in charge of mitigating the negative impact of the pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people. This underscored the importance of leveraging administrative data sources and innovative statistical estimation methods in order to supplement or even replace traditional survey-based data collection methods. However, not all countries were able to innovate in the same way. For example, while almost nine in every ten high-income countries reported the use of civil registration, and vital statistics data to generate COVID-19 excess mortality estimates, less than half of the respondents from upper-middle-income countries, and one-fourth of those from low- and lower-middle-income countries reported that (see Figure 14).

**Figure 14: Means to respond to COVID-19-related data demands, by income group**

**Question:** *Since March 2020, has your office produced data on COVID-19 excess mortality, i.e., the difference in mortality during COVID-19 and before COVID-19, through the following methods? Check all that applies.*



**N=99**

# 4 Dissemination and use of sustainable development data

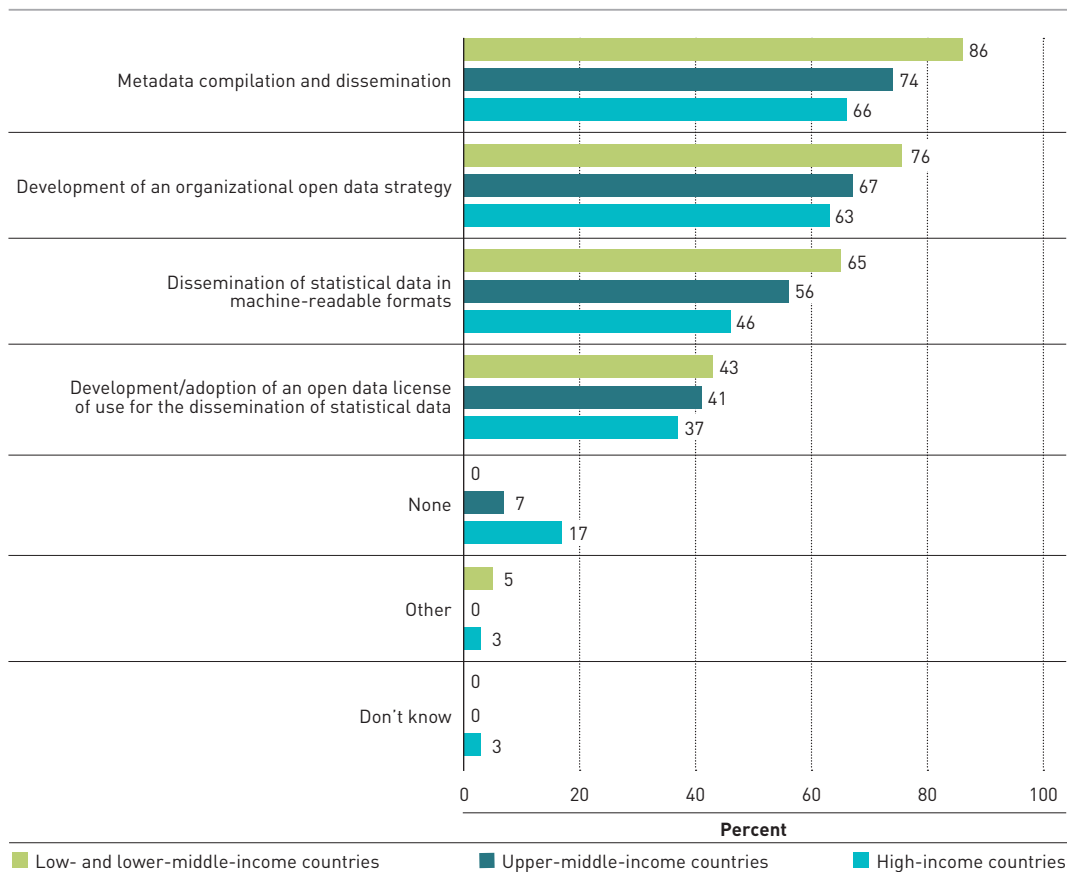


**To enable the adoption of open data principles and practices, NSOs identified the compilation and dissemination of metadata, as well as the development of an organization-wide open data strategy as top priority areas that need to be strengthened.**

Strategic Area 4 of the CTGAP aims to develop and promote innovative strategies to ensure proper dissemination and use of data for sustainable development, including by adopting open data principles and practices. It is worth noting that a larger proportion of NSOs in lower-income countries than in higher-income countries identify priority areas of improvement in their organizations with respect to the implementation of open data principles and practices. This may be directly correlated with the awareness of NSO leadership of capacity gaps in relation to metadata, open data, and interoperability (see Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Priorities for capacity development – Open data principles, by income group**

*Question: Please select priority areas that need to be strengthened in order to enable the adoption of open data principles and practices in your organization*



