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of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

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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 (ECLAC) is a subsidiary body of the Commission, established pursuant to United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/7 of 25 July 2000, to contribute to the progress of policies on statistics and statistical activities in the countries of the region. The members of the Conference are ECLAC member countries, generally represented by the highest national statistical authorities.

The objectives of the Conference are as follows: (i) to promote the development and improvement of national statistics and work to ensure that they are comparable internationally, bearing in mind the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission, the specialized agencies and other relevant organizations; (ii) to promote international, regional and bilateral cooperation among national offices and international and regional agencies; and (iii) to draw up a biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities to meet the demands of the countries of the region, subject to the availability of resources.

In order to guide its work as the main body for coordination, cooperation and strengthening of statistical systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Conference adopted two ten-year strategic plans for the periods 2005–2015 and 2015–2025. These plans identified structural challenges, promoted joint lines of action and defined shared objectives.

The Strategic Plan, 2026–2035 builds on its predecessors, incorporating lessons learned and projecting a renewed vision for the next decade. It serves as a key instrument to guide collective action by the national statistical systems of the region. Through this Plan, the Conference seeks to strengthen the production and use of official statistics as a regional public good, with the aim of supporting informed decision-making, the design of policies based on reliable information and the monitoring of national and international commitments undertaken by countries.

The Strategic Plan provides a non-binding common regional framework, proposing joint lines of action and cooperation mechanisms that can be advanced by the Conference in its role as an intergovernmental forum. It includes a set of indicators aligned with specific goals, which will facilitate biennial monitoring of progress in implementation, while acknowledging the diversity of capacities, resources and priorities among countries of the region. However, unlike strategic plans developed by national statistical offices, no specific targets are established for the proposed indicators.

This Strategic Plan is shaped by a broader context of international commitments that guide the development of official statistical systems. The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean are explicitly referenced as the core values underpinning it. The goals of the Strategic Plan are closely aligned with those set out in the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data and the Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development, both of which provide guidance for advancing strategic planning, resource mobilization and international cooperation in the field of statistics. Likewise, the Strategic Plan aligns with international development commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for high-quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Strategic Plan, 2026–2035 was developed through an inclusive and participatory process, supported by an advisory group whose members contributed their expertise and knowledge throughout the various stages. A regional online questionnaire and interviews with key stakeholders were used to analyse the strengths and weaknesses in implementing the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025 and to carry out a regional assessment of national statistical offices’ main challenges and needs. These inputs were fundamental for defining the thematic pillars and goals of the present document. The current version has benefited from numerous comments and suggestions received during regional consultations conducted in the first half of 2025. Detailed information on the process and its outcomes is provided in the annex.

A. MAIN CHALLENGES IN THE PRODUCTION OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1. Institutional strengthening

(a) Regulatory frameworks and statistical governance

The national statistical offices of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean face significant challenges with regard to institutional strengthening, especially those related to the regulatory frameworks that govern their operations. In many countries, these frameworks are outdated or insufficient to adequately reflect the leading role of national statistical offices within the national statistical system, safeguard their professional and technical autonomy and protect them from political pressures that may compromise the quality of statistical production. Furthermore, current legal frameworks often do not clearly regulate access to data provided by public and private entities, nor do they establish effective mechanisms for information exchange within national statistical systems.

This situation limits national statistical offices’ ability to coordinate with other actors, use non-traditional data sources, access administrative records and manage data under modern standards of governance and data protection. The absence of a harmonized vision of the national statistical system also hampers the integration and joint use of existing institutional and technical capacities. The overlap of legislation, such as laws on statisticians and personal data protection, combined with the lack of incentives for sharing information undermines interoperability and trust among institutions.

Strengthening statistical governance requires modernizing the legislative and regulatory frameworks related to national statistical offices and national statistical systems as a whole. This includes the establishment of clear mechanisms to ensure their technical and operational independence, including stable mandates for statistical authorities and transparent procedures for their appointment and removal, as well as adequate budget allocations that are safeguarded against political transitions.

Moreover, it is essential to develop institutionalized spaces for effective coordination with other actors in the national statistical system, fostering ongoing cooperation across sectors to facilitate information exchange and management, promote interoperability and encourage the harmonization of methodologies. There is also a need to foster a legal environment that enables sustainable access to data held by the private sector for statistical purposes, under strict observance of statistical codes and good practices.

However, updated legal frameworks alone are not sufficient. Effective and transparent mechanisms for their implementation and monitoring are also required, along with clear accountability systems and tools to ensure compliance. In parallel, inter-agency partnerships and collaboration should be fostered through mechanisms that do not solely rely on the legal context.

Additionally, there must be effective coordination between statistical legislation and personal data protection laws, so as to ensure the safe, ethical and efficient use of information and confidentiality, privacy and legal certainty for all participants in the system, thereby enhancing public trust in official statistics.

