



Distr.
LIMITED
LC/CE.24/4
25 April 2025
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH
2500131[E]

Twenty-fourth meeting of the Executive Committee
of the Statistical Conference of the Americas
of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Virtual meeting, 29 and 30 April 2025

**EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, 2015–2025 AND PROPOSED
THEMATIC AREAS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN, 2026–2035**

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INTRODUCTION

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean was established in 2000 by virtue of ECLAC resolution 580(XXVIII) and Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/7 to contribute to the progress of policies on statistics and statistical activities in the countries of the region and promote international, regional and bilateral cooperation among national statistical offices and international and regional agencies.

The Statistical Conference has structured its work according to two 10-year strategic plans (2005–2015 and 2015–2025). Each plan defined the objectives, mission, vision and values that would guide each decade, as well as the main challenges facing national statistical offices (NSOs) of the region. As the Conference's current Strategic Plan ends in 2025, the Executive Committee agreed to update the Plan to define a new action framework for the next decade, 2026–2035. This process consists of three stages: (i) the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025 and a regional assessment; (ii) the definition of the thematic areas and priorities for the Strategic Plan, 2026–2035; and (iii) the drafting of the new plan.

This report addresses the first two stages. First, it presents the results of an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in implementing the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025, together with a description of the current regional context of statistical production, taking into account institutional, economic and technological aspects. The methodology applied included an online questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Second, the report presents the proposed priority themes to be addressed in the Strategic Plan, 2026–2035.

I. EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, 2015–2025 OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS

The methodology used to evaluate the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025 included an online questionnaire that was sent to all Latin American and Caribbean NSOs and in-depth interviews, which were conducted with representatives of the countries that have chaired the Statistical Conference in the last 10 years, as well as current members of the Executive Committee and experts in regional statistics. A total of 24 countries replied to the questionnaire, which was available from 4 July to 16 August 2024. In addition, 14 interviews were conducted from 11 June to 15 July 2024.¹

Both the questionnaire and the interviews were based on three evaluation dimensions: relevance, effectiveness and sustainability (see table I.1).

Table I.1
Evaluation dimensions

Dimension	Definition	Issues
Relevance	Assesses whether the Strategic Plan objectives were adapted to the needs and challenges of national statistical offices.	Alignment between stated objectives and regional statistical needs Alignment between the outputs of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and regional statistical challenges
Effectiveness	Assesses whether the Strategic Plan met the three proposed strategic goals. ^a	Organization and management Technical capacity development Coordination and cooperation
Sustainability	Assesses the capacity to sustain implementation of the Strategic Plan over time. The aim is to determine the extent to which the tasks of the working groups can be replicated in the next decade.	Human and economic resources

Source: Prepared by the authors.

^a Strategic goal 1: To strengthen the organization and management practices of the national statistical offices and the integration and coordination of national statistical systems. Strategic goal 2: To foster the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information. Strategic goal 3: To foster coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and subregional and international organizations.

The results for each of the dimensions are presented below.

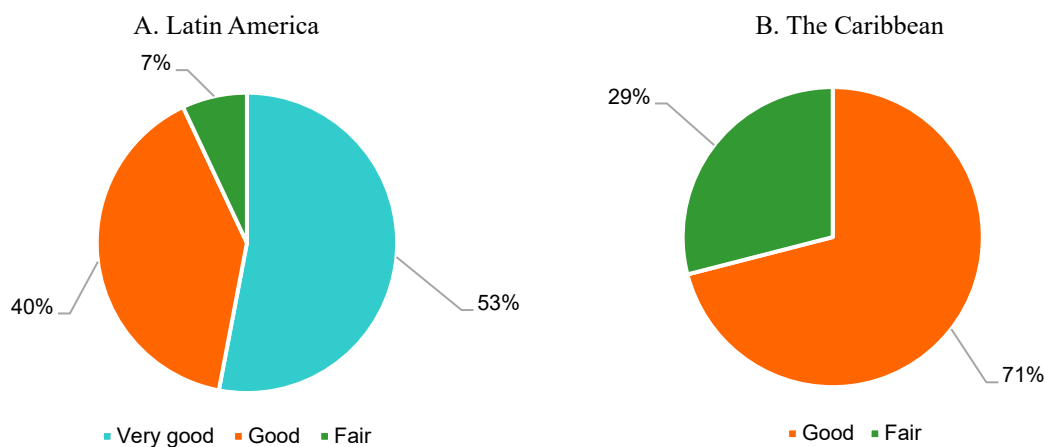
A. RELEVANCE

The analysis of this dimension sought to measure the alignment between the activities carried out in the framework of the Conference over the past 10 years and the needs and challenges of NSOs in the region during that period. The overall aspects and mechanisms for participation were evaluated, including working groups, the Knowledge Transfer Network and Conference seminars and side events.

¹ See annex 1 for more details.

The questionnaire results show that activities carried out in the framework of the Conference over the past decade received a positive evaluation overall, particularly in Latin American countries. In response to the question on the relevance of activities carried out in the last 10 years to address regional statistical challenges—such as the 2020 round of censuses, the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts, the development of environmental statistics, and the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the data revolution—93% of Latin American countries rated the alignment between the activities implemented through the Conference and regional statistical challenges as “good” or “very good” (see figure I.1A).

Figure I.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: evaluation of the relevance of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025
relative to the needs and challenges of national statistical offices
(Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of the results of the questionnaire circulated to national statistical offices.

In the case of Caribbean countries, the relevance of activities is assessed as good (71%) and fair (29%), reflecting challenges in the alignment of national agendas with the programme of activities of the Statistical Conference (see figure I.1B).