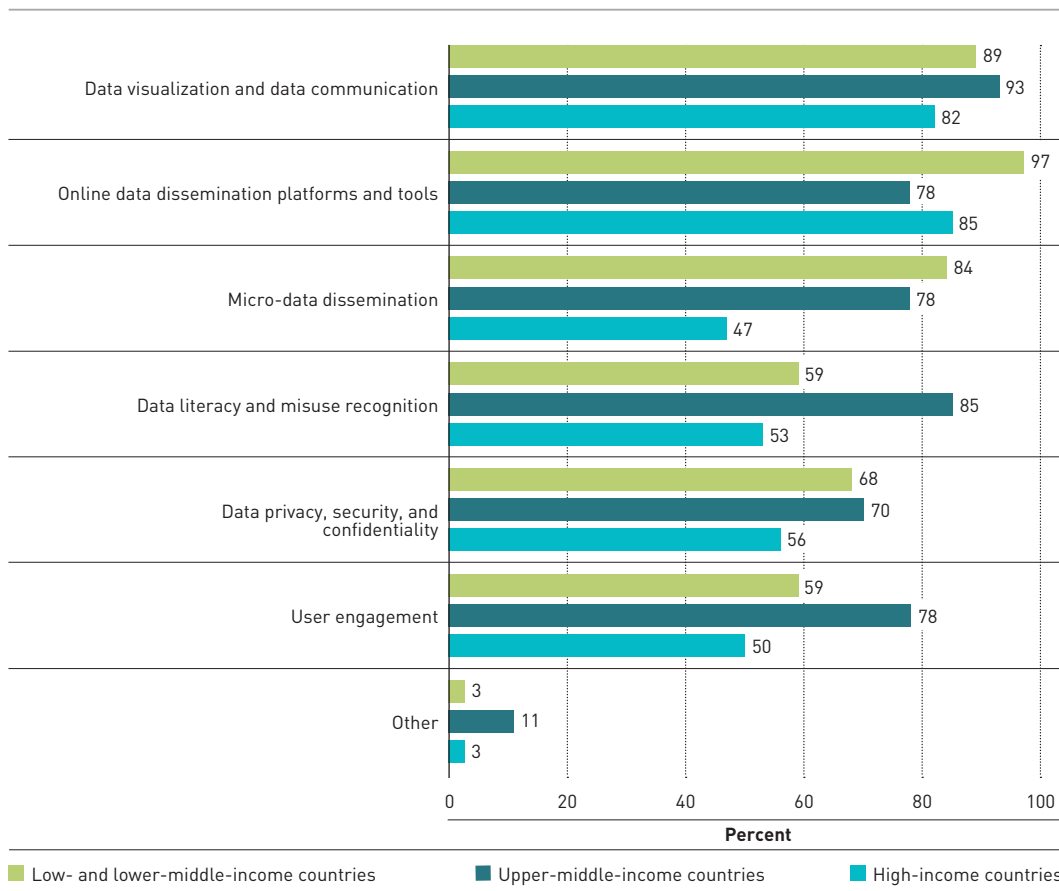
N=99

➔ ***Almost nine in ten NSOs identified the strengthening of online data dissemination platforms and tools, as well as data visualization and data communication capabilities, among their top priorities to enhance data dissemination capacity over the next three years.***

The top two priority categories identified by NSOs in this domain (see Figure 16) did not differ between high- and low-income countries, while the capacity for micro-data dissemination was in higher demand among low- and middle-income countries.

**Figure 16: Priorities for capacity development – Data dissemination, by income group**

**Question: What are the areas where the NSO wants to further strengthen their data dissemination capacity over the next three years?**



N=98

➔ ***The survey revealed important differences across NSOs in the tools and approaches used to monitor and measure the use of data and statistical products.***

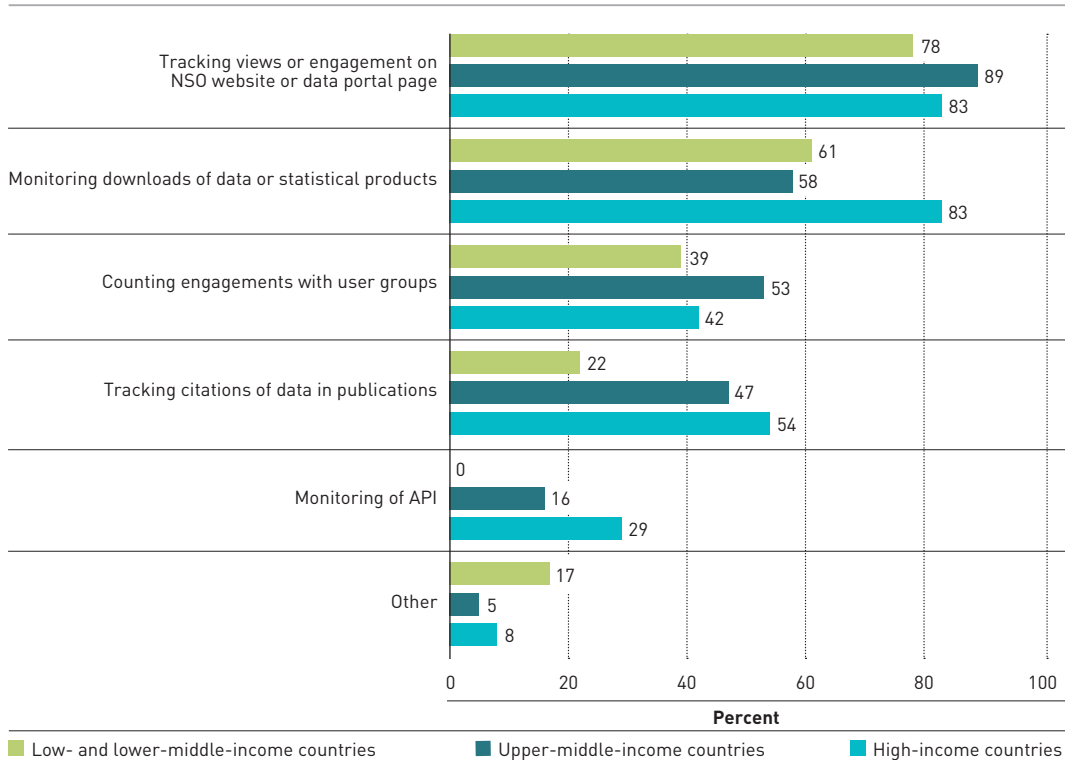
Understanding and appreciating the demand and use of the data produced by national statistical systems is the key to guiding strategic capacity development decisions.

While most countries across all income levels monitored website traffic, there were differences between income groups in other metrics, such as number of downloads of data

and statistical products that were much more prevalent among high-income countries, and the number of data citations in publications or use of application programming interfaces (APIs), which are more prevalent among high-income and upper-middle-income countries (see Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Means of assessment of the use of statistical products, by income group**

*Question: How does the NSO/NSS monitor and measure the use of data and statistical products?*



N=61

# 5 Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data



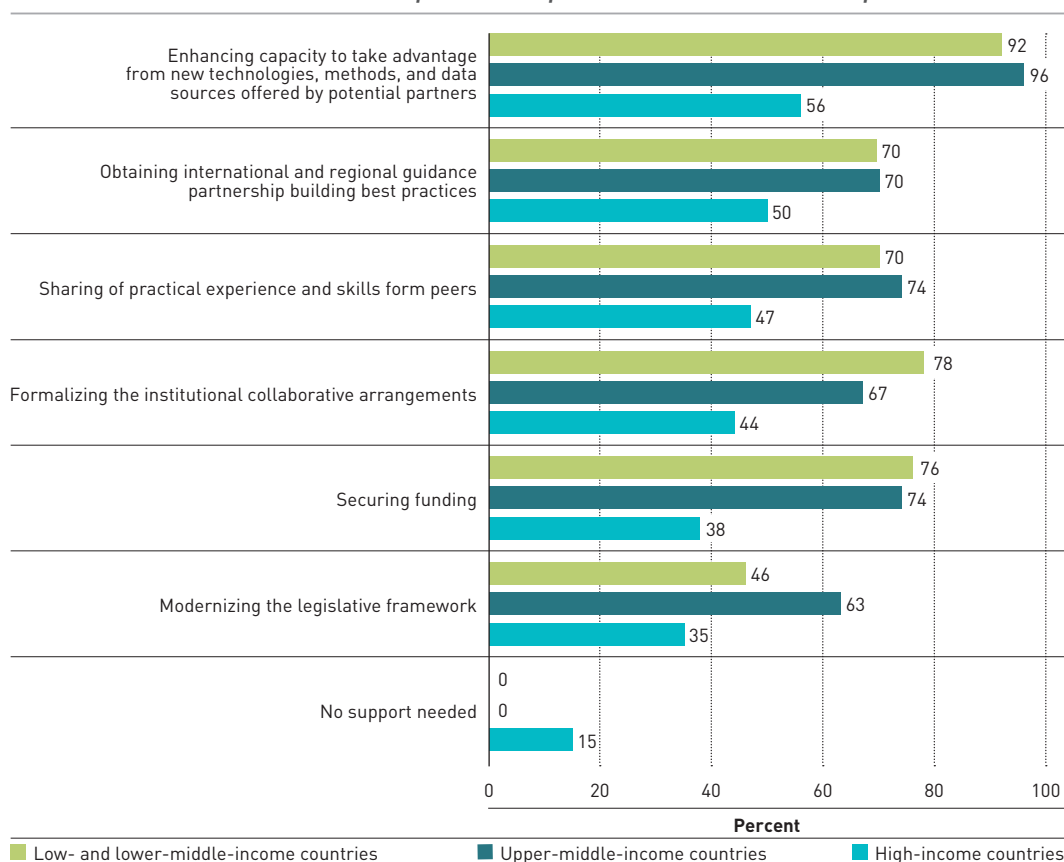
➔ ***Almost all NSOs in low- and middle-income countries expressed the need for partners' support to enhance their capacity to use new technologies, methods, and data sources as a top priority.***

