



# **IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS**

## **LIECHTENSTEIN**



# **PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM OF LIECHTENSTEIN IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Recommendation**

The Government, supported by the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein, should reform the Statistics Act to separate administrative and statistical registers where relevant and to give the Statistics Commission more of a decision-making role by, in addition to its advisory function, taking over some of the Government’s control over the activities of the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein. (Compliance-relevant: ES CoP, Indicator 1.1)

**Current situation:**

Certain registers maintained by the Office of Statistics have been used for both administrative and statistical purposes. The Statistics Ordinance was supplemented in November 2022 with Article 8a stating that the Office of Statistics can keep employment registers for purely statistical purposes. However, there is still a category of registers with a dual statistical and administrative purpose and the Government is set to retain control over the establishment of new registers and could possibly also reclassify registers.

The legal environment for the Office of Statistics conveys an impression of government control and also raises the risk that excessive control could be implemented if the political environment were to change. The Government could be seen as creating scope for political interference, as it approves the work programme of the Office of Statistics, new surveys (unless they are based on European legislation) and decides on the creation of a register or the change of an existing register. Moreover, the arrangements for pre-release access to statistics are currently set out in a government ordinance, which may not seem like an instrument that is well suited to give the impression of a professionally independent statistical office. As far as the reputational risk is concerned, evidence is scant but, perhaps significantly, in the 2023 user satisfaction survey respondents almost unanimously saw the Office of Statistics as objective but a somewhat smaller majority saw it as politically independent.

In this context, attributing many of the roles currently played by the Government to the Statistics Commission could be seen as safeguarding the Office of Statistics independence while at the same time providing appropriate checks and balances on an overly ambitious use of its independence by the Office of Statistics. As of the current state the Statistics Commission has an advisory role to both the Office of Statistics and the Government and its advice is not made public.

**Improvement sub-action 1.1:** Develop a concept to separate statistical registers and registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical

A project will be launched to address important issues regarding a future separation of statistical and registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical. Thereby, the use of statistical data within registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical should be impeded. Furthermore, the process should result in a clear legal basis für the collection of data for registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical.

**Deadline:** Q2 2025

**Responsible Institution for improvement sub-action 1.1:** Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

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<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.2:</b> Prepare a draft amendment to the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance</p> <p>Together with the Government Legal Services, the Office of Statistics prepares a proposal for amendments to the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance to strengthen its independence. Potential influence through the Government will be limited and activities such as approval of the work programme and the introduction of new surveys will not be executed by the Government but by the Statistics Commission. Thus, the Statistics Commission will be given more of a decision-making role. Decisions by the Statistics Commission will be made public. Furthermore, there will be a distinction between registers for statistical purposes and registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical based on the conceptual work.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.3:</b> Present amendments to the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance to the Statistics Commission</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.4:</b> Submission of amendments to the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance to the Government</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.4:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.5:</b> Approval by the Parliament of amendments to the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.5:</b> Relevant bodies of the Government and Parliament</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.6:</b> Adjust the Statistics Commission's composition</p> <p>In accordance with the adaption of the role of the Statistics Commission from an advising to a rather decision-making Commission, its composition will be adapted. A higher number of experts from the official statistics domain can further support the development of official statistics in Liechtenstein and will be proposed by the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.6:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 1.7:</b> Appointment of the members of the Statistics Commission</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 1.7:</b> Liechtenstein Government</p>