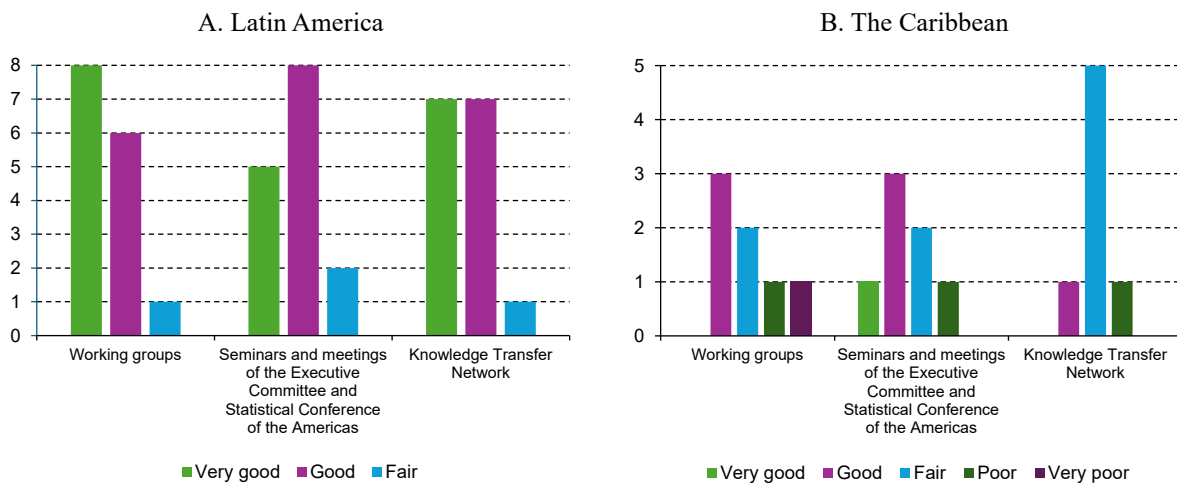
With reference to the interviews, while a comprehensive assessment of the past decade was not possible because several interviewees had been in office for less than 10 years, activities were still rated positively, as described below.

Mention must first be made of the unprecedented development that marked the second half of the implementation period of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025: the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The global situation warranted the establishment of new practices and acceleration of emerging practices. One of the most highly rated activities in the period under consideration—and also a consequence of the pandemic—was the integration of videoconferencing as an ongoing practice within the Knowledge Transfer Network.² Virtual meetings for collaboration and exchange have become increasingly important for the regional statistical community and have been rated positively by all interviewees.

² The Knowledge Transfer Network is a virtual site created within the framework of the Conference, which serves as a repository and space for disseminating the results and activities of the working groups of the Statistical Conference, as well as those of the regional statistical community. Shortly before the pandemic, and especially since that time, the subsection “Conectados RTC” was reactivated, with the aim of organizing and disseminating webinars, under the coordination of the National Institute of Statistics of Chile. See [online] <https://rtc-cea.cepal.org/en>.

While the activities carried out through cooperation mechanisms, such as the Knowledge Transfer Network and working groups, received positive feedback in the survey and interviews conducted in Latin America, the Caribbean paints a different picture, with a more critical assessment. This can be explained to a large extent by the language barrier: simultaneous interpretation is often needed for meetings and events of the Knowledge Transfer Network and working groups, for which sufficient resources are not always available, making it difficult to include English-speaking countries. In contrast, seminars held in the framework of Executive Committee and Conference meetings received more positive feedback from the Caribbean, given the availability of resources for simultaneous interpretation (see figure I.2).

Figure I.2
Latin America and the Caribbean: evaluation of the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, by cooperation mechanism
(Number of countries)



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of the results of the questionnaire circulated to national statistical offices.

While the 2020 round of population and housing censuses were also heavily affected by the pandemic, they received a major boost from the Knowledge Transfer Network. According to interview findings, while restrictions such as lockdowns imposed by countries to prevent the spread of the virus made the work of NSOs more difficult, webinars held in the framework of the Network and publications on the subject were key support tools. In the case of censuses and household surveys, the use of videoconferences and hybrid data collection methodologies was highly beneficial to NSOs and enabled them to carry out their activities. As a result, the Statistical Conference has been evaluated positively for its facilitation and fostering of spaces for sharing knowledge and experience between countries.