As data ecosystems have evolved and become more complex and inter-related, the dialogue and partnership among stakeholders, and the stewardship role of NSOs in the NSS, have been receiving increased attention at national and international levels. The information the survey elicited from respondents in this regard confirmed a much higher demand for support among low- and middle-income countries, compared to high-income ones (see Figure 18).

Support for implementing best practices, sharing of skills with peers, formalizing institutional collaborative arrangements, and securing funding for multi-stakeholder partnerships was also considered important, although to a more limited extent. The modernization of the statistical legislative framework to support partnerships was mentioned more frequently by NSOs from upper-middle-income countries.

**Figure 18: Support priorities for partnerships, by income group**

**Question:** *What type of support do you need on a priority basis to effectively establish new multistakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data?*



N=99



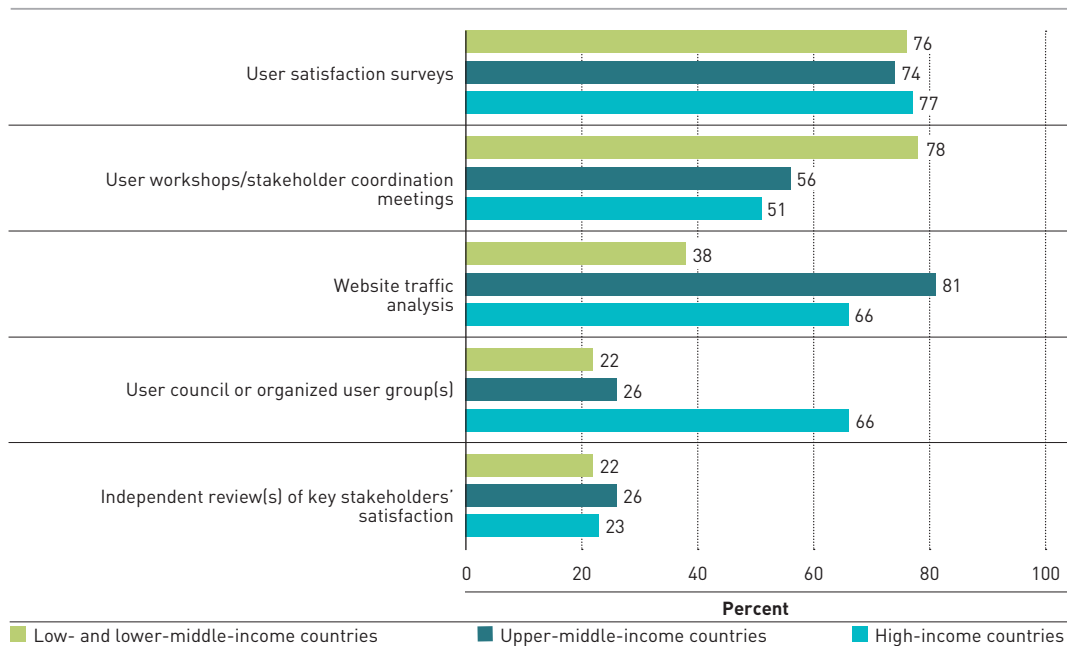


**Approximately three-quarters of NSOs across all income groups engage in user satisfaction surveys to obtain feedback from users.**

The survey explored how NSOs engage with users of statistical products to collect feedback and to educate data users on aspects of relevance to their mandate (see Figure 19). Overall, satisfaction surveys were the most frequent form of engagement with users. In addition, user workshops have been particularly popular in low- and lower-middle-income countries (78 percent) but only in about half of the countries in higher-income groups. Website traffic analysis was prevalent among upper-middle-income (81 percent) and high-income (66 percent) countries, but much less among low- and lower-middle-income countries (38 percent). While user councils and organized user groups were used by NSOs in 66 percent of high-income countries, they were much less frequent in both upper-middle-income countries (26 percent) and low- and lower-middle-income countries (22 percent). Finally, independent reviews of stakeholder satisfaction were only practiced by about a quarter of the NSOs, regardless of the country's income level.

**Figure 19: Means of gathering feedback on statistical products, by income group**

*Question: How was feedback from users on statistical products and services sought in the past three years?*