<p><b>2. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should aim for a greater and more visible separation between its two roles as a statistical office and a provider of registers for administrative use. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 1.1 and 5.5)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>In a small country context, it is understandable that the OSL has been given the task of collecting information for government registers which are used administratively. Having parallel institutions and systems for collection of data for administrative and statistical purposes would be a questionable use of very scarce resources. Nonetheless, there may potentially be a reputational risk when a statistical institute collects data that are then used for administrative purposes, even if nothing untoward takes place to compromise statistical confidentiality.</p> <p>Perhaps indicative of this risk, though the evidence should not be exaggerated, the Office of Statistics witnessed a fall in response rates subsequent to having more visibly announced the access of other administration offices to data collected by the OSL for administrative purposes – if a legal basis exists. In addition, a more general reputational risk could appear for the activities of the Office of Statistics even though there are only very few relevant registers (e.g., the Central Persons Register and the Employment Register), which, in some cases, contain information which is not very sensitive (e.g., the Buildings and Dwellings Register).</p> <p>To mitigate the reputational risk and to further guard against the risk of an actual mishap taking place, the Office of Statistics should take action to clarify its role and differentiating it from that as a statistics provider.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.1:</b> Adapt the labelling of data collections initiated by the National Administration</p> <p>Data collections related to registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical will be clearly identified and described as initiated by the National Administration, clarifying the role of the Office of Statistics as coordinator of the data collection. For example, the cover letter and the questionnaire display the logo of the National Administration. In the cover letter the exclusively coordinating role of the Office of Statistics will be stated. Thus, the visibility of the role of the Office of Statistics as provider of registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical and as coordinator of respective data collections will be improved.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.1:</b> Liechtenstein Government</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.2:</b> Adapt the labelling of data collections initiated by the Office of Statistics</p> <p>Data collections for exclusively statistical purposes will be clearly associated to the Office of Statistics by using the Office of Statistics' logo for the cover letter and the questionnaire. The Office of Statistics will be stated clearly as the initiator of the data collection and holder of the respective data. Thus, the visibility of the role of the Office of Statistics as statistical office will be improved.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.3:</b> Review the assignment of administrative data collections to the Office of Statistics</p> <p>The Office of Statistics will check whether administrative data are available in reasonable timeframe and sufficient quality and thus can be used to feed and maintain registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical. In addition, the Office of Statistics will evaluate and discuss whether other offices or institutions might better serve as data providers for various registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.4:</b> Amend the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.4.1:</b> Prepare a draft amendment to the Statistics Act and Statistics Ordinance and, if necessary, suggestions for amendments of related other legislations</p> <p>Changes in the legislation are necessary in order to ensure that information provided to the Office of Statistics in course of statistical data collections will not be used to update information in registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical. This also means that the formulation of a legal basis for the provision of the Office of Statistics to collect data for registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical (e.g. Employment Register) must be included.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 2.4.1:</b> Liechtenstein Government, Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.4.2:</b> Present amendments to the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance to the Statistics Commission</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.4.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.4.3:</b> Submission of amendments to the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance to the Government</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.4.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 2.4.4:</b> Approval by the Parliament of amendments to the Statistics Act and the Statistics Ordinance</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 2.4.4:</b> Relevant bodies of the Government and the Parliament</p>

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**Improvement sub-action 2.5:** Review of internal assignment of staff of the Office of Statistics to registers for purposes that are not exclusively statistical and its resulting statistics

It should be critically reviewed whether a different assignment of staff of the Office of Statistics to the tasks of dealing with administrative data/registers and the tasks of creating statistics out of the respective data and its communication would make the separation of roles more visible and, at the same time, whether it is feasible within the small team of the Office of Statistics.

**Deadline:** Q4 2027

**Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 2.5:** Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

<p><b>3. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should circumscribe its practice of informing administrative data holders about potential errors in their data by clearly describing the limits of this practice so as to clarify the correct application of statistical confidentiality to the public. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 5.5)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>In case of potential erroneous observations discovered during the data validation process, the Office of Statistics reports back to administrative data holders. The Office of Statistics is undertaking validation of its in-data, but the validations taking place have no statistical content. They are based on using only the concrete dataset and comparing changes over time and various arithmetic constraints on individual records. As such, administrative data holders could do the same validation, but it has traditionally been undertaken by the Office of Statistics. This might lead to suspicions of the Office of Statistics being overly close to the Government and administration. Thus, this practice could potentially imply a reputational risk.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.1:</b> Identify data and respective data providers with major or reoccurring issues in data validation</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.1:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.2:</b> Develop an action plan to handle reoccurring issues in data validation</p> <p>The Office of Statistics will define the limits of what types of validation can be done by the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein. Thereby, the Office of Statistics might e.g., return the validation to the data providers themselves or serve as a service provider for data validation based on formal agreements.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.3:</b> Implement the action plan</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 3.4:</b> Elaborate and publish guidelines for data providers</p> <p>These guidelines will outline the responsibilities for data validation which are to be part of the tasks of the data provider. These guidelines will be made publicly available.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 3.4:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>



#### 4. Recommendation

Building on its role in the Open Government Data initiative, the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should assume more of a data steward function, firstly by ensuring that the relevant data and statistics exhibited on Open Government Data platforms comply with the ES CoP. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.7 and 4.2)

##### Current situation:

The setup of an Open Government Data database is an important priority for the Government of Liechtenstein. An evaluation of the state of the art is currently being carried out by the Office of Information Technology and the project should be launched in autumn 2023. The Office of Statistics has already informed the Ministry for General Government Affairs and Finance that it sees itself as an important actor to be involved in the discussions and decisions on the Open Government Data strategy in Liechtenstein and has the assurance that it will be invited for the corresponding meetings.