(b) Capacity-building and retention of human resources

Another key dimension of institutional strengthening relates to the challenges in ensuring the availability of skilled human resources. A lack of competitive salary incentives and the absence of structured career plans have contributed to high staff turnover. This situation affects both team continuity and the consolidation of institutional technical capacity. Many qualified professionals migrate to the private sector or international organizations, resulting in hard-to-fill vacancies and an erosion of institutional technical knowledge.

In light of this, it is essential to design strategies to attract and retain highly qualified professionals. Such strategies should include enhanced working conditions, continuous training programmes and professional development opportunities and the cultivation of work environments that stimulate creativity and innovation, particularly for younger professionals. Knowledge management and peer-to-peer knowledge transfer mechanisms should also be promoted to maximize existing resources and strengthen team cohesion.

Driving the transition toward the use of advanced tools and methodologies also requires strengthening human capital. It is crucial to train teams in innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, as well as to attract professionals with specialized profiles in data science and emerging fields.

To address this challenge, it is recommended to establish strategic partnerships with universities, research centres, international organizations and private sector entities. Such collaborations can facilitate knowledge-sharing, the development of joint training programmes, the incorporation of new generations of statisticians into public service and the mobilization of the financial resources required to sustain these efforts.

2. Methodological and technological innovation

(a) Use of administrative records in the production of statistics

There is broad consensus, both at the regional and international levels, regarding the importance of incorporating administrative records as a key source in the production of official statistics. Their integration can complement—and in certain cases replace—traditional sources such as censuses and surveys, leading to cost reductions, improved timeliness of data availability and increased efficiency within statistical systems.

Nonetheless, this transition entails significant challenges. Its successful implementation requires sustained investment in technological infrastructure, technical training for personnel and adjustments to legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure secure, ethical and lawful access to administrative records. In many countries, despite legislation mandating the sharing of data with statistical offices, effective cooperation is often hindered by institutional mistrust and a lack of incentives to collaborate.

To overcome these barriers, it is essential to establish clear institutional frameworks fostering cooperation and the pursuit of shared benefits, implement protocols to ensure the statistical quality of records, and develop interoperability mechanisms to facilitate the flow of information from data-providing entities, while ensuring the protection of that information. Moreover, the adoption of international good practices in the use of administrative records could significantly contribute to enhancing the efficiency and reliability of national statistical systems across the region.

(b) Emerging technologies and new methodologies

National statistical offices are modernizing their technology against a global backdrop of rapid advances in computational capacity and the development of new analytical methods. These changes have paved the way for the automation of statistical processes and the use of non-traditional data sources, which can be harnessed to complement or transform the production of official statistics. Emerging technologies such as big data analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning and the systematic use of geospatial information hold considerable potential to transform the way data are collected, processed, analysed and disseminated.

In recent years, many statistical institutions have made significant progress in areas such as process digitalization, the use of mobile devices for data collection, the integration of geospatial information and the application of machine learning-based coding techniques. However, major challenges remain in scaling up the use of these technologies, largely owing to budget constraints, outdated regulatory frameworks and a shortage of specialized technical personnel.

Bridging these gaps requires strengthening international cooperation, facilitating the sharing of good practices and establishing strategic partnerships. There is also a need to design sustainable financing mechanisms that enable access to advanced infrastructure, the development of context-specific technological solutions and the formation of multidisciplinary teams.

At the same time, technological innovation should be accompanied by a renewal of methodological approaches. Traditional conceptual and operational frameworks should be reviewed and adapted to incorporate approaches that respond to increasingly complex and fast changing social, economic and environmental trends. A comprehensive strategic planning approach that aligns the adoption of technologies with national information priorities will help ensure that these innovations are sustainable, scalable and useful for decision-making based on reliable information.

3. Dissemination and accessibility of statistics

The production of high-quality data is a necessary but not sufficient condition to ensure that such data contribute to decision-making and public debate. For data to be useful, they should be accessible, understandable and disseminated in a timely manner. In this regard, national statistical offices have developed communication and dissemination strategies aimed at ensuring that information reaches decision-makers, researchers, the media and the public at large in a clear and effective way.

One of the main barriers to the understanding and use of official statistics is the low level of statistical literacy among broad segments of the population. Addressing this challenge requires implementing statistical education programmes tailored to different audiences, as well as providing statistics training for journalists specializing in data. Likewise, it is important to develop interactive tools and user-friendly visualizations that facilitate the interpretation of statistical information.

Data and statistics must also be disseminated in a timely, reliable and structured manner through digital platforms that facilitate access to information, open databases, automated download mechanisms and user-appropriate formats. This must comply with interoperability standards, enabling large-scale and remote access to data science, machine learning and artificial intelligence algorithms.