N=99

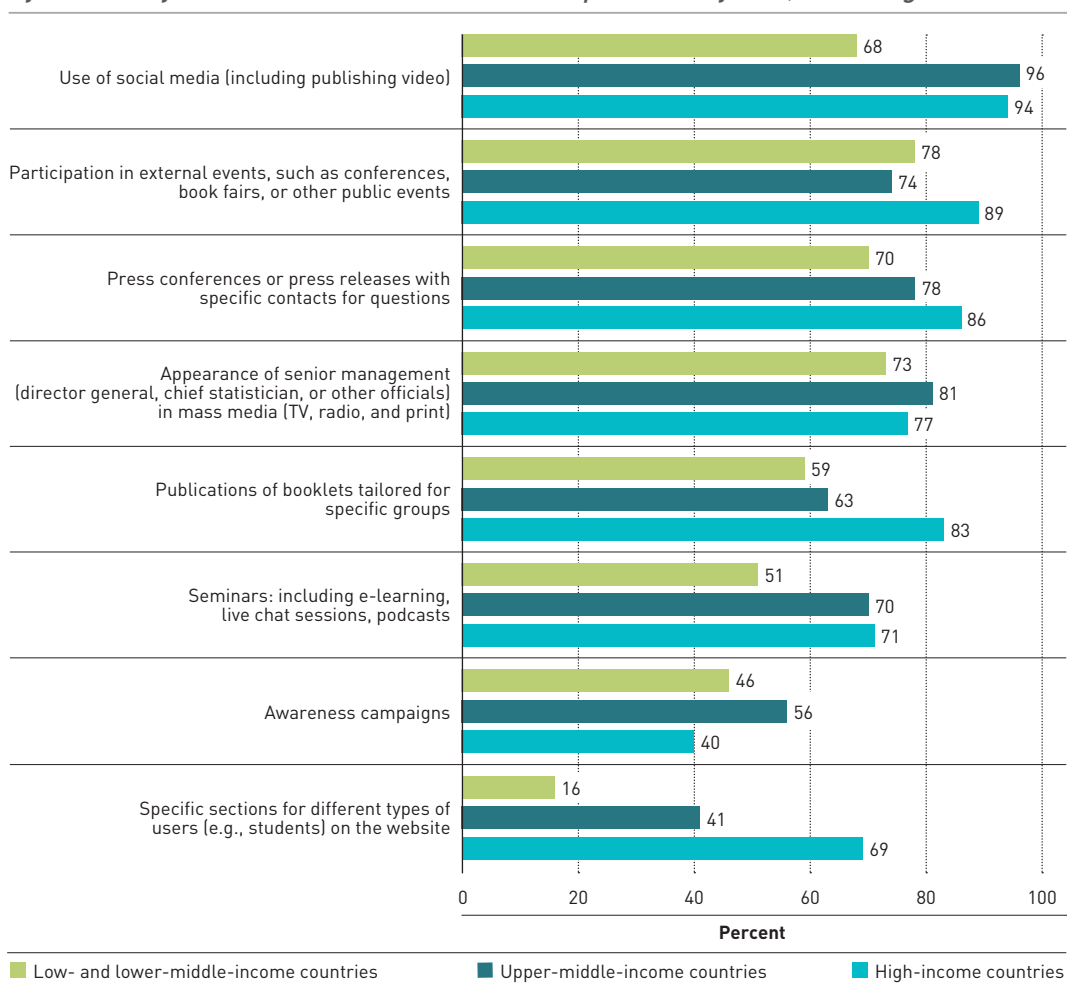


*The survey revealed important gaps in the capacity of NSOs to engage via tools and media available today, with those from low- and lower-middle-income countries being less able to do so.*

Engaging and partnering with stakeholders, also involved educating and informing them and the general public about the different functions of the NSS, and their relevance in society. The survey uncovered a gulf between NSOs from low- and lower-middle-income countries and those from higher-income countries in the extent to which they engaged in social media, publication programs targeted at specific user groups, seminars, e-learning platforms, live chat sessions, and podcasts. The gaps were much less marked in the use of more traditional approaches to users' engagement, such as press conferences, traditional media presence, general awareness campaigns, presentations, conferences, and launch events (see Figure 20). This signaled another area where there was scope for concerted action by the statistical community to promote partnerships with different stakeholders in the data ecosystem.

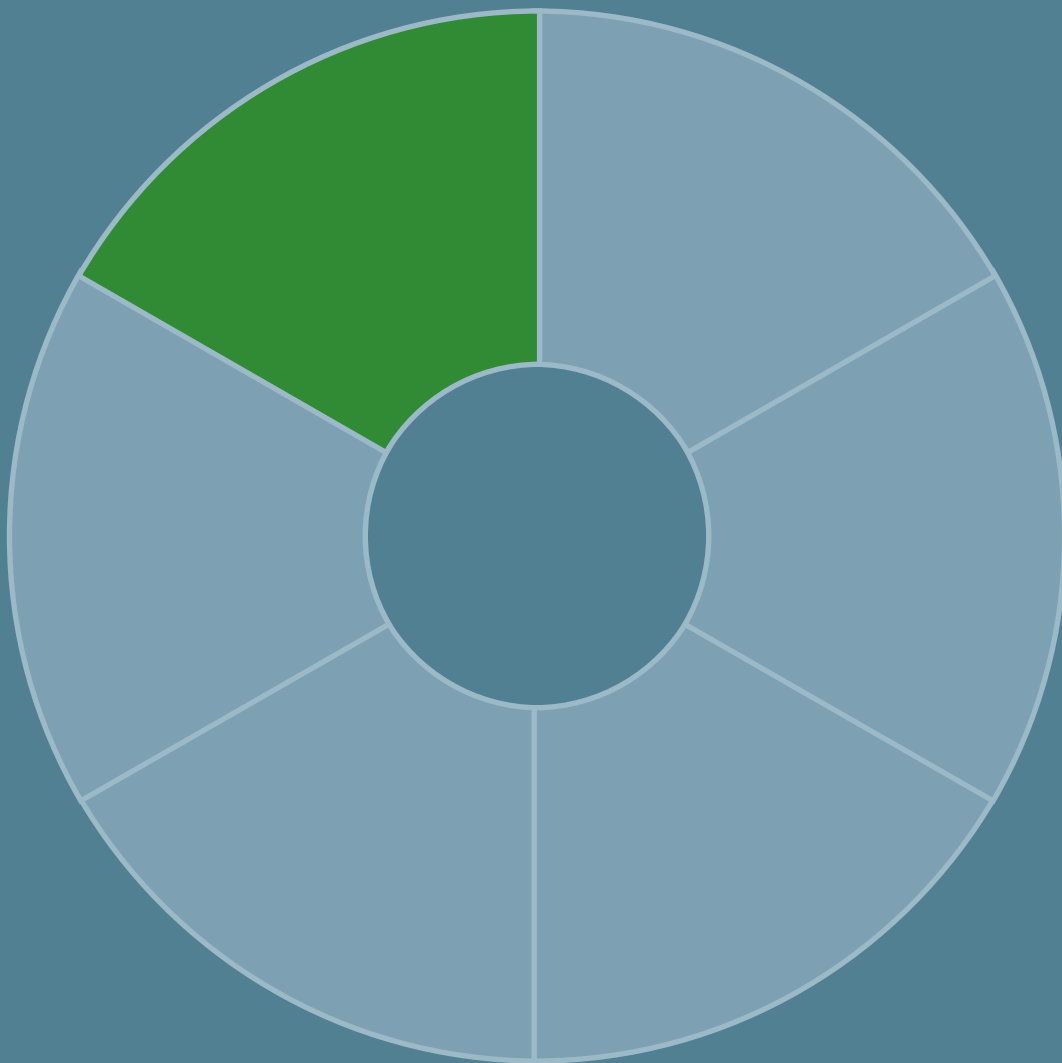
**Figure 20: Means of outreach to statistical users, by income group**

*Question: Which activities did the National Statistical Office/National Statistical System carry out to educate data users in the past three years, including the media?*