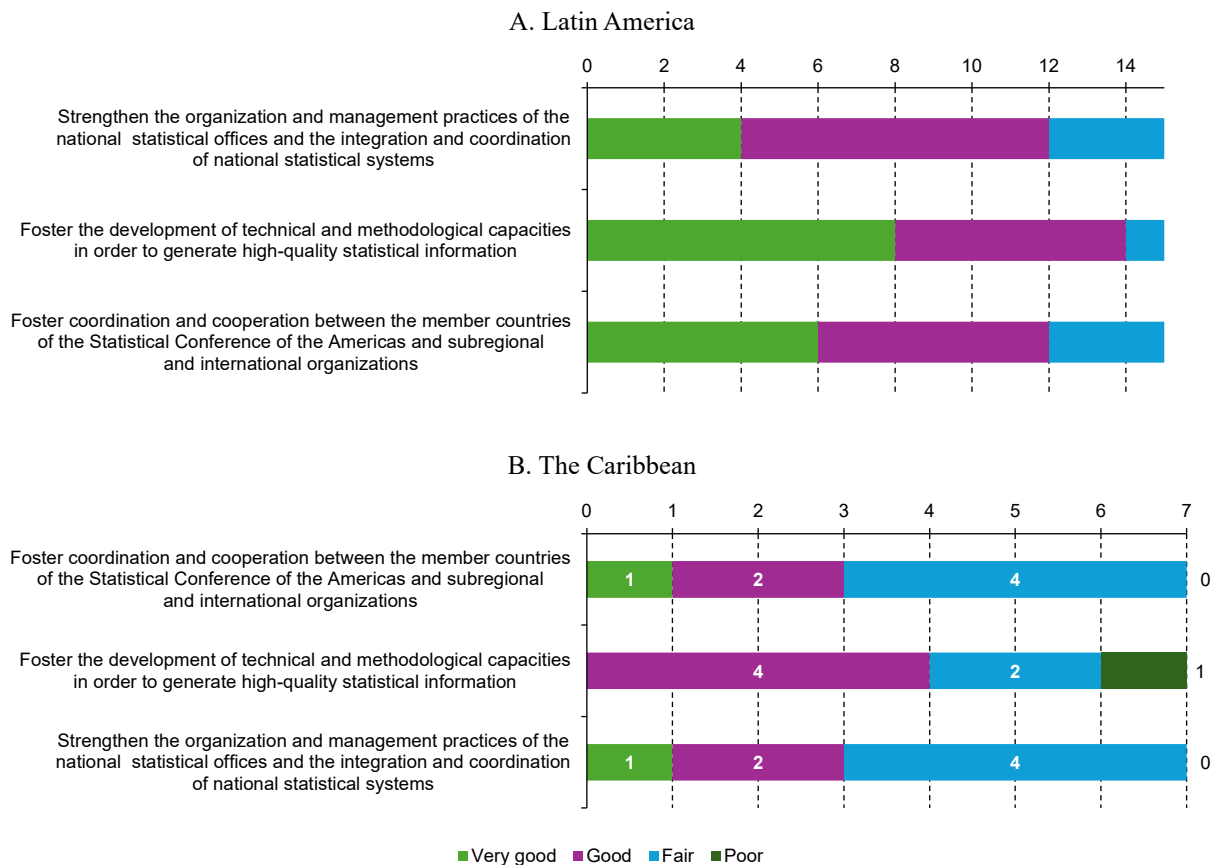
The activities implemented in the past decade include the strengthening of the institutional framework for statistics in the region, notably through publications such as the Generic Law on Official Statistics for Latin America, the updated Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean and quality frameworks aligned with regional and international standards. These documents serve as benchmarks and targets that allow offices to identify their own shortcomings and move forward in implementing the necessary changes. Another topic mentioned was the alignment between some needs of NSOs and Conference activities on issues such as the integration of statistical and geospatial information, environmental statistics and the use of alternative data sources. In addition, data disaggregation efforts related to the Sustainable Development Goals received a positive evaluation.

B. EFFECTIVENESS

Under this dimension, the assessment focused on the degree of achievement of the three strategic goals of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025: (i) strengthen the organization and management practices of national statistical offices and the integration and coordination of national statistical systems; (ii) foster the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information; and (iii) foster coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and subregional and international organizations.

According to the questionnaire results, countries provided generally positive assessments of the level of fulfilment of the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2015–2025, particularly in Latin America. Strategic goal 2 on fostering the development of technical and methodological capacities received a higher rating in both Latin American and Caribbean countries, while the goals on strengthening of management practices and fostering coordination and cooperation among countries have not been as positive (see figure I.3).

Figure I.3
Latin America and the Caribbean: assessment of level of achievement
of Strategic Plan, 2015–2025, by strategic goal
(Number of countries)



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of the results of the questionnaire circulated to national statistical offices.

These findings are supported by those of the interviews, which reaffirm the role played by the Conference in developing technical and methodological capacities. Working groups and the Knowledge Transfer Network have both played an important role as spaces for sharing and generating knowledge. The results for each strategic goal are presented below.

1. Strengthen the organization and management practices of the national statistical offices and the integration and coordination of national statistical systems

The findings highlight the efforts and achievements in modernizing and strengthening statistical systems in Latin America. Also mentioned are the contributions of the Generic Law on Official Statistics for Latin America and the updating of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Within the framework of the Conference and drawing on expert guidance, work has been undertaken to compile good practices for a more efficient use of resources and to integrate and coordinate statistical systems by adopting international good practices and modernizing statistical laws.

2. Foster the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information

The interviews are consistent with the questionnaire results, highlighting the achievements of the Conference over the past decade, particularly in the area of building technical and methodological capacities. They also draw attention to the mechanisms that have facilitated such efforts, acknowledging the progress made by working groups and the importance of videoconferencing in the framework of the Knowledge Transfer Network. Both are essential for capacity development, as they foster the adoption of good practices and sharing of lessons learned between countries with different experiences. More specifically, the Network provides a valuable forum for exchanging ideas and experiences on censuses and fostering the practical application of knowledge in NSOs.

Countries have benefited in areas such as small area estimation, data collection methodologies for censuses and household surveys in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, gender and labour statistics, peer review, innovation and the use of alternative data sources.

3. Foster coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and subregional and international organizations

Despite the positive evaluation of efforts made, this goal may be the most challenging to achieve, especially owing to the region's heterogeneity.

The Conference has helped to ensure effective collaboration among countries and to foster the exchange of knowledge and the development of common positions on statistical matters. It has also played a key role in technical coordination and capacity-building, facilitating statistical development through working groups and the technical assistance of international organizations.

In keeping with the above, respondents value the support and input of the international organizations that serve as technical secretariats of the working groups. This has allowed countries to have more direct contact with these entities and to benefit from their technical expertise.

Among the issues is the need to deepen collaboration with the Caribbean and focus on issues of common interest, providing countries with resources and targeted strategies to help them overcome the constraints they face. It is important to address not only language barriers, but also differences in resources, institutional frameworks and general characteristics of smaller NSOs in the Caribbean. The challenge lies in building bridges through matters of genuine interest and use to these countries; that is, establishing greater linkages between the agendas of the Caribbean and of the Conference.

Additional challenges that have been identified include increasing the region's participation in international forums, building greater regional cohesion, improving representation in other regions and strengthening the sharing of experiences in order to learn from advanced practices in other countries.