The Office of Statistics anticipates that it will play a central role in the implementation of the Government's ambitious initiative, knowing this will mean a big responsibility, an extremely wide field of work and a fast mobilisation of resources which at present are limited. A new position would then be created at the Office of Statistics having a data steward function for the coordination of actions related to data and statistics under the Open Government Data initiative. Ensuring that all data and statistics exhibited as part of the Open Government Data comply with the ES CoP is potentially a very important stepping stone to ensure better coordination more generally of government data and statistics.

**Improvement sub-action 4.1:** Clarify the role of the Office of Statistics in the Open Government Data initiative

The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein will serve as an important actor in the Open Government Data initiative and thus the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein strives for an assignment as project leader.

**Deadline:** Q4 2023

**Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 4.1:** Liechtenstein Government, Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

**Improvement sub-action 4.2:** Create a new position for the coordination of actions related to the Open Government Data initiative

A job position will be created and must be budgeted and approved by the Parliament in November 2024. Following that, the position must be outlined in terms of job requirements and activities and filled after a selection process.

**Deadline:** Q3 2025

**Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 4.2:** Liechtenstein Government, Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

**Improvement sub-action 4.3:** Formulate a strategy for handling Open Government Data

A strategy will be formulated for a comprehensive understanding of Open Government Data and their handling. The strategy clarifies the necessity that all data and statistics which are part of the Open Government Data are guided by the principles of the ES CoP.

**Deadline:** Q2 2026

**Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.3:** Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

<b>Improvement sub-action 4.4:</b> Present the strategy to the Statistics Commission
<b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2026
<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.4:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein
<b>Improvement sub-action 4.5:</b> Approval of the strategy for handling Open Government Data by the Government
<b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2026
<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 4.5:</b> Liechtenstein Government

### 5. Recommendation

The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should strengthen coordination with the relevant authorities on government-sponsored data collection and statistics production outside the scope of official statistics as regards both quality requirements and survey design. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 1bis.3)

#### Current situation:

In Liechtenstein, as elsewhere in the EEA, users' statistical needs are gradually increasing. In the case of Liechtenstein, in order to find answers that explain various relevant phenomena in economy and society, Government offices are willing to use statistics and analyses produced outside the realm of official statistics. They order or purchase empirical analyses, data collections and statistics from research institutions outside the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein either based on surveys of samples drawn by the Office of Statistics or pulling together available evidence in larger reports (e.g., education report, Covid report, media usage, etc.). The know-how to do this would be available in the Office of Statistics, but, due to its lack of resources and the inability to free up resources at short notice, other institutions are entrusted by Government offices with the mandate to carry out the compilation of statistics with somewhat research-type characteristics.

A greater reliance on statistical evidence is a positive development, but the quality of the information is often not clear and in the small country context the frequent solicitation of the population may risk "questionnaire fatigue" with negative spill overs for official statistics. Therefore, the Office of Statistics should agree on procedures with relevant authorities so as to provide advice at the appropriate time to other institutions that perform surveys and should coordinate the surveys (with respect to content and timing).

**Improvement sub-action 5.1:** Develop guidelines concerning conduction of surveys in view of small populations

Guidelines concerning the amount and extension of surveys respecting the response burden of participants will be elaborated, preferably in coordination with ESTAT and respective member states.