N=98

# 6 Mobilization of resources and coordination of efforts for statistical capacity building

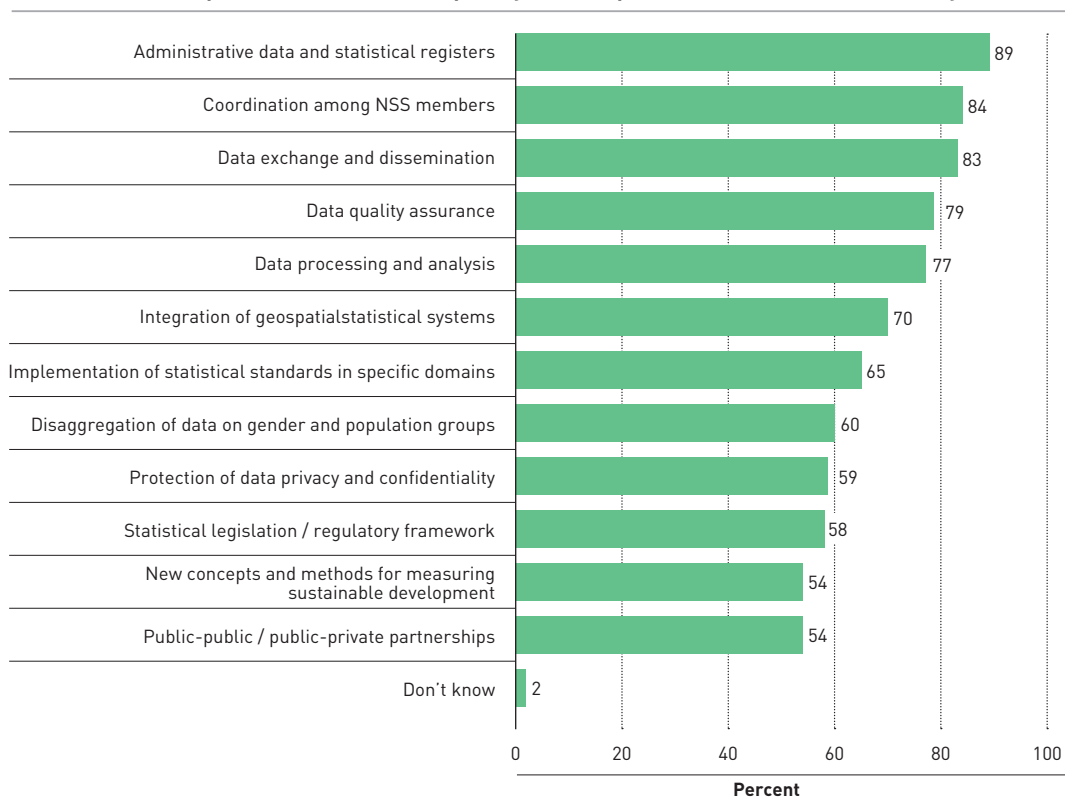


The sixth and final area of the CTGAP is that of the coordination of statistical capacity building efforts and the related resource mobilization. The results that emerged from the survey responses were in line with the constraints and opportunities identified by NSO respondents and presented earlier in the report (see Figure 21).

**➔ *The use of administrative data and statistical registers was the area of capacity development most frequently identified as a priority for investments, followed by coordination among NSS members and data exchange and dissemination.***

**Figure 21: Priority areas for the modernization of the National Statistical System (NSS)**

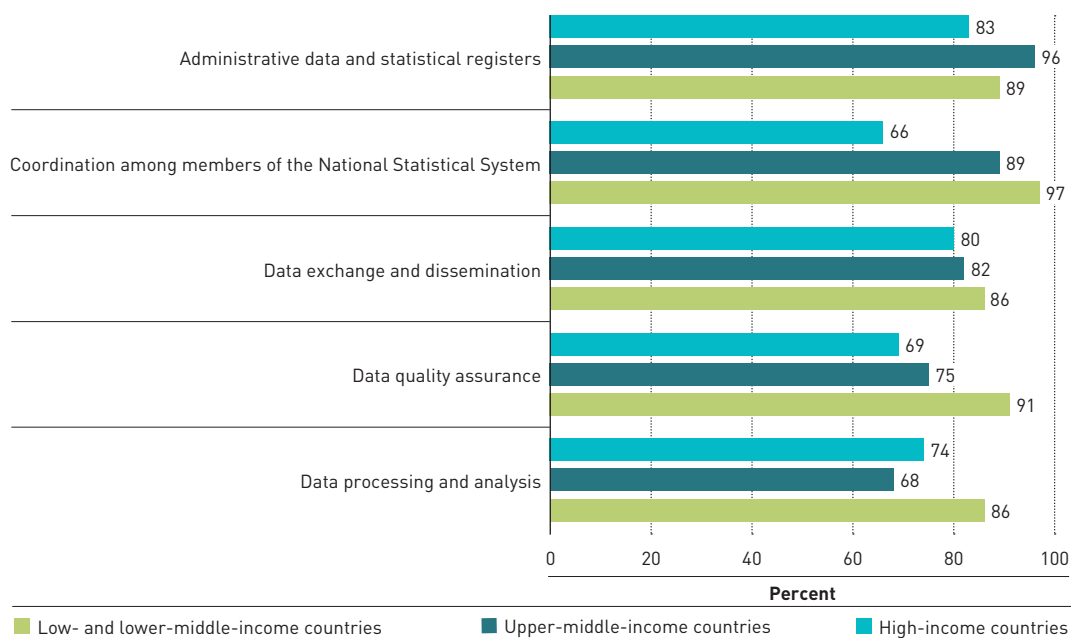
*Question: To modernize the National Statistical System, what are the priority areas where the NSO plans to invest in capacity development over the next three years?*



**N=98**

**Figure 22: Investment priorities for the modernization of the NSS, by income group**

*Question: To modernize the National Statistical System, what are the priority areas where the NSO plans to invest in capacity development over the next three years?*



N=98

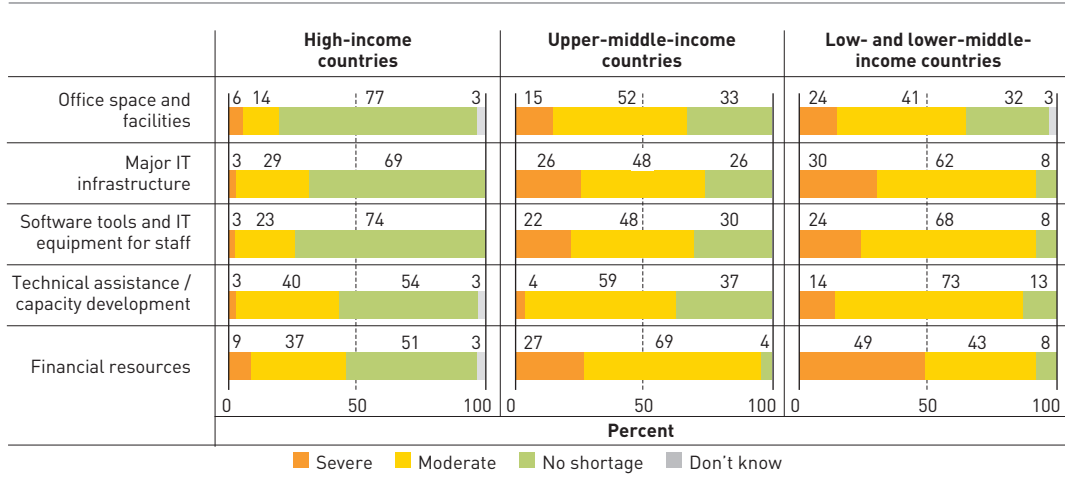


***Coordination of the NSS was the most common priority for investment in capacity among low- and lower-middle-income countries, followed by data quality assurance (see Figure 22). In contrast, high-income countries put more weight on investing in administrative data, statistical registries, and data exchange and dissemination.***