C. SUSTAINABILITY

This dimension refers to the capacity to sustain the implementation of the Strategic Plan over time, particularly through the activities of working groups. While NSOs recognize that working group activities are somewhat limited by the availability of resources, they also underline the importance of membership in those groups.

In fact, respondents highly value the working groups as spaces for discussion and sharing of experiences and knowledge, as well as the products they develop, particularly the methodological guides, which have fostered mutual and horizontal learning. NSOs also show great interest and a sense of belonging towards these groups. The contributions of technical secretariats, especially those of international organizations, are also rated positively.

Along with this positive feedback, several proposals were made to strengthen the working groups' performance, such as establishing partnerships and links with other stakeholders and academic institutions and building networks that foster cooperation and knowledge sharing. Another recommendation is to improve the follow-up of the working groups, as not all progress at the same pace. The challenges cited include language and skills barriers across countries of the region, hence the proposal to design strategies that facilitate the integration of offices in English-speaking countries and those with fewer resources. Lastly, the issues addressed by the working groups should be pragmatic, so that the products developed have a direct positive impact on the work of institutions.

II. CONTEXT ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

This chapter provides an overview of the current institutional, economic and technological landscape of the region's NSOs. The questionnaire results are presented and combined with information gathered from the interviews.

The study analysed the statistical capacities of NSOs to carry out routine activities and, more specifically, their assessment of their current situation. The Inter-American Development Bank definition of statistical capacity, used as a reference for the study, is understood as the existence of a permanent structure or system with sufficient resources to generate relevant and quality statistical data on a sustained basis, and to disseminate them adequately and in a timely manner.³ It includes the following dimensions:

- Dimension I: the human, financial, technological resources and infrastructure that are typically available to the statistical system for statistical data production and dissemination.
- Dimension II: the characteristics, regulations and institutional practices of statistical organizations.
- Dimension III: the statistical production methodologies (including primary data collection) used in data production.
- Dimension IV: the methodologies and practices for disseminating the data produced.
- Dimension V: the range of statistical products developed.

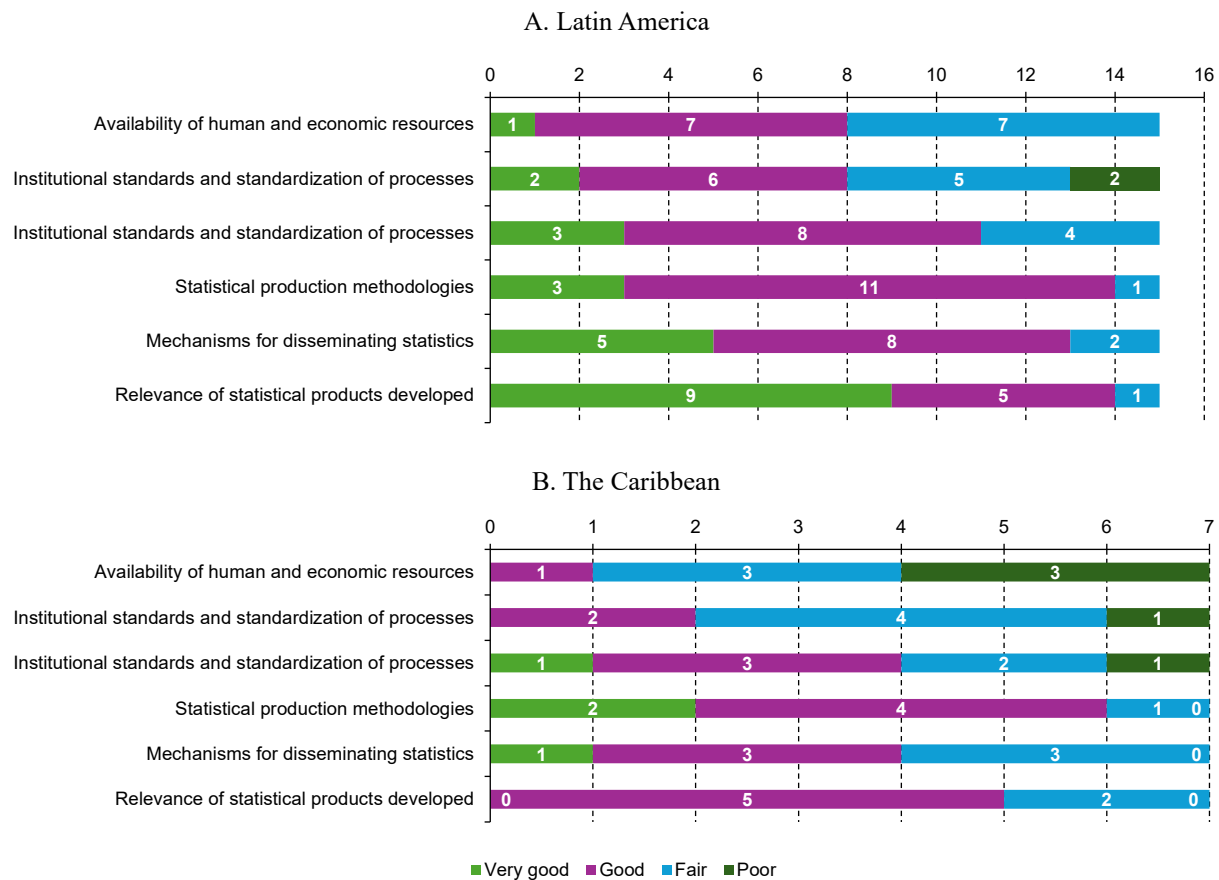
For the purposes of the questionnaire, dimension I was divided into two: human and financial resources; and technological resources and infrastructure.