It is equally important to ensure the continuity and sustainability of institutional dissemination channels, while upholding key principles such as equal access, transparency in the use of methodologies and proper documentation of published statistics. In this regard, the adoption of metadata standards, data traceability systems and user feedback mechanisms significantly enhances the quality of statistical services. Establishing clear, updated and predictable publication calendars is also essential for building trust in the statistical system.

Lastly, greater collaboration should be promoted with the media, universities and other strategic actors to enhance the visibility, understanding and use of official statistics in public debate. Transparency and public trust in the information produced by national statistical systems are fundamental to consolidating their legitimacy and relevance in society.

4. Statistical challenges arising from international recommendations and commitments

National statistical systems are increasingly called upon not only to respond to growing domestic demand for information from policymakers and the general public, but also to provide data for the monitoring of international commitments. This requires the adoption of internationally agreed methodologies and adaptation to continuously evolving international standards.

In the last decade, the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development constituted one of the key challenges, as its monitoring framework placed considerable demands on national statistical systems. At the same time, this challenge served as a powerful driver for improving the production, availability and quality of data. During the period covered by this Strategic Plan, the target year for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals will be reached, and a new international agreement is expected to be adopted to guide member States' priorities and follow-up mechanisms beyond 2030. In this context, one of the ongoing challenges will be to improve the regional harmonization of statistics to ensure data comparability across countries and support collective monitoring of global commitments.

The adoption of methodologies aligned with international agreements not only enables cross-country comparability of statistics but also enhances the credibility of data at the national level. Increasingly, global initiatives and guidelines are focusing on measurements beyond GDP, aiming to capture dimensions of well-being and sustainability that are not reflected in traditional economic indicators. This broader statistical perspective requires a review—and, in many cases, an expansion—of data collection tools, as well as capacity-building to enable national institutions to process and analyse more complex thematically diverse data.

The international statistical community has developed and adopted standards that drive both technical and organizational transformations. These require national statistical systems to demonstrate increasing capacity for adaptation and innovation, while promoting the exploration of new data sources and the application of collection and processing techniques that were previously unused or unavailable. Notable examples of this evolution include the System of National Accounts 2025, the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework and the recommendations of the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians, all of which require the

adaptation of existing data sources and exploration of new ones, along with new data collection and processing techniques. These conceptual and methodological frameworks are complemented by models that guide the modernization of the organizational structure of statistical institutions, such as the Generic Statistical Business Process Model and the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations, as well as updated versions of various international classifications, aimed at ensuring their relevance to the realities being measuring and securing the comparability and coherence of data.

B. VALUES, MISSION AND VISION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Values

The Strategic Plan will be guided by the values established in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics¹ endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean.²

These principles are structured around three main dimensions. First, ethics and professionalism, which entail the promotion of technical independence, impartiality, adherence to scientific principles, respect for statistical confidentiality and a firm commitment to quality. Second, transparency and responsibility, reflected in accountability, clear communication of data, the prevention of misuse of information and the assurance of equitable access. Lastly, cooperation and coordination, which underscore the importance of both national and international alignment, the use of diverse information sources and the application of comparable standards to ensure the consistency and relevance of the statistics produced.

2. Mission

The mission of the Strategic Plan, 2026–2035 is to strengthen the national statistical systems of Latin America and the Caribbean through enhanced institutional development, technological and methodological modernization and the production of relevant, accessible and reliable statistical information. The Strategic Plan seeks to foster a statistical culture based on regional cooperation, innovation and transparency, with a view to consolidating official statistics as a public good that supports informed, inclusive and sustainable development-oriented decision-making.

¹ Principle 1: relevance, impartiality and equal access. Principle 2: professional standards, scientific principles and professional ethics. Principle 3: responsibility and transparency. Principle 4: prevention of misuse. Principle 5: sources of official statistics. Principle 6: confidentiality. Principle 7: legislation. Principle 8: national coordination. Principle 9: use of international standards. Principle 10: international cooperation (see https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/hb/E-fundamental%20principles_A4-WEB.pdf).

² Principle 1: professional independence. Principle 2: coordination of the national statistical system. Principle 3: statistical mandate for data collection. Principle 4: statistical confidentiality. Principle 5: adequacy of resources. Principle 6: quality commitment. Principle 7: impartiality, objectivity and transparency. Principle 8: international cooperation and participation. Principle 9: sound methodology. Principle 10: appropriate statistical procedures. Principle 11: non-excessive burden on respondents. Principle 12: cost-effectiveness. Principle 13: use of secondary data sources. Principle 14: relevance. Principle 15: accuracy and reliability. Principle 16: timeliness and punctuality. Principle 17: coherence and comparability. Principle 18: accessibility and clarity.

3. Vision for 2035

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean will have strengthened, integrated and innovative statistical systems, grounded in solid and autonomous institutional frameworks. These systems will be capable of producing and disseminating high-quality, timely, comparable and accessible statistics, aligned with international standards and responsive to the needs of an informed public. Their work will contribute to the formulation of inclusive public policies and the fulfilment of commitments under the post-2030 international development agenda, advancing social justice, equity and sustainable development.