**Deadline:** Q4 2024

**Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.1:** Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

**Improvement sub-action 5.2:** Approval of the guidelines by the Government

**Deadline:** Q1 2025

<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.2:</b> Liechtenstein Government
<b>Improvement sub-action 5.3:</b> Elaborate directives for the coordination of samples Directives are formulated that facilitate drawing statistical relevant samples in view of small population sizes and risk of increased response burden. Within this process possibilities for generating respective tools to apply the directives should be clarified.
<b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2025
<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein
<b>Improvement sub-action 5.4:</b> Present directives to the Statistics Commission and the Government
<b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2026
<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 5.4:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

<b>6. Recommendation</b> The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should periodically review the delivery of administrative data from different providers and, where necessary, aim to conclude formal agreements covering issues such as quality, timeliness, format and processes for change. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 8.6 and 8.7)
<b>Current situation:</b> The quality and timeliness of statistical outputs depends on the cooperation between the Office of Statistics and administrative data holders. They are in close contact and exchange views to ensure various aspects of data quality. In a small country context and due to the Office of Statistics size, the exchange of information is informal and kept simple with very short channels of communication. Further facilitating current informal arrangements for the use of administrative data for the purpose of official statistics, offices of the National Administration are required by the Statistics Act to cooperate with Office of Statistics. However, the Office of Statistics currently has no written agreements with the holders of administrative data.  In some cases, difficulties with data deliveries have arisen in practice. This said, in cases where data delivery functions less smoothly, the Office of Statistics should nonetheless aim to conclude written agreements and Memoranda of Understanding.
<b>Improvement sub-action 6.1:</b> Identify data and respective data providers with major or reoccurring issues regarding quality, timeliness, format and processes
<b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2025
<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.1:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein
<b>Improvement sub-action 6.2:</b> Develop action plans to address issues with data providers
The Office of Statistics defines action plans and whether and how formal Memoranda of Understanding can be helpful to lower the occurrence or severity of these issues.
<b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2026

<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.3:</b> Implement defined actions</p> <p>Initiate talks with respective data providers for further analysis and the drafting of agreements on Memoranda of Understanding if useful.</p>
<b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2026
<b>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 6.3:</b> Defined data providers, Office of Statistics Liechtenstein
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 6.4:</b> Elaborate and publish guidelines for data providers</p> <p>Guidelines are formulated that set out the expectations of the data providers. This might include a clear concept of quality, information policy regarding timeliness, revision of data and other aspects of cooperation between data providers and the Office of Statistics such as review cycles. These guidelines will be made publicly available.</p>
<b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2026
<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 6.4:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

## 7. Recommendation

The Office of Information Technology should provide the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein with systematic and timely information on plans for new or changed government data collections. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 2.2)

### Current situation:

In principle, the Statistics Act should ensure that the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein is informed about planned changes to or establishment of new government data collections with a view to being able to include statistical needs in decisions on such data collections. Nevertheless, consultations with providers of administrative data typically happen informally and not on a regular basis, meaning that relevant information may not be brought up in a timely manner.

At a practical level, there is an agreement between the Office of Statistics and the Office of Information Technology, which states that the Office of Statistics should be informed about new data collections or changes to existing data collections by the Office of Information Technology, which is involved in most projects of the national administration concerning data collection. However, this information does not come as fast and systematically as desired, even if the Office of Statistics together with the Office of Information Technology hold monthly meetings and an annual meeting in which issues connected to statistics are reviewed.

**Improvement sub-action 7.1:** Elaborate processes and/or process adaptations to ensure systematic and timely information flow on plans for new or changed government data collections

Together with the Office of Information Technology, the Office of Statistics elaborates measures to effectively ensure information flow with regard to data collections. Such measures might be included in existing processes or new processes might be defined.

**Deadline:** Q1 2026

<b>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 7.1:</b> Office of Information Technology, Office of Statistics Liechtenstein
<b>Improvement sub-action 7.2:</b> Implement agreed processes
<b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2026
<b>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 7.2:</b> Office of Information Technology, Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

<b>8. Recommendation</b>
The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should conceive a strategy for its potential use of privately held data in the future. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 2.4)
<b>Current situation:</b> The Statistics Act mentions surveys, registers and administrative data as the main data sources and does not exclude the use of other sources, such as privately held data. For the time being, there are no agreements or partnerships on the use of such data. The Office of Statistics does not want to miss the chance to capitalise on the new data sources. Thus, the Office of Statistics needs to reconsider its priorities and preferred modi operandi, knowing that using privately held data usually implies a need for a consensual approach together with data holders.
<b>Improvement action 8:</b> Develop a strategy on the use of privately held data The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein sees the potential of privately held data in some areas, whereas other areas are of minor relevance for such a small country with large overlapping networks in neighbouring countries. A strategy will be formulated defining priorities for the use of privately held data and preferred procedures for handling them.
<b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2027
<b>Responsible institution for improvement action 8:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein

<p><b>9. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should agree with the Office of Information Technology on ways to monitor and vet the practice of the Office of Information Technology in granting access authorisations to registers. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 5.5)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics does not have its own IT department, with all IT infrastructure of the National Administration being under the authority of the Office of Information Technology, aiming to reach economies of scale and scope as well as supplying quality services in a small administration. All general IT tasks are executed by the Office of Information Technology, including systems for registers which are kept in shared IT solutions to which many offices of the National Administration have access. User access rights are kept up-to-date continuously.</p> <p>The Office of Statistics does not have an overview of access rights to the appropriate data sets. As manager/administrator of the respective registers, the Office of Statistics should have an overview of access rights to see how they are used within the National Administration and take action in case of any inappropriately assigned access rights. This is important to avoid any real or perceived risks to confidentiality. Considering the future possibility of registers for exclusively statistical purposes, it is necessary to exercise strict control of the access to these statistical registers in order to respect the principle of statistical confidentiality.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 9.1:</b> Set up a regular and sustainable flow of information on access rights to statistical software and databases</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 9.1:</b> Office of Information Technology, Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 9.2:</b> Set up a regular and sustainable flow of information on access rights to the Central Persons Register</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 9.2:</b> Commission of the Central Persons Register, Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>

<p><b>10. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The relevant authorities should ensure that the budget allocated to the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein is adjusted to enhance timeliness and, furthermore, is adjusted on an ongoing basis to meet additional statistical demand. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.1 and 13.1).</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>The workforce of the Office of Statistics is rather small and carries a heavy workload despite demand for statistics being reduced by a substantial number of exceptions from European regulations and the supply being facilitated through widespread use of administrative data sources and, to some extent, collaboration with the Swiss Federal Office of Statistics. At the same time, the Office of Statistics strives for high quality of statistics. But limited resources are part of the background to timeliness issues on certain statistics, not least national accounts. This concerns i.e. complex statistics such as national accounts and GDP, but also repeated delays in collecting statistics on poverty.</p> <p>However, with increasing demands for statistics arising from new EU regulations (together with increasing national user demands) pressure on resources seems set to increase in the future, which calls for on-going adjustments in resources to be able to satisfy demands that cannot be avoided or resisted.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 10.1:</b> Sensitise the EEA Coordination Unit and other data collecting offices on the potential impact of new/changed EU regulations upon the Office of Statistics</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 10.1:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 10.2:</b> Include the estimated scope of the foreseen projects in the Statistical Program</p> <p>The Statistical Program is a multi-year program that contains planned projects. To increase predictability of requirements regarding budget and personnel, projects should be respectively specified. In addition, the projects are evaluated regarding potential outsourcing of projects or parts of it.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 10.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 10.3:</b> Establish a dialogue with the Government as the budgetary authority on resources needed for high quality official statistics meeting statistical demands</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institutions for improvement sub-action 10.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein, Liechtenstein Government</p>

<p><b>11. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should undertake more formalised and standardised quality assessments of statistics based on a clear concept of quality and with appropriate prioritisation across statistics, while ensuring that all statistics are reviewed in due course. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 4.4 and 4.3)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>In line with the current Office of Statistics strategy, comprehensive internal quality guidelines have been elaborated to ensure a common understanding of quality in statistics and the uniform application of standardised procedures by the Office of Statistics staff. Statistical publications are accompanied by a document on methodology and quality, which means that the quality information is part of the statistical publication and therefore easily accessible for users. Significant attention is directed to the quality of outputs including the accessibility, clarity, credibility and other conditions for appropriate use of statistics provided by the Office of Statistics. Another important focus of quality control is on input data, development of quality indicators, and monitoring of the quality of handbooks serving as internal manuals for the different publications. By contrast, further progress is needed in process-based quality management in statistical production. The Office of Statistics needs to take action commensurate with its resources to strengthen the monitoring and auditing of quality.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 11.1:</b> Develop a concept for formalised and standardised quality assessments</p> <p>The concept defines the monitoring of processes, products and information flows. Different approaches such as internal self-assessment or assessments by experts outside the statistic (but internal to the office) and outside the office of statistics will be considered.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.1:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 11.2:</b> Holistic revision of the quality guidelines</p> <p>The quality guidelines will be updated to reflect the monitoring measures defined in the concept for formalised and standardised quality assessments.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 11.3:</b> Implement quality assessments for selected statistical processes</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q3 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 11.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>