As shown in figure II.1, in both Latin America and the Caribbean, the dimensions with the highest rating or in which NSOs report the highest levels of capacity relate to the relevance of the statistical products developed, the statistical production methodologies used and the mechanisms for disseminating statistics. In contrast, the dimensions that have the lowest ratings relate to human, economic and technological resources.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the countries and the realities of each vary greatly, making it difficult to conduct a general analysis of statistical capacities and to implement measures that benefit the region as a whole. The results of a classification exercise show that this heterogeneity stems from the statistical capacities of NSOs in middle-income countries, which range from average to high levels. This suggests that while NSOs can adequately carry out their activities, they face persistent resource constraints or shortages, hindering their ability to execute more than core tasks and requirements. In other words, the region's NSOs suffer the paradoxical consequences of existing in middle-income countries: while their level of capacity precludes access to external financial resources, they cannot escape the predicament of having to cover basic institutional needs.

³ L. Beccaria, "Capacidad estadística: una propuesta para su medición", *Nota Técnica*, No. IDB-TN-1274, Washington, D.C., Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 2017, p. 2.

Figure II.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: assessment of statistical capacities
of national statistical offices, by dimension
(Number of countries)



Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of the results of the questionnaire circulated to national statistical offices.

In the following detailed analysis, the issues raised in the interviews are grouped into three main dimensions: institutional, economic, and methodological and technological.

A. INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION

The interviews conducted revealed a number of commonalities regarding the current institutional context of NSOs, which are described below.

1. Regulatory framework and institutional autonomy

Many countries have to deal with outdated regulatory frameworks which do not adequately reflect the autonomy of their statistical offices. Statistical offices' existing legal frameworks should be updated and adapted to ensure their independence and relevance. In many cases, these frameworks do not ensure the full

autonomy of NSOs, leaving them exposed to changes of government and political pressures that may affect the independence and quality of their data production. It is also important to have laws in place that facilitate data collection and management, as well as interoperability with other governmental and private bodies.

2. Coordination and collaboration challenges

The relationship between NSOs and other governmental or private entities presents recurrent challenges, especially in the area of cooperation and information-sharing. NSOs seek to improve their collaboration with other entities and sectors to optimize their data access and use, particularly for administrative records. However, this raises issues of trust and incentives: while some countries have laws that require agencies to share data with statistical offices, actual collaboration depends on the generation of benefits for all and the confidentiality of personal data. There is also a need to develop regulatory interoperability in order to align, for instance, personal data protection laws with statistical laws.

3. Institutional capacities and resources

The limited availability of financial and human resources is an ongoing challenge for statistical institutes in Latin America and the Caribbean, which hampers their ability to generate quality data and implement innovations. These resources are essential for modernizing infrastructure, improving data collection and analysis methodologies and maintaining institutional stability. In addition, turnover at the helm of offices affects their technical and organizational stability, weakening their effectiveness and putting their independence at risk.

4. Relevance and credibility among the public

NSOs also face challenges related to the relevance and public perception of their data compared with the private sector. The relationship with private data producers and other governmental organizations is uneven, which suggests that regulatory changes could solve these problems, although there may be challenges in implementing them.

In some countries, statistical institutes have gained public trust and appreciation. However, in other countries, they risk being seen as irrelevant, especially when compared with the private sector, which sometimes provides more timely data. This underscores the importance of statistical offices demonstrating their ability to respond to data needs in a reliable and timely manner.

5. International standards and good practices

Compliance with international standards and good statistical practices is a key strategy to protect statistical institutions from political and economic shocks. By adopting international guidelines and standards, these offices can ensure the quality and comparability of data at the international level and shield their operation from regional instabilities. Countries also hold the view that incorporating such practices can facilitate international collaboration and contribute to the development of technical capacities in the region.

B. ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Statistical offices face multiple challenges that affect their human and financial resources and their ability to fulfil their strategic mission.

One recurrent problem is the failure to attract and retain qualified staff, largely owing to the lack of competitive salary incentives and clear career plans. In several institutions, high staff turnover results in a steady loss of specialized talent. Once trained, professionals often migrate to sectors with better salary conditions, which prevents NSOs from keeping technical knowledge in-house.

The technological transition raises the need for continuous training in new methodologies, such as the use of big data, artificial intelligence and the analysis of administrative records. Human capital must therefore be strengthened, with a particular focus on specialized technical skills, which are scarce in many countries of the region. However, the capacity to respond to these needs is limited by tight budgets and a lack of incentives for professional development.

Budgetary constraints are one of the main challenges facing these institutions. The decrease in resource allocation generates a vicious circle, as reduced budgets lead to lower data production capacity, thus weakening arguments regarding future allocations. This is particularly critical in middle-income countries, where NSOs face fundamental challenges, which include conducting censuses or household surveys, which absorb most of the available resources.

Despite the constraints, there are opportunities to increase operational efficiency through technology uptake. In some cases, digitalization and process automation have increased productivity without the need for significant additional resources. However, the potential for innovation remains underutilized owing to economic constraints and a shortage of specialized technical staff.

C. METHODOLOGICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

The region's statistical offices are undergoing a technological transition, marked by both significant advances and major structural and operational challenges.

Many countries have made large strides in the adoption of modern technologies, including process digitalization, the use of mobile devices to gather data and the installation of cloud infrastructure. Through these technologies, the accuracy, efficiency and accessibility of statistical production have been enhanced.

Some countries are also exploring the use of advanced tools like artificial intelligence and machine learning to optimize data production and analysis. Although promising, these initiatives are constrained by the need for large volumes of high-quality data and by the lack of specialized technical and human resources.

While technological development is encouraging, it is broadly conditioned by budgetary limits, which often make it difficult to procure advanced infrastructure and contract qualified technical personnel.

The failure to approach technology adoption strategically also poses certain risks, including that of using technologies without thoroughly assessing their impact and suitability for real needs.