The majority of NSOs indicated that they are currently facing shortages in financial resources and information technology (IT) infrastructure (see Figure 23). This was especially the case in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where only eight percent of NSOs did not report such shortages. Moreover, 49 percent of NSOs in this group reported severe shortages in financial resources, while 30 percent reported severe shortages in major IT infrastructure.

**Figure 23: Resource needs for statistical activities and programs, by income group**

*Question: Does your organization currently face a shortage in the following resources to respond to demand for statistical outputs?*

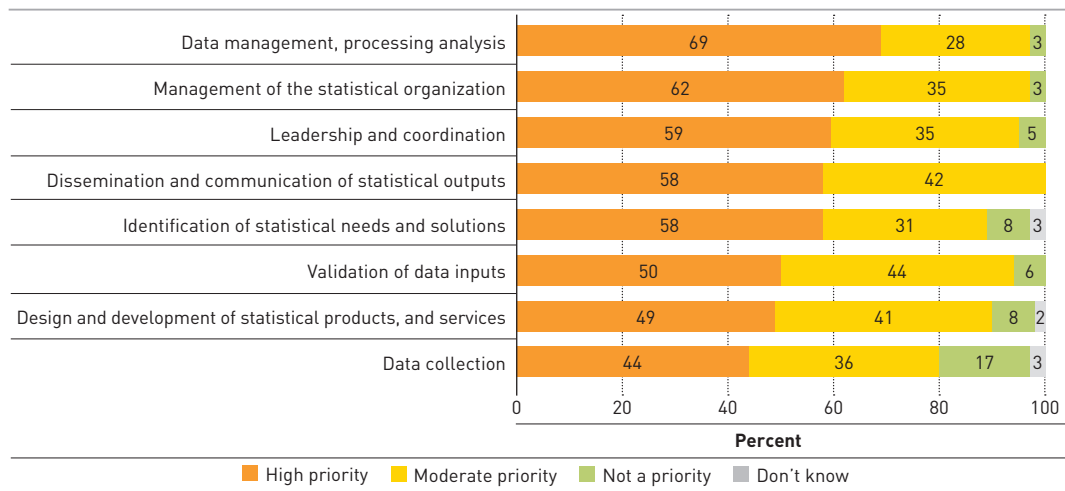


N=99

There is also unmet demand for technical assistance and capacity development. In particular, most NSOs in low- and lower-middle-income countries expressed that the need for support in the field of data management, processing, and analysis (69 percent) is a high priority. There is also strong need for technical support in areas related to skills, such as management of statistical organizations (62 percent) and leadership and coordination (59 percent). While there is almost universal need for support across all technical aspects of the statistical production process (see rows 4 to 8 of Figure 24), a few countries (17 percent) in the low- and lower-middle-income group did not consider that data collection was a priority (see row 8 of Figure 24).

**Figure 24: Priority areas for training in NSOs, low- and lower-middle-income countries**

*Question: Please indicate the priority for the following areas of training for your organization:*



N=35

## Financial needs in IDA countries

The information presented in this section was collected through Pillar II of the survey. Unlike Pillar I, this Pillar was only assigned to the 74 IDA borrowing countries. This section of the survey sought to understand the demand for financing for data and statistics and improve the decision-making of international organizations such as the World Bank, UNSD, and PARIS21, as well as other development cooperation providers (multilateral, bilateral, and philanthropic organizations). In this way, these international organizations could better focus their resources and statistical capacity programs on the most urgent and relevant priorities and country needs. Twenty-nine IDA borrowing countries submitted their response by September 15, 2021.

### Current state of funding to data and statistics in IDA borrowing countries

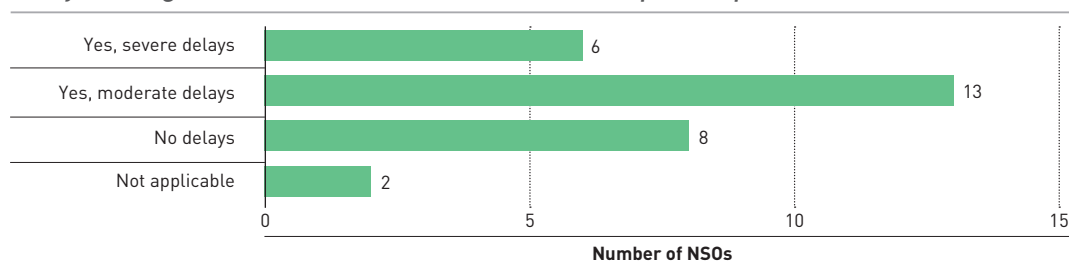


***Two-thirds of IDA countries experienced moderate to severe budget delays in the past fiscal year.***

Delays in budget disbursement may have prevented NSOs from initiating their planned activities at the beginning of the 2021 fiscal year. That could have significantly disrupted the production of time-sensitive data, including pandemic-related statistics. Among the 29 NSOs from IDA countries that responded to the survey, the majority (19 countries) indicated that they had experienced moderate or severe budget disbursement delays in the last fiscal year (see Figure 25). Six of these countries experienced a severe delay during that period. Consequently, these delays in budget disbursement affected the work plan implementation of these NSOs and may have led to severe backlogs and data gaps that undermine emergency response and long-term recovery. These delays, together with the reported decrease of government financing in the previous survey (UNSD/World Bank, 2021), was a worrying sign that official statistics remained low on the priority list of governments during the pandemic, even with the unprecedented demand for data.

**Figure 25: Severity of delays in budget disbursements in IDA countries**

**Question:** *In the past completed budget year, did your organization experience delayed budget disbursements that affected work plan implementation?*



N=29

**A substantial number of IDA countries relied on development aid from external sources, which has decreased since the pandemic, to implement their work program.**

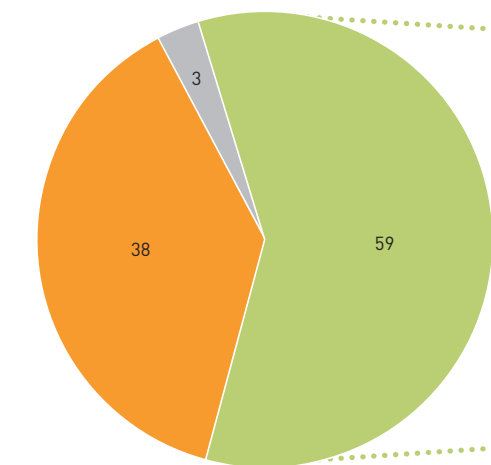
External resources are critical to sustain foundational statistical programs and to create data that leave no one behind.