<p><b>12. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should further standardise and automate parts of the statistical production process. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 10.2 and 10.4)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics' efforts to standardise procedures have been manifested in many areas. Quality guidelines, internal manuals, Methodology and Quality reports and other measures are significantly based on common knowledge and experience of the Office of Statistics staff.</p> <p>Further standardisation efforts are required not least for quality assessment of input data (plausibility checks and data validation), of underlying data related to statistical outputs and for the final phase of statistical production (e.g., database of processed data). Achieving such standardisation in statistical processes is a necessary condition for their widespread automation, allowing different steps in data processes to be executed by standardised, predefined and automated formulas and functions. Among the benefits of such developments would be better coherence and consistency of data, faster data processing, overall quality improvements and robustness.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 12.1:</b> Examine possibilities for standardisation and automation for input data</p> <p>Processes for input data such as data validation and applied rules should be examined with the aim of harmonising them and formulating best practices for the production of statistics. Alignment with GSBPM should be examined.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 12.1:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 12.2:</b> Examine possibilities for standardisation and automation in production of statistical products</p> <p>Existing processes and recommendations related to the statistical production process should be described. Thereby, the intention is to evaluate different ideas for standardisation and automation such as the provision of a dissemination database and further harmonisation measures. Alignment with GSBPM should be examined.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2026</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 12.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 12.3:</b> Implement decisions from the examination processes</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2027</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 12.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>

<p><b>13. Recommendation</b></p> <p>To further enhance the quality of statistical output, the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should consider ways to strengthen its “four eyes” quality control policy. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 4.4)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>For quality control of statistical products in the Office of Statistics, the “four eyes principle” applies, whereby the person responsible for a specific statistical product first checks tables and text, which is followed by a second person checking the draft publication with a particular focus on the plausibility and consistency of results. Other members of staff are usually not involved in the process (apart from the publication team). The process is standardised, and checks have to follow/respect the procedure described in the internal quality guidelines.</p> <p>The four-eyes procedure is very useful as it allows to identify and resolve potential deficiencies before the product is published, especially if more knowledgeable and experienced auditors for specific statistical products are involved. However, over time the ability to spot problems may be dulled by routine. They might lose some of the critical sense as they get familiar with it.</p>
<p><b>Improvement action 13:</b> Develop and implement a rolling approach to the “four-eyes” principle</p> <p>Together with the publication team, an approach that benefits both experienced and new auditors within the scope of its possibilities should be defined. Following this idea, each year a specific number of publications should be assigned to new auditors for one publication cycle.</p>
<p>Deadline: Q4 2024</p>
<p>Responsible institution for improvement action 13: Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>

<p><b>14. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should strengthen its training policy with a particular emphasis on cooperation with other National Statistical Institutes on the supply of training and drawing relevant lessons from other small offices that supply training through electronic means. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 7.6)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>Vocational training of employees is considered by the Office of Statistics as an integral part of the personal development of the staff. The needs and wishes for training are discussed annually as part of the performance review. Long tenures at the Office of Statistics point to the importance of training.</p> <p>With its very limited staff, it is difficult for the Office of Statistics to conduct regular training courses and to establish a standard training plan enabling the fulfilment of various educational requirements. Therefore, the Office of Statistics staff is informed about and participates in the ESTP training courses although work pressures and the time needed for travel are constraints. Similarly, the training programme of the National Administration is available for the Office of Statistics employees. It focuses mainly on core skills.</p> <p>There are obvious economies of scale in the supply of training which can be hard to reap for a small office, which therefore has to consider alternative options to in-person and in-house training programs.</p>