The degree of innovation varies widely across the region. While some countries are at the vanguard of the technological transformation, others continue to face fundamental barriers that limit even the generation of basic administrative records. These differences reflect a significant gap, which could widen without more coordinated regional support.

The speed of technological change highlights the need for a flexible, adaptable approach. Recent innovations in data collection systems and statistical analysis offer opportunities to maximize limited resources, which enables statistical offices to operate more efficiently. Strengthening internal capacities through training and international collaboration is also a key strategy for closing the technology gap and making progress more sustainable.

D. MAIN CHALLENGES FOR NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICES

The following section presents the main points that emerged from the interviews, aiming to summarize national statistical offices' current situation and vision for their short- and medium-term challenges.

1. Use of administrative records

All interviewees agreed on the need to leverage administrative records to produce official statistics, the main challenge faced by national statistical offices.

Using administrative records is a strategy for complementing and in some cases even replacing traditional methods such as censuses and surveys. If national statistical offices can use these records, they can leverage data from different entities to obtain more detailed, up-to-date statistics. Combining these sources with traditional surveys can improve data quality and frequency, lower costs and facilitate more specific analysis, such as analysis of data disaggregated by geography.

However, this calls for adaptation and investment in new technologies and hiring of personnel with new skills. Regulatory amendments would also be needed to enable access to those records.

2. Innovation and technology

Statistical offices are considering incorporating new technologies and methodologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and big data, as a means of improving the efficiency and accuracy of data collection and analysis. The use of technology tools makes it possible to process large volumes of data more quickly and with greater detail. The use of satellite imaging and geolocalization algorithms also presents a major opportunity to territorialize data and spatial analysis, as they are essential for decision-making in various sectors.

3. Training and adaptation of human capital

Training is required to prepare personnel for technological and methodological changes. This means not just training today's workers in the use of new tools but also attracting professionals with specialized skills

in data analysis, data science and artificial intelligence. Meeting the challenge means seeking ways to adapt incentives, study programmes and training opportunities to enable personnel to satisfy the contemporary demands of statistical production.

4. Regulatory and governance challenges

One major issue is updating legal frameworks to enable secure, efficient data use. This includes ensuring that personal data are protected and maintaining the trust of providers and users. Interoperability and coordination among different entities are essential to create a more cohesive statistical system. A data governance model must be established to ensure the quality, reliability and confidentiality of information.

5. Communication and dissemination of data

Improving the means of communicating and disseminating statistical results is important, as high-quality data must not only be produced; they must also be accessible to and used by the public and decision makers. This includes developing more proactive dissemination policies, creating statistical literacy programmes and establishing clear, accessible schedules for data releases.

6. International collaboration and learning from good practices

Cooperation with other regions and with strategic stakeholders, such as universities and the private sector, is critical to keep methodologies up to date and adopt good practices. Incorporating international experiences gives statistical offices access to innovative approaches and helps them to avoid being left behind in the global context. This collaboration also implies sharing knowledge and resources to address common challenges in the production of statistics.

7. Specific challenges of environmental and social statistics

Environmental and social statistics are specific areas in need of further development. Climate change and other environmental subjects must also be more thoroughly incorporated into the statistical agenda. Lastly, gender statistics and those that touch on other social aspects present opportunities to innovate and respond to the new information demands of society, policymakers and policy implementers.

III. PROPOSED PILLARS OF ACTION FOR THE 2026–2035 STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2015–2025 Strategic Plan and current evaluations of national statistical offices indicate that the vast majority of the statistical offices in Latin America and the Caribbean are facing similar problems. As noted in this report, the issues faced by institutions are affecting them now and posing challenges for the medium and long term.

In line with the problems described in the previous chapter, five pillars are proposed to identify strategic and specific goals for the strategic plan for the period 2026–2035.

Pillar 1: Institutional autonomy and strengthening

Vision: foster the independence and sustainability of statistical offices through robust regulatory frameworks and sufficient resources.

- **Modernization of legal frameworks for official statistics:** encourage the Conference’s member countries to update their regulatory frameworks and ensure national statistical offices’ technical autonomy and ability to access administrative records.
- **Financial sustainability:** design strategies to strengthen domestic and external financing for national statistical offices, including international cooperation mechanisms and public-private partnerships.
- **Data governance models:** drive the adoption of international data management standards to guarantee quality, interoperability and public trust.

Pillar 2: Modernization and innovation

Vision: consolidate a regional statistical system adapted to the demands of the twenty-first century relating to technology and issues of concern.

- **Digital transformation of national statistical offices:** encourage the adoption of advanced technology solutions to incorporate processes that employ big data, geospatial data, satellite imaging and artificial intelligence, to generate more information using modern tools to gather, process and analyse data.
- **Inclusive technological infrastructure:** facilitate the establishment of mechanisms for countries to exchange technologies and good practices in order to enable national statistical offices with fewer resources to access technology solutions, and to close gaps.
- **Innovative data production:** foster the integration of administrative records and alternative sources of data into the production of official statistics and enforce quality and data protection standards.
- **Strategic topics in statistical production:** further develop topics of relevance for the region, including environmental and climate change statistics, shed light on gender gaps and establish mechanisms for producing disaggregated data.

Pillar 3: Development of human talent

Vision: encourage the establishment of highly qualified technical teams and design talent retention strategies for statistical offices.

- **Continuous training:** drive the implementation of training programmes on the use of emerging technologies and advanced methodologies in statistics and data science.
- **Talent acquisition and retention:** design incentives to strengthen the engagement of statistics professionals that include well-defined career plans and competitive salaries.
- **Collaboration with academia:** foster the establishment of partnerships with universities and research centres to attract data analysis and data science specialists.

Pillar 4: Accessibility and strategic communication

Vision: make official statistics a public good such that all sectors of society understand and use them.