In their last fiscal year, 59 percent of IDA countries received on-budget support for their statistical activities from providers of development aid (see Figure 26a). External funding is crucial for NSOs in these countries, as 53 percent of these countries indicated that more than ten percent of their total budget comes from external on-budget support (see Figure 26b). Alarming, previous surveys also reported that many countries, including over half of the Sub-Saharan countries, experienced a decrease in funding from donors since the pandemic (UNSD/World Bank, 2021). Although reprioritizing funding in light of COVID-19 was inevitable, providers of development aid should have avoided long-term reduction that disrupted the implementation of the necessary programs and actions as outlined in the Cape Town Global Action Plan.

**Figure 26: NSO receiving budget support for providers of development aid and importance of budget support for NSO receiving support from development cooperation providers**

**Figure 26a**

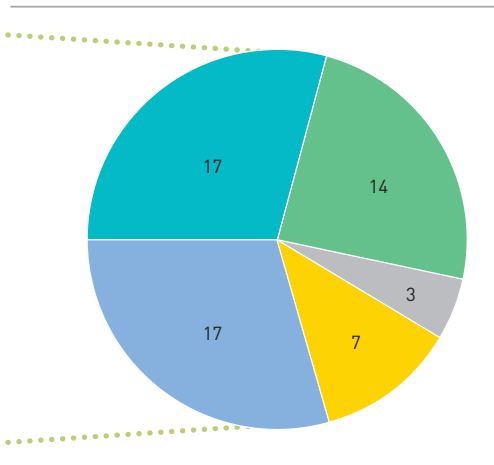
*Question: Did your organization receive on-budget support in the last fiscal year from providers of development aid?*



■ Yes  
 ■ No  
 ■ Don't know

**Figure 26b \***

*Question: How important was the on-budget support you received from development cooperation providers in the last fiscal year? Please provide your best estimate.*



■ More than 25% of total NSO budget  
 ■ Between 10-25% of total NSO budget  
 ■ Less than 10% of total NSO budget  
 ■ Did not answer  
 ■ Don't know

\* This question was only asked to IDA countries that indicated they received on-budget external support in the last fiscal year.

N=29



## Future financial needs of IDA borrowing countries



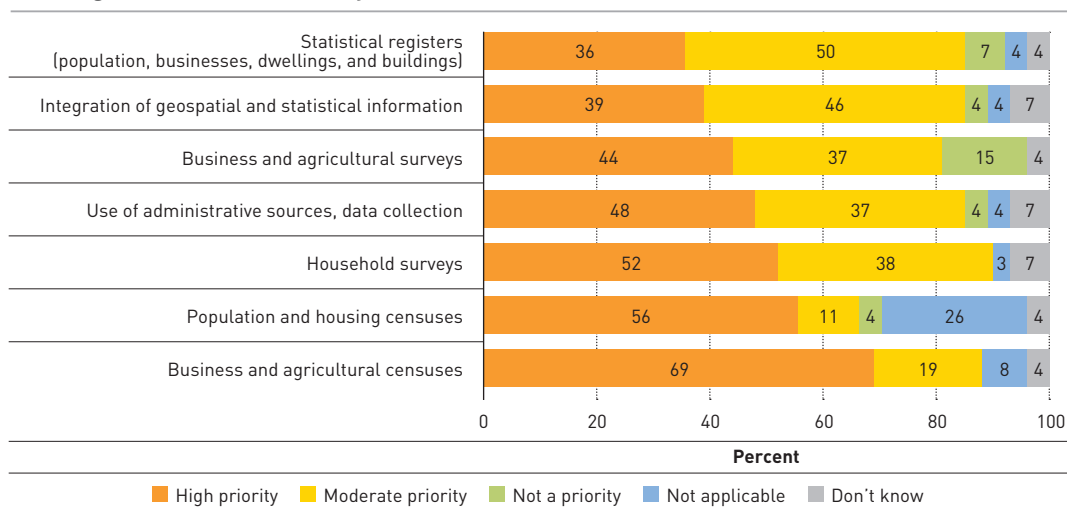
***For the next three years, IDA countries see the most prioritized funding need in business and agricultural census, and population and housing census.***

Aligning development aid with priorities identified by countries can address the most urgent needs and foster country ownership.

While funding shortages were expected across all statistical production, with most IDA countries assigning either high or moderate priority to all programs, 69 percent of IDA countries assigned high priority to the expected funding shortage in business and agricultural census programs (see Figure 27). Population and housing census was also a high priority for most applicable countries<sup>9</sup>. In many IDA countries, these two types of programs used to rely heavily on face-to-face data collection, which is one of the most impacted activities since the beginning of the pandemic<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, status reports on population census<sup>11</sup> and agricultural census<sup>12</sup> showed significant number of postponed activities since the beginning of the pandemic. For IDA countries, programs associated with alternative sources and new methodologies, such as statistical registers and geospatial and statistical information integration, were placed lower on the scale of priorities with respect to funding shortages. Going forward, development aid providers should consider targeting programs directly identified by countries to address the most urgent needs and foster country ownership.

**Figure 27: Funding shortages and programmatic priorities**

**Question: What statistical production programs will face the most significant funding shortages in the next three years?**



N=29

<sup>9</sup> "Not applicable" was a response option for respondents from countries that were not planning a population and housing census in next three years.

<sup>10</sup> See previous survey reports: [www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/survey-of-national-statistical-offices-nsos-during-covid-19](http://www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/survey-of-national-statistical-offices-nsos-during-covid-19)

<sup>11</sup> [unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/census/censusdates](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/census/censusdates)

<sup>12</sup> [www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8984en](http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8984en)