<p><b>Improvement sub-action 14.1:</b> Investigate possible cooperation in training courses and seminars with other National Statistical Institutes</p> <p>As a small office, training courses and seminars related to statistical products and processes are limited. Thus, possibilities for participating and contributing to trainings and seminars provided by other National Statistical Institutes seem to be a good opportunity to strengthen the training policy of the Office of Statistics. In view of the language barriers and some structural similarities, the National Statistical Institutes of Austria, Switzerland and Germany might be a good starting point.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 14.1:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 14.2:</b> Exchange experience with other small National Statistical Institutes on training policies and procedures</p> <p>Liechtenstein has by far the smallest statistical office among the ESS member states. Nevertheless, other small offices such as the National Statistical Institutes of Malta or Iceland might face similar challenges concerning staff training. Corresponding exchanges should help to strengthen the training policy.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q1 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 14.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 14.3:</b> Create an introductory program with information on European statistics and policies at the Office of Statistics</p> <p>Newly hired personal should be systematically trained on general issues of European statistics and respective quality principles. In addition, they shall be trained regarding general principles and quality regulations of the Office of Statistics Liechtenstein.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 14.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>

<p><b>15. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should make the process for prioritising activities in its work programme more systematic and transparent. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicators 3.3, 11.1 and 11.2)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein defines a multi-year work programme. The work programme reflects a number of inputs from individual users bilaterally and through the Statistics Commission, inputs and ideas from staff, and evolving EU regulations. In addition, it considers the aims outlined in the strategy, where a new strategy 2025-29 is to emerge in the course of 2024, and it considers the need to make investments to be able to deliver on demands in the future.</p>

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<p>The outcome in the form of a final work programme reflects a number of trade-offs and prioritisations between competing demands and the constraints within which the Office of Statistics operates – mainly the resource situation, which is generally recognised as tight. The process leading to the work programme is rather informal, especially for prioritising and consideration of inputs from various sources.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 15.1:</b> Define a new approach for prioritising activities in the multi-year work programme</p> <p>A new approach will be defined to categorise and prioritise various projects included in the multi-year work programme according to their required effort and the assigned importance of implementation.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.1:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 15.2:</b> Discuss the new approach and assigned values with the Statistics Commission</p> <p>Within the meeting of the Statistics Commission, the Office of Statistics will discuss and seek advice on the new approach. Thereby, the categories (effort associated with a project and importance of its implementation) and assigned values to the projects for testing purposes will be presented.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 15.3:</b> Apply the new approach for prioritising activities in the multi-year work programme</p> <p>The new approach will be applied and visible within the multi-year work programme.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 15.3:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>

<p><b>16. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should implement its policy of no pre-release access to data for all statistics, including health statistics. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 6.7)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics operates a very clear and transparent policy on pre-release access to statistics, which is not to give such access except in (rare) cases where a person is invited to speak at a press conference on a release. However, there is a single exception – based on a government ordinance – to this very clear policy in the case of health statistics for which the Minister is granted pre-release access. This exception gives the impression of somewhat idiosyncratic Government interference in Office of Statistics activities, which is not helpful to the Office of Statistics’ image as a professionally independent institution.</p>
<p><b>Improvement action 16:</b> End pre-release access to health statistics without granting new or renewed access rights</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2024</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement action 16:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>

<p><b>17. Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Office of Statistics Liechtenstein should identify and pursue ways to strengthen collaboration with academia. (Improvement-related: ES CoP, Indicator 7.7)</p>
<p><b>Current situation:</b></p> <p>While also the academic community in Liechtenstein is small, there can be great benefits for a statistical institute to collaborate with academia within or across borders. While there are cases of such collaboration in Liechtenstein, they are very informal and person-borne which calls for the development of a more structured approach without becoming overly burdened by procedure.</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 17.1:</b> Opening up the opportunity for scientific theses</p> <p>The Office of Statistics will allow drafting Bachelor and Master theses together with the Office of Statistics. In this context prerequisites will be formulated and presented to students interested in completing their scientific thesis on a statistical topic. Furthermore, students might receive topic suggestions.</p>
<p><b>Deadline:</b> Q2 2025</p>
<p><b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 17.1:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein</p>
<p><b>Improvement sub-action 17.2:</b> Establish and use networks with academia for specific tasks and projects</p> <p>Establishing new statistics but also major changes to existing statistics highly depends on the input of experts. Respective processes should thus be additionally accompanied by academia. A change in the composition of the Statistics Commission foresees increased cooperation with experts in (official) statistics including academia. In the course of the changes, networks should be established and consequently used for different tasks.</p>

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<b>Deadline:</b> Q4 2026
<b>Responsible institution for improvement sub-action 17.2:</b> Office of Statistics Liechtenstein