- **Proactive communication:** spur the development of innovative dissemination strategies that include interactive portals, attractive visuals and clear narratives for the general public.
- **Statistical literacy:** implement training programmes for decision makers, the media and the general public, and encourage the responsible use of official statistics.
- **Open data networks:** work to develop the technical and methodological conditions that enable open data standards for data-sharing, and foster transparency and collaboration among countries.

Pillar 5: Stronger regional cooperation

Vision: transform the region into a model for countries' integration and mutual learning.

- **Technical exchange networks:** consolidate the Knowledge Transfer Network and the working groups as permanent collaborative learning spaces and prioritize the inclusion of the Caribbean and its challenges in the production of official statistics.
- **Participation in international forums:** boost the region's active representation at global forums, showcase regional achievements and provide continuous updates on international innovations.
- **Regional synergies:** establish mechanisms for countries to support each other and conduct joint initiatives, leveraging their specific strengths and abilities.

Annex 1

**DETAILED RESULTS AND GUIDING QUESTIONS
FOR THE INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRE**

A. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Table 1
Countries and stakeholders interviewed

Country or institution	Description	Number of interviews
Argentina	Former Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	1
Bahamas	Member of the Executive Committee	1
Chile	Former Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC	1
Colombia	Former Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC	1
Dominican Republic	Former Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC	1
Ecuador	Former Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC	1
Grenada	Member of the Executive Committee	1
Mexico	Former Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC	1
Peru	Member of the Executive Committee	1
Spain	Member of the Executive Committee	1
Uruguay	Member of the Executive Committee	1
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	Regional expert	1
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Regional expert	1
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	Regional expert	1
Total		14

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of the results of the interviews.

B. REGIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was sent to all member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (including associate members of ECLAC). However, only Latin American and Caribbean countries were included in the analysis.

Table 2
Countries that responded to the regional questionnaire

1	Argentina	13	Guatemala
2	Aruba	14	Honduras
3	Bahamas	15	Jamaica
4	Belize	16	Mexico
5	Bermuda	17	Nicaragua
6	Chile	18	Panama
7	Colombia	19	Paraguay
8	Costa Rica	20	Peru
9	Cuba	21	Spain
10	Dominican Republic	22	Suriname
11	Ecuador	23	United States
12	Grenada	24	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Source: Prepared by the authors, on the basis of the results of the questionnaire sent to national statistical offices.

C. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRE

1. In-depth interviews of former Chairs of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and of current Executive Committee members

Former Chairs of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and current Executive Committee members

This interview seeks to gauge your opinion of the activities conducted in the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas over the past 10 years and the current conditions in your institution, to identify basic elements for designing the next strategic plan for the period 2026 to 2035.

The first set of questions evaluates the events of recent years. This is followed by questions analysing the current conditions of your institution and the medium- and long-term projections.

(a) Questions evaluating the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

1. In your role as Chair of the Conference [or as a member of the Executive Committee], but also as a representative of a member country of the Conference, what were the main regional statistical needs in recent years, and to what extent have they been met by the different activities of the Conference?
2. What were the regional challenges in the area of statistics in recent years, and to what extent have the activities organized by the Conference addressed them?
3. The first strategic goal of the 2015–2025 Strategic Plan of the Statistical Conference of the Americas is to “strengthen the organization and management practices of the national statistical offices and the integration and coordination of national statistical systems”. To what extent have the activities led by the Conference improved the organization and management practices of the region’s national statistical offices? What aspects of the Conference’s activities should be improved?

4. The second strategic goal is “to foster the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information”. To what extent have the activities led by the Conference fostered the development of technical and methodological capacities within the region’s national statistical offices? What areas should the Statistical Conference of the Americas focus on in the coming years?
5. The third strategic goal is “to foster coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and subregional and international organizations”. To what extent has the Statistical Conference of the Americas fostered collaborative activities between member countries and international organizations? How could these relationships be improved?
6. What are the challenges and opportunities in implementing the activities of the working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas?

(b) Analysis questions: national statistical offices’ current situation and expectations for the medium and long term

These questions aim to gauge the circumstances of your national statistical office and your perspective on the regional situation.

1. How would you describe the current institutional scenario at your national statistical office and how do you think it will evolve in the coming years, in particular with regard to regulatory frameworks, the national statistical system and the relationship with other State institutions?
2. What human resources management challenges do you expect in the coming years?
3. How would you describe the current situation at your institution and the future challenges stemming from new technological developments aimed at the production of official statistics? Do you expect your institution to progress in tandem with technological advances, or do you anticipate setbacks?
4. What topics should be included for the next decade?
5. Thank you very much for your time. Do you have any further comments on topics not addressed in the interview?

2. In-depth interviews of experts in regional statistics

Updating the strategic plan of the Statistical Conference of the Americas for the period 2026–2035

Good morning, and thank you very much for your time. The Statistical Conference of the Americas is collecting information for a regional assessment of the current conditions at national statistical offices to identify the main elements of the new strategic plan for the period 2026 to 2035.

This interview seeks to analyse the institutional, economic and technological context of the production of official statistics in the region and to establish projections for the medium and long term.

(a) Guiding questions and topics to be addressed

1. Based on your knowledge and experience, how would you describe the current regional situation and the future challenges for the production of official statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean? Please consider the following subjects:
 - (i) The institutional context of national statistical offices and their relationship with other data producers.
 - (ii) Whether national statistical offices' human and financial resources are able to meet demands for information.
 - (iii) Technological developments and their impact on the production of official statistics.
2. How would you assess the role of the Statistical Conference of the Americas over the past 10 years? Which contributions of the Conference and its working groups stand out over this period?
3. In preparing the strategic plan for the period 2026–2035, which thematic areas will be important and should be considered? How can the Conference strengthen collaboration with international organizations?
4. Thank you very much for your time. Do you have any further comments on topics not addressed in the interview?