C. STRATEGIC AND SPECIFIC GOALS

1. Institutional strengthening

Strategic goal 1: To strengthen the institutional framework of national statistical systems by ensuring adequate regulatory frameworks, sustainable financing and highly qualified technical teams.

Specific goals

- (i) To foster the updating of statistical regulatory frameworks to effectively reflect the principles established in the Generic Law on Official Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean Community Statistics Model Bill, as well as other relevant international standards.
- (ii) To strengthen data governance through policies and processes that ensure compliance with ethical standards for personal data protection, confidentiality and information security.
- (iii) To encourage the implementation of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean within national statistical offices of the region.³
- (iv) To develop sustainable internal and external financing strategies for national statistical offices.
- (v) To promote continuous training on emerging technologies and advanced methodologies in statistics and data science, including the responsible use of artificial intelligence, and promote strategic partnerships with universities and research centres to build technical capacity.
- (vi) To promote effective policies for attracting, developing and retaining professional talent.

2. Innovation and modernization

Strategic goal 2: To contribute to the modernization of countries' statistical capacities by incorporating innovative technologies and methodologies, integrating new data sources and addressing emerging thematic areas.

³ This objective also includes the implementation of the Caribbean Community Statistics Code of Practice and other national or subnational codes adopted in the region, insofar as they complement the Code of Good Practice in Statistics mentioned under this goal.

Specific goals

- (i) To encourage the development and implementation of advanced technological solutions for data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination.
- (ii) To promote the systematic integration of administrative records and non-traditional data sources into statistical production and analysis.
- (iii) To advance the integration of statistical and geospatial information and expand the use of geospatial tools to enrich data production and dissemination.
- (iv) To support the conceptual, methodological and operational modernization of official statistics production by adopting the latest international standards and good practices in each thematic area.
- (v) To enhance the identification, analysis and visibility of emerging and priority issues for the region —such as climate change, structural inequalities, intersectionality, digital transformation and human mobility— and promote the production of disaggregated data on these topics.
- (vi) To incorporate gender, ethnic and racial perspectives and sexual and cultural diversity approaches across all statistical production.

3. Accessibility and strategic communication

Strategic goal 3: To consolidate the status of official statistics as a public good by promoting access, understanding and effective use by all sectors of society.

Specific goals

- (i) To promote dissemination strategies that improve the accessibility, usability and visualization of official statistics.
- (ii) To encourage the adoption and implementation of open data standards to ensure the availability, interoperability and reuse of statistical information.
- (iii) To support training and statistical literacy programmes aimed at diverse audiences.
- (iv) To implement collaborative and co-creation plans that actively involve civil society, the private sector and academia in the validation and improvement of statistical information.

4. Consolidation of regional cooperation

Strategic goal 4: To position the region as an international standard-setter for cooperation, integration and learning in statistics by strengthening ties among countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Specific goals

- (i) To consolidate the Knowledge Transfer Network and the working groups of the Statistical Conference as permanent spaces for collaborative learning and sharing of good practices, prioritizing the inclusion of the Caribbean.

- (ii) To increase the region’s representation, active participation and leadership in global forums.
- (iii) To establish mutual support mechanisms among countries for the development of joint cooperation projects.
- (iv) To promote regional harmonization of statistical processes and instruments to improve data comparability and strengthen regional cooperation.

D. MONITORING INDICATORS

The Strategic Plan of the Statistical Conference is conceived as a roadmap for the development and strengthening of official statistics in the region, with the expectation that all national statistical offices will advance its implementation according to their capacities. Given that this document is not binding for countries, the role of the Conference is to provide guidance, promote cooperation, facilitate the sharing of good practices and monitor progress.

The Strategic Plan has a flexible implementation pathway, allowing each country to move forward according to its own circumstances, national context and level of statistical development. No predefined quantitative targets are established, in recognition of the diverse realities and potential for progress among countries over the course of the decade. This flexibility reflects the non-mandatory nature of the plan, as the adoption of the necessary measures falls under the responsibility of each State, in accordance with its statistical sovereignty, national priorities and legal framework. Furthermore, given that statistical systems in the region vary widely in terms of human, financial and technological resources, the pace of progress towards each objective will depend on each country’s specific circumstances.

