

## Summary Note

# 2025 Members' Meeting of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

3 April, 9:00 – 11:00 AM EST

As the Praia Group concludes its second term in 2025 and reflects on priorities for a potential third term, the [Praia Group on Governance Statistics](#) invited its members and partners to reflect on recent progress and future directions of work on governance statistics. The discussion focused on the role of governance statistics in fostering trust in official statistics more broadly, highlighting how credible, transparent data on governance can strengthen the overall integrity and relevance of official statistics. The meeting also updated members on the methodological work carried out by the Praia Group's Task Teams on Participation in Political and Public Affairs and on Non-Discrimination and Equality.

## Context



*Governance statistics are not just numbers. They have the potential to revitalize the social contract between governments and citizens.*

-Mr. João de Pina Mendes Cardoso, Chair, Praia Group on Governance Statistics

The importance of governance statistics has seen a marked rise in recent years, culminating in their recognition as a standalone domain in the revised [Classification of Statistical Activities \(CSA 2.0\)](#) in 2023. In his welcoming remarks, **Mr. João de Pina Mendes Cardoso**, Chair of Praia Group, noted that this momentum has reinforced the significance of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics, particularly during its second term (2020–2025). Mandated to establish international standards and methodologies for measuring key dimensions of governance, the Praia Group plays a pivotal role in shaping the global governance data landscape. Its work aims to ensure that governance statistics are both