(b) Questions in the regional questionnaire

- Name
- Institution
- Country
- Email

EVALUATION OF THE 2015–2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

1. How relevant have the activities carried out by the Statistical Conference of the Americas been over the last 10 years in terms of addressing regional statistical challenges, such as the 2020 round of censuses, the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA), the development of environmental statistics, the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the data revolution?
5 Very relevant / 4 Relevant / 3 Fairly relevant / 2 Not relevant / 1 Very irrelevant
2. How would you rate the efforts of the following bodies to address statistical topics that are a priority for your institution over the past 10 years?
 - (a) Working groups
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (b) Seminars in the framework of meetings of the Executive Committee and the Conference
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (c) Knowledge Transfer Network
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor

3. Which five deliverables of the working groups have been most useful for your institution? (see [online] <https://rtc-cea.cepal.org/en/documents>).
4. Evaluate the activities of the Conference over the past 10 years on the basis of the objectives for the decade.
 - (a) Strengthen the organization and management practices of the national statistical offices and the integration and coordination of national statistical systems
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (b) Foster the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (c) Foster coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and subregional and international organizations
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
5. To what extent are resources available at your institution for activities linked with the Statistical Conference of the Americas? Are the resources sufficient?
Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree
6. In general, how have the actions of the Conference affected the development of your institution's official statistics?

CURRENT NEEDS AND CHALLENGES AT YOUR INSTITUTION

This section aims to gauge the current context of national statistical offices and projections for the next 10 years.

1. Regarding the capacity of your institution to conduct regular statistics activities, what is the current situation in each of the following areas?
 - (a) Availability of human and financial resources
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (b) Availability of technological resources and infrastructure
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (c) Institutional standards and process standardization
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (d) Statistical production methodologies
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (e) Mechanisms for disseminating statistics
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor
 - (f) Relevance of statistical products
5 Very good / 4 Good / 3 Fair / 2 Poor / 1 Very poor

2. In terms of the production of official statistics, what are the five most important topics for your institution over the next decade? Please list them and briefly explain why.
3. How can the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas contribute to meeting those challenges?
4. Are there any topics not addressed in the questionnaire that you wish to add, which could be reviewed in the framework of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2035?

Annex 2

**A. MAIN TOPICS ADDRESSED AT THE PLENARY MEETINGS
OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

To identify relevant topics in statistics at the global level and complement the regional perspective gained from the interviews, a review was conducted of the main points examined at the plenary meetings of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) over the period 2020–2024, which focused on analysing innovative topics and on modernization in the field of official statistics.

In general, the topics addressed were linked with the use of artificial intelligence, big data and cloud systems to improve accuracy and efficiency. The need to strengthen ethics and data governance, and to deepen public trust and transparency through flexible ethical frameworks and international best practices, was also underscored.

Climate change was also a key topic. Efforts were made to integrate environmental statistics into public policies and to harmonize indicators linked with emissions, mitigation and adaptation. New methodologies were also explored to measure emerging phenomena, such as the circular economy, new forms of employment and subjective poverty, by integrating administrative and non-traditional data.

Also emphasized was the role of statistical offices in crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the need to foster resilience, operational continuity and innovation in response to the demand for more disaggregated, timely and relevant data. This holistic approach aims to ensure the usefulness and sustainability of official statistics in a constantly changing environment.

The above-mentioned topics reflect the current situation of national statistical offices in Europe and the challenges expected over the short and medium term. In many respects, the situation is similar to that of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is facing issues common to all institutions worldwide. A brief overview of each point is presented below.

1. Adapting to new data demands

- Greater disaggregation, frequency and timeliness of data: reform how statistics are collected and processed, since users demand more detailed, up-to-date data, especially in emergencies (such as pandemics or climate emergencies).
- Integrate new data sources: incorporate big data and data from social networks and mobile devices to complement traditional surveys and improve the coverage and relevance of statistics.

2. Digital transformation

- Use of advanced technologies: the adoption of tools such as machine learning, artificial intelligence and synthetic data offers a variety of opportunities, but also poses challenges linked with privacy and data quality and interpretation.
- Technological modernization: migration to cloud-based systems and open-source software implies overcoming barriers that include training for personnel, cybersecurity risks and operational continuity.

3. Ethics and trust in data

- Emerging ethical dilemmas: establish flexible and adaptable ethical frameworks, given the privacy and equity concerns raised by the use of personal data and advanced techniques (such as artificial intelligence).
- Social acceptance: clearly communicate the benefits and safeguards associated with the use of new sources of data to gain public trust.

4. International and private sector collaboration

- Global harmonization: establish common standards to ensure data comparability, especially in emerging areas such as the digital economy, migration and climate change.
- Access to private data: establish sustainable, ethical agreements that enable access to data from the private sector, with robust legal frameworks that protect individual rights and facilitate collaboration.

5. Climate change and sustainability

- Environmental statistics: develop more comprehensive indicators to measure the impact of climate change and the circular economy and sustainability. This includes the integration of geospatial statistics and standardized methodologies.
- Climate action: strengthen the contribution of official statistics to the follow-up of international commitments, such as the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

6. Inclusion and diversity in statistics

- Vulnerable populations: improve the capacity to collect data on groups for which data are difficult to capture, such as emigrants, children in alternative care or persons with disabilities.
- Social cohesion: measure phenomena such as political polarization and the impact of social networks on social inclusion.

7. Training and organizational development

- Training of personnel: skill-building in the areas of emerging technologies, strategic communication and statistical ethics is critical.
- Cultural change: foster a user-centred approach that focuses on innovation and adaptability in statistical offices.

8. Data integration and governance

- Interoperability: improve the integration of data from a variety of sources (administrative, traditional and new) through common standards and well-defined governance frameworks.
- Automation: increase the use of automated processes to boost efficiency and reduce errors in statistical production.