In light of the above, a set of 20 indicators is proposed, aligned with the specific goals of the Plan, to monitor progress in its implementation (see table 1). The information required to construct these indicators will be collected through a questionnaire to be completed by the national statistical offices of the region. The first round of the questionnaire will be conducted at the end of 2025, with the aim of establishing a baseline. Thereafter, the questionnaire will be administered biennially in order to provide updated information on the implementation status of the Strategic Plan at each meeting of the Conference.⁴

Table 1
Monitoring indicators of the Strategic Plan

Specific goals	Monitoring indicators	
1. Institutional strengthening		
(i) Regulatory frameworks	1	Percentage of countries with a statistical regulatory framework consistent with the Generic Law on Official Statistics for Latin America or the Caribbean Community Statistics Model Bill, as well as other international standards.
(ii) Data governance	2	Percentage of countries with formalized policies and processes for data governance, in compliance with ethical standards and information protection and security requirements.

⁴ The questionnaire will be conducted in conjunction with monitoring the implementation of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Specific goals	Monitoring indicators	
(iii) Implementation of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean	3	Percentage of countries that comply with the principles of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean.
(iv) Financing	4	Percentage of national statistical offices with documented strategies for sustainable financing.
(v) Continuous training	5	Percentage of national statistical offices with continuous training programmes and active partnerships with academic or research institutions.
(vi) Professional talent	6	Percentage of national statistical offices that have implemented formal policies or plans for attracting, developing and retaining professional talent over the past two years.
2. Innovation and modernization		
(i) Technological solutions	7	Percentage of national statistical offices that have implemented at least one advanced technological solution in any phase of the statistical process (collection, processing, analysis or dissemination) over the past two years.
(ii) Administrative records	8	Percentage of national statistical offices that have incorporated new administrative records or non-traditional data sources into their statistical processes over the past two years.
(iii) Integration of statistical and geospatial information	9	Percentage of national statistical offices that use technological tools for georeferencing data in the development, production and dissemination of statistical information.
(iv) Conceptual, methodological and operational modernization	10	Percentage of national statistical offices that have updated methodologies, operational manuals or statistical classifications in line with international standards over the past two years.
(v) Emerging issues	11	Number of reports, studies or publications produced by national statistical offices that address emerging and priority issues over the past two years.
(vi) Gender, ethnic and racial perspectives and sexual and cultural diversity approaches	12	Percentage of national statistical offices with specific guidelines or policies for incorporating gender, ethnic and racial perspectives and diversity approaches in statistical production.
3. Accessibility and strategic communication		
(i) Dissemination strategies	13	Percentage of national statistical offices that use media and technologies for disseminating statistics that respond to users' information needs and ensure greater coverage.
(ii) Open data	14	Percentage of national statistical offices that publish data in open formats, in line with international standards.
(iii) Statistical literacy	15	Number of programmes, workshops or training activities on statistical literacy conducted by national statistical offices and number of participants over the past two years.
(iv) Participation of civil society, the private sector and academia	16	Percentage of national statistical offices with formal participation mechanisms in place (with civil society, the private sector and academia) for the validation and improvement of statistics.
4. Consolidation of regional cooperation		
(i) Knowledge Transfer Network and working groups of the Statistical Conference	17	Number of activities for sharing good practices carried out and number of institutions involved over the past two years.

Specific goals	Monitoring indicators	
(ii) Global forums	18	Number of international forums in which national statistical offices participated as a regional representative (Statistical Conference and its working groups, Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among others) over the past two years.
(iii) Joint cooperation projects	19	Percentage of national statistical offices with formal agreements or mutual support mechanisms for the development of regional cooperation projects.
(iv) Regional comparability and standardization	20	Percentage of national statistical offices that develop processes and apply instruments harmonized with regional standards in priority statistical areas.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

E. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Effective implementation of the Strategic Plan requires coordinated action at both the national and regional levels. The aim of the Plan is to steer progress in national statistical systems through guidelines that countries can adopt and adapt according to their specific contexts and priorities. National statistical offices play a central role in this process, as they have the primary responsibility for action required to bring about tangible transformations in their respective statistical systems.

At the regional level, the Conference can contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan through various cooperation mechanisms, such as working groups and forums and platforms for sharing good practices. These spaces promote mutual learning and the building of institutional capacities. Such efforts are complemented by cooperation activities developed by both ECLAC and other regional and international organizations, which can also contribute to achieving the objectives outlined herein.

1. National strategic plans

The main driving force for fostering change at the regional level lies in the action that each country undertakes to strengthen its own national statistical system. In this framework, it is expected that each national statistical office will make progress in developing a transformation agenda aligned with the thematic pillars set forth in this Strategic Plan.

This implies recognizing that statistical offices, as well as different departments within the same institution, advance at their own pace and are at varying stages of development in relation to their objectives. Regarding the implementation of the Conference's Strategic Plan, progress can be determined according to three phases in which the national statistical offices may be: initial, intermediate and consolidation. Each of these phases represents a distinct scenario, but in all of them, opportunities for improvement and pathways to advance towards the achievement of common objectives can be identified.

An overview of the three phases, along with a detailed explanation of what each means for the corresponding indicator, is presented below.

- (i) Initial phase: countries that are beginning to align their institutional framework, human resources or processes with the objectives of the Strategic Plan. In this phase, priorities include diagnostic assessments, regulatory strengthening and initial pilot projects.
- (ii) Intermediate phase: countries that have made partial progress. Efforts in this phase focus on consolidating practices, integrating technologies and developing permanent capacity-building efforts.
- (iii) Consolidation phase: countries that have made significant progress. In this phase, the focus is on sharing good practices, generating regional standards and acting as technical mentors or partners in horizontal cooperation.

Table 2 provides a detailed description of the level of progress—in terms of achieving the specific goals outlined above—for each phase in which countries’ national statistical offices may find themselves.

Table 2
Development phases of statistical offices in achieving the specific goals of the Strategic Plan

Specific goals	Initial phase	Intermediate phase	Consolidation phase
1. Institutional strengthening			
(i) Regulatory frameworks	Outdated legal framework or one undergoing reform, not aligned with international standards.	Updated legal framework, partially aligned with international standards.	Updated legal framework, fully aligned with international standards, with periodic review mechanisms.
(ii) Data governance	Lack of formal policies; fragmented practices without regulatory control.	Formal policies approved and progressively implemented.	Comprehensive governance, with audits and continuous evaluation.
(iii) Implementation of Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean	No implementation or limited awareness of the Code.	Selective application of the Code, with internal evaluations and improvement plans.	External validation of compliance, fully applied across the institution.
(iv) Financing	Annual budget without continuity or sustained financing mechanisms.	Three-year financial strategy, partially implemented.	Consolidated multiannual budget linked to strategic objectives.
(v) Continuous training	Occasional training, dependent on international cooperation.	Continuous training programmes in partnership with universities or regional organizations.	Institutionalized programmes with specialized modules and impact evaluation.
(vi) Professional talent	High turnover and lack of retention and professional development policies.	Human resources policy with initial career plans.	Development and retention strategies with measurable impact.
2. Innovation and modernization			
(i) Technological solutions	Limited use of basic tools, without process integration.	Partial automation of processes; integration in specific phases.	Fully digitalized and interoperable processes.
(ii) Administrative records	Sporadic access without standards; no regular agreements with other institutions.	Active agreements with periodic data flows and basic validation processes.	Functional data lake (or centralized data repository), with regularly validated and integrated records.

Specific goals	Initial phase	Intermediate phase	Consolidation phase
(iii) Integration of statistical and geospatial information	Occasional use of geographic information systems, without systematic georeferencing.	Georeferencing in key surveys and basic maps.	Systematic integration of statistical and geospatial information throughout the entire statistical chain.
(iv) Conceptual, methodological and operational modernization	Non-standardized operational manuals; limited adoption of international standards.	Partial adoption of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model and Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations, with periodic methodological review.	Full implementation of international standards across all operations.
(v) Emerging issues	Sporadic or non-existent statistical production on emerging issues.	Exploratory or pilot reports on emerging issues.	Sustained production of relevant studies and methodological innovation in emerging issues.
(vi) Gender, ethnic and racial perspectives and sexual and cultural diversity approaches	Absence of guidelines; limited or no application of approaches.	Formal policy with initial application of approaches.	Cross-cutting integration and systematic application in statistical production.
3. Accessibility and strategic communication			
(i) Dissemination strategies	Dissemination in basic formats (PDF or Excel), with limited reach.	Portal with interactive visualizations and thematic publications.	Dynamic dashboards, use of application programming interfaces and user-focused statistical products.
(ii) Open data	Rudimentary website with no open data formats or metadata.	Publication of datasets in open formats with basic documentation.	Open platform with detailed metadata, licensing and robust application programming interfaces.
(iii) Statistical literacy	Sporadic or non-existent activities, without a defined strategy.	Defined strategy including workshops and digital campaigns.	Institutionalized programmes delivered through multiple channels and targeting diverse audiences.
(iv) Participation of civil society, the private sector and academia	Interaction limited to informal events or individual requests.	Active advisory councils with regular meetings.	Structured participation in data production and validation processes, as well as in policy design.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

2. Biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities of the Statistical Conference

The biennial programme of cooperation activities of the Conference is a key instrument for achieving the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. It should outline the planned activities and the outputs to be delivered by the working groups operating during the biennium. The expected results should align with the objectives of the Strategic Plan and provide clear guidance to encourage and support the actions of countries, international, regional and subregional organizations and the various coordination and cooperation mechanisms.

3. Working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

The working groups are organizational arrangements allowing the national statistical offices of the member countries of the Conference to jointly address problems or topics concerning the goals of the Strategic Plan. The criteria for their establishment and overall functioning are detailed in the document *Guidelines for the formation and functioning of the working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas* (LC/CEA.11/10).

Each working group is tasked with preparing a specific product. These may address targeted needs, resulting in outputs such as good practice guides, methodological studies or diagnostic assessments. Alternatively, they may focus on more complex challenges, leading to the development of outcomes such as regulatory frameworks, permanent cooperation networks or interoperability platforms. Working groups operate for a two-year period and are selected based on criteria and procedures defined by the Executive Committee and the secretariat of the Conference for each biennium.

4. Knowledge Transfer Network and related communities

The Knowledge Transfer Network is a platform dedicated to strengthening knowledge and cooperation in the field of statistics across Latin America and the Caribbean. Its objective is to disseminate products, methodologies and activities developed by the working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, as well as by the broader regional statistical community. It operates primarily through a website that serves as both a repository and a platform for sharing events, documents and methodological materials.⁵

The Network organizes periodic videoconferences on a variety of relevant topics, which can serve to support initiatives aligned with the goals of the Strategic Plan. These virtual meetings, which are open to the public, facilitate the dissemination of experiences and good practices, fostering knowledge exchange and the democratization of information. Thus, they promote broad access and participation from all actors within the statistical community.

The communities of practice of the Knowledge Transfer Network are collaborative spaces to facilitate experience-sharing and the development of joint actions among national and international statistical institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean on issues of regional interest. They function as expert networks made up of individuals designated by their institutions, organized around specific topics. These communities serve as a complementary cooperation mechanism to working groups and are neither focused on producing specific outputs nor bound by predetermined deadlines.

5. Seminars

Within the framework of the meetings of the Conference and its Executive Committee, thematic seminars are held to address current regional needs and interests. These events bring together subject-matter experts and relevant institutions to share their experiences and transfer knowledge to all national statistical offices in the region, thereby fostering the creation of support networks among countries.

⁵ <https://rtc-cea.cepal.org/en>

6. Activities of regional and international bodies

Both ECLAC and various regional and international organizations engaged in statistical activities in the region have programmes of work that are independent from the Conference yet often pursue similar objectives and lines of action. Synergies between these programmes and the Strategic Plan are essential for strengthening regional statistical capacities and can contribute significantly to the achievement of the objectives set forth in this document. The activities and initiatives undertaken are diverse and may include the preparation of publications with analysis and recommendations, the development of methodological proposals, the organization of seminars and workshops, as well as the provision of direct technical assistance.

Annex A1

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, 2026–2035

The Strategic Plan, 2026–2035 is the result of a broad and participatory process carried out in several stages. In April 2024, an advisory group was established with the voluntary participation of the national statistical offices of Argentina, Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Mexico, as well as the Caribbean Community. The group was tasked with making recommendations on the process of updating the Strategic Plan and contributing to the review of the inputs to be developed.

In the second half of 2024, an evaluation was conducted on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025, along with an assessment of the current context facing national statistical offices in Latin America and the Caribbean. To this end, the following tools were used: a regional online questionnaire, completed by 24 countries between July and August 2024; a series of 14 in-depth interviews conducted in June and July 2024 with the national statistical authorities of countries that have chaired the Statistical Conference of the Americas, current members of the Executive Committee and experts from regional and international organizations; and a literature review of the main topics addressed during the plenary sessions of the Economic Commission for Europe between 2020 and 2024.

The thematic pillars of the new strategic plan were defined on the basis of the study’s findings and the analysis of the current context and shared challenges of national statistical offices in the region. The first draft of the strategic plan was circulated throughout the region during the first half of 2025, with the aim of encouraging regional engagement and collecting feedback to enrich its content. This current version of the document was developed based on the comments received.

A summary of the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025 and the regional assessment is presented below, as set out in the document *Assessment of the 2015–2025 Strategic Plan and proposed thematic pillars of the 2026–2035 Strategic Plan* (LC/CE.24/4).⁶

1. Evaluation of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025

The evaluation of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025 was structured around three dimensions: relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. With regard to relevance, the analysis examined the extent to which the activities promoted by the Conference over the past decade had responded to the needs and challenges of the region’s national statistical offices, including cross-cutting aspects and participatory mechanisms such as working groups, the Knowledge Transfer Network and the seminars held in the framework of the Conference. Effectiveness was evaluated based on the degree of fulfilment of the three strategic goals of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025: institutional strengthening; the development of technical and methodological capacities; and regional and international cooperation. Lastly, with regard to the sustainability dimension, the assessment focused on the capacity to sustain implementation of the Strategic Plan over time, particularly through the functioning of the working groups.

⁶ For the full document, see <https://hdl.handle.net/11362/81495>.

(a) Relevance

The study found that the Conference’s activities received a positive evaluation, particularly in Latin American countries, in terms of their alignment with regional statistical challenges. In Latin America, 93% of responding countries rated the alignment between the activities implemented through the Conference and the challenges facing national statistical offices as “good” or “very good”. The assessment was more critical in the Caribbean, possibly owing to language barriers and resource constraints.

The Knowledge Transfer Network stood out as a key mechanism for technical cooperation, particularly during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The institutional framework for statistics in the region also received a positive evaluation, notably the Generic Law on Official Statistics for Latin America and the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean.

(b) Effectiveness

The evaluation of progress towards achieving the three strategic goals of the Strategic Plan, 2015–2025 was positive overall, although differences were observed across the individual goals:

- (i) Development of technical and methodological capacities: this goal received the highest rating, largely owing to the role of the working groups and the Knowledge Transfer Platform as spaces for horizontal and shared learning. Key topics highlighted included gender statistics and the use of alternative data sources and methodologies in the context of the pandemic.
- (ii) Organization and management of national statistical offices: the support provided to modernize national statistical systems was acknowledged, particularly with respect to the adoption of international best practices and the updating of legal frameworks.
- (iii) Regional coordination and cooperation: while progress was recognized, challenges remain. Respondents stressed the need to strengthen collaboration with the Caribbean, enhance regional representation in international forums and consolidate ties with subregional and international organizations.

(c) Sustainability

The sustainability of the operating model of the Conference —especially its working groups— was assessed positively, albeit with some observations. National statistical offices expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in these spaces, while also highlighting that limited resources often constrained their full engagement. The technical assistance provided by international organizations serving as secretariats was considered a key factor in enabling more direct and specialized participation.

Among the challenges identified were the need to improve the follow-up of the working groups, strengthen collaboration with academic stakeholders and design inclusive strategies that facilitate the integration of offices with fewer resources or that face language barriers. The importance of ensuring that the products developed have a direct positive impact on the work of institutions was also underscored.

2. Regional assessment: current situation of national statistical offices

The study characterized the institutional, economic and technological context of national statistical offices. While the quality of statistical outputs and production methodologies emerged as key strengths, the study also revealed significant limitations in the availability of human, financial and technological resources.

(a) Institutional context

In institutional terms, national statistical offices face considerable challenges related to outdated regulatory frameworks that undermine their operational autonomy, limit access to administrative records and hamper the integration of emerging technologies. Obstacles were also noted in the coordination with other government entities that produce data, a domain in which effective collaboration depends on mutual trust, clear incentives and legal frameworks in which statistical laws and personal data protection regulations are compatible. Internally, the limited availability of financial and human resources restricts institutional capacity to innovate and sustain complex technical processes, while high turnover in leadership affects organizational stability. Public perception of the offices is also strained by competition from private actors that provide data more rapidly or with greater visibility, reinforcing the need for national statistical offices to demonstrate their relevance and reliability.

(b) Economic context

National statistical offices operate with economic constraints that limit their capacity for planning, institutional development and operations. The budgets assigned are typically insufficient, forcing priorities towards basic tasks and restricting investment in strategic activities such as technological modernization, training or thematic diversification. This financial fragility creates a vicious cycle: the limited availability of resources reduces statistical production, which in turn weakens the justification for increasing budget allocations in the future. This situation is exacerbated by the particular vulnerability of middle-income countries, which struggle to access external financing and lack fiscal space, leaving them trapped in a grey area. Although efforts are made to optimize the use of resources through technical cooperation and process automation, the scope for innovation remains limited unless internal and external financing modalities are strengthened.

(c) Methodological and technological context

Progress across the region has been uneven and the adoption of emerging tools remains at an early stage. While some countries have begun incorporating technologies such as mobile devices for data collection, cloud storage and interactive visualization, the digital transformation has yet to be fully consolidated across the region. The use of artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data and satellite imagery represents a key opportunity to boost efficiency and broaden thematic coverage, but their application is still hindered by technical barriers, lack of strategic planning and weaknesses in technological infrastructure. Significant gaps between countries, both in terms of equipment and internal technical capacities, heighten the need for support mechanisms and technology transfer. Moreover, the risk of adopting solutions without a clear assessment of their relevance underscores the urgency of reinforcing digital innovation strategies, ensuring that technologies respond to real needs and are sustainably integrated into statistical processes.

3. Main challenges identified

- Use of administrative records: implementing legal reforms, investing in technology and developing new professional profiles. This is considered the central challenge given its potential to complement or replace traditional methods.
- Innovation and technology: integrating big data, artificial intelligence and satellite imagery to territorialize and enrich statistical information.
- Training and retention of personnel: attracting and retaining technical profiles, adapting career pathways and offering continuous training.
- Regulation and governance: advancing towards data governance models that ensure interoperability, personal data protection and public trust.
- Communication and dissemination: improving data accessibility and usability through proactive strategies, statistical literacy initiatives and interactive portals.
- International cooperation and strategic partnerships: cultivating synergies with other regions, universities and the private sector to share good practices and address common challenges.
- Emerging thematic areas: promoting the development of environmental, climate, gender and social statistics as priority thematic areas in the next strategic cycle.