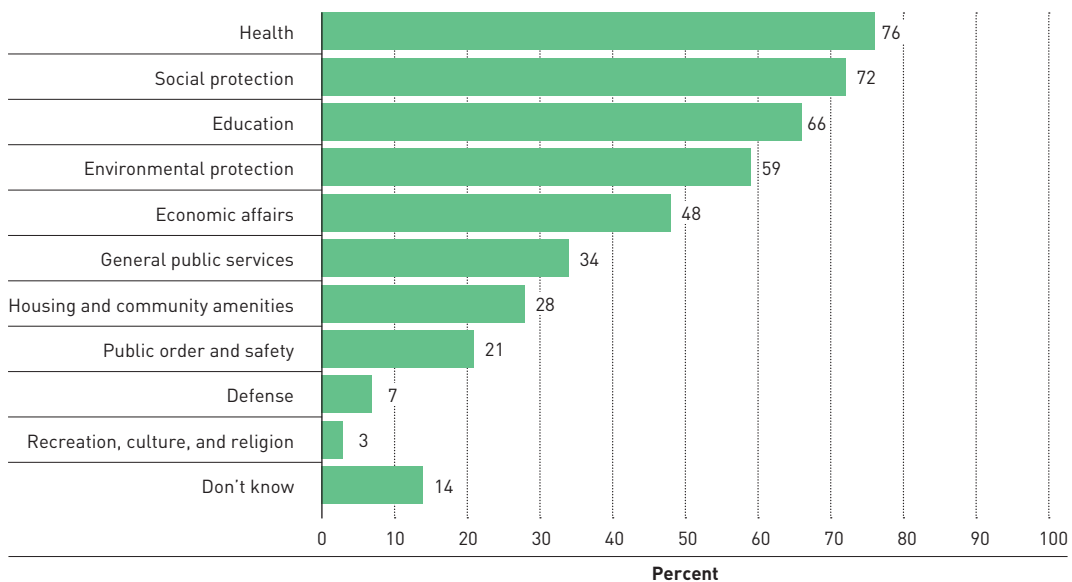


***NSOs will continue to need on- and off-budget support to health statistics in the next three years. Education, social protection, and economic affairs were also identified as prioritized sectors.***

NSOs have played a crucial role in breaking the sectoral silos so that these data are sufficiently coordinated, elaborated, integrated, and used across sectors. Looking at statistical activities by policy sectors in the next three years, health has been the most prioritized sector by IDA countries for both on-budget (76 percent) and off-budget (83 percent) support. That was not unexpected considering that since the beginning of the pandemic, NSOs in these countries had been struggling to meet the surging demand with limited resources and capacity in health data. Many IDA countries also included the education (66 percent) and social protection (72 percent) sectors among their top priorities for on-budget support for the production of statistics (see Figure 28). For off-budget resources, countries also expressed demand for support in education and economic affairs (see Figure 29). Investing in the sectors identified by the countries can help NSOs link and integrate knowledge and data across domains and sectors to tackle cross-cutting issues under the 2030 Agenda within the context of each country.

**Figure 28: Sectoral priorities for on-budget support from development cooperation providers**

**Question:** Which are the policy sectors for which you need on-budget support from development cooperation providers to produce statistics? Please choose the five priority policy sectors for the next three years.

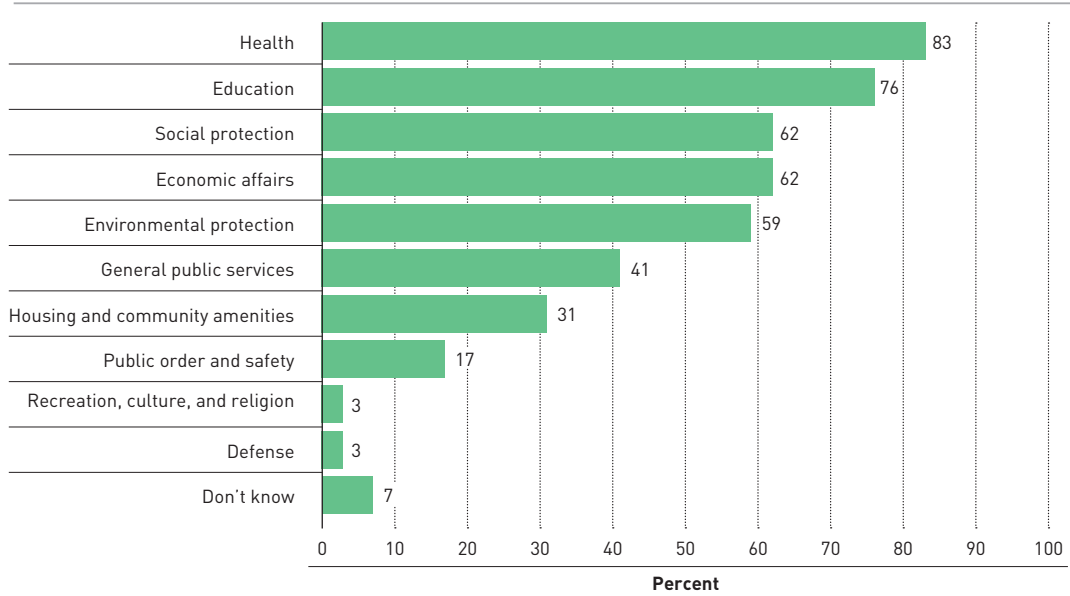


**N=29**

Note: Each respondent could select up to five policy sectors.

**Figure 29: Sectoral priorities for off-budget support from development cooperation providers**

*Question: Which are the policy sectors for which you need off-budget support from development cooperation providers to produce statistics? Please choose the five priority policy sectors for the next three years.*



**N=29**

Note: Each respondent can select up to five policy sectors.

# Conclusions

- Five years after the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) was launched, the results of a global survey of NSOs paint a mixed picture of the progress made toward its implementation: despite gradual progress towards the strategic areas of the CTGAP and the strength and resilience of NSOs, a step change in terms of the capacity of national statistical systems has yet to be realized.
- In progress towards the implementation of the CTGAP, the majority of respondent countries reported formalizing institutional collaborative arrangements, securing funding, sharing of practical experience and skills from peers, obtaining international and regional guidance, and enhancing capacity to take advantage from new technologies, methods, and data sources offered by potential partners as priorities to effectively establish new multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable data.
- However, progress towards the implementation of the CTGAP needs to be accelerated in order to fulfill the 2030 Agenda. With several countries facing severe delays and shortages in funding, it is imperative to mobilize more and better funding for statistical capacity development. Governments must recognize the essential role of official statistics, and ramp up their domestic resources. Development aid providers need to align resources with priorities identified by NSOs to close the data gaps and foster country ownership.
- To address the challenges of better targeting, coordinating, and scaling up funding for data and statistical systems, two linked global initiatives have been recently launched: The Global Data Facility<sup>13</sup>, a World Bank-hosted fund, will enable long-term support, sustainable data, and statistics transformation. The Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data<sup>14</sup> by the Bern Network will help countries, donors, and development agencies identify funding opportunities, bring projects to scale, advocate for support to data and statistics, and connect to new partners.
- These two innovative, linked mechanisms will work in tandem to provide unprecedented support for the data agenda, accelerate progress towards the implementation of the CTGAP, and help realize the new social contract for data envisioned by the World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives<sup>15</sup> and the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/global-data-facility](http://www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/global-data-facility)

<sup>14</sup> [smartdatafinance.org](http://smartdatafinance.org)

<sup>15</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2021](http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2021)





Survey on the  
**Implementation of  
the Cape Town  
Global Action Plan**  
for Sustainable  
Development Data