

BUILDING TRUST IN DATA: WHAT'S NEW FOR NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEMS? PARIS21 CROSS-REGIONAL FORUM

28–29 October 2019, OECD Boulogne Conference Centre



Data, truth and trust in the digital age

Trust matters for national statistical systems because it affects the adoption of official statistics by government, the private sector, academia and citizens. Official statistics have supported credible public discourses for decades and been perceived as trustworthy truth-holders in the past. So what is different today?

90 percent of the world's data has been generated in only the last two years. From satellite imagery to smart appliances, the way that we interact with the world, and with one another, is becoming increasingly governed by data. Aided by our smartphones we, ourselves, have become human data factories, pumping out torrents of information—from heart rates to browsing habits—twenty-four hours a day.

Whereas once, our sources for 'facts' about the world were limited largely to official statistics or the work of a small group of academics, today, with only a few clicks of a button we can analyse millions of data points or fact-check a friend's casual assertion. Moreover, from civil society organisations to armchair evangelists, anyone is capable of accessing a dataset and using it to advance a point of view.

What does this mean for official statistics?

For one, official statistics are now only one of many competing sources of information, and they may not always win against more relatable, real-time data sources. Moreover, we may be less influenced by those datasets we perceive to be the "truest" than those which support our biases. For another, populist attacks on "experts" and "elites" are undermining trust in public institutions, and those attacks are increasingly backed by competing data and pseudo-science. These trends have ushered in a new post-truth political climate characterised by amplified disinformation and biases.

How can we renew and sustain public confidence in official statistics?

Many national statistical offices are starting to adapt to this new context. Embracing openness, implementing new forms of communication, collaborating with diverse stakeholders from the private sector, the media and academia, are all helping to seat national statistics in the real world. Yet for many others, especially among low-income countries with fledgling statistical systems, the path to increasing relevance and authority may not be obvious.

Against this background, the 2019 PARIS21 Cross-Regional Forum will explore the current realities of the NSSs in the digital age and discuss what it takes to build and sustain trust in data.

PARIS21's annual Cross-Regional Fora (CRF) were launched in 2015 as a platform of engagement and exchange to bring together multiple stakeholders from the national, regional and global levels to discuss good practices, experiences, and challenges on different statistical themes. For more information, please visit: <https://paris21.org/cross-regional-engagement>

Objective

The forum brings together countries, experts and development partners over two days to discuss and identify what emerging role NSSs should play to address trust-related challenges in the data-driven digital age. It will showcase perspectives and stories from a wide range of stakeholders from all over the world, with a particular focus on low and middle-income countries.

Specific objectives of the forum include:

- Discussing how truth and trust work in modern societies and the implications for NSSs,
- Discussing the key trust-related challenges for NSSs and their data,
- Showcasing examples of NSSs successfully adapting and discuss scaling-up of solutions, and
- Launching the “Enhancing trust – PARIS21 2020” initiative, to design and fund pilot activities in countries to improve trust in their data.

The forum anchors the discussions around developing trustworthy NSOs, and their role in building and sustaining trust in the broader data ecosystem.

AGENDA DAY 1

DATA, TRUTH AND TRUST IN SOCIETY

08:30	Registration
09:30	Welcoming remarks and objectives
09: 40	Setting the scene
09: 50	Keynote

WHAT MAKES TRUST IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS?

11:00	Understanding and measuring trust in official statistics – current practices
11:20	Reality-check panel

Lunch Break

TRUST IN THE DIGITAL AGE

13:45	My Data vs. Yours
14:05	Reality-check panel

Coffee Break

WORKING ON TRUST : OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR NSS

15:30	Group work around the drivers of trust
16:30	Reporting back
17:00	Discussion and close of day 1 – key takeaways
18:00	Networking opportunity

AGENDA DAY 2

BUILDING TRUST IN STATISTICS – WHAT CAN NSS DO?

09:30	Keynote
10:30	Panel - listening to the users
11:15	NSO story: measuring trust in data, and effective communication with users to build trust
11:35	NSO story: managing privacy/ confidentiality in a responsible way
11:50	NSO story: improving survey data quality through trustworthy respondents
12:05	NSO story: open data, transparency and trust
12:20	NSO story: success in debugging fake numbers and fake news
12:50	Discussion
13:00	Lunch Break

TRUST AND THE FUTURE OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

14:00	The future: trusted smart statistics?
14:45	Discussion
15:15	“Enhancing trust – PARIS21 2020 initiative”
15:30	Takeaways and closing remarks
15:45	End of forum

Note: agenda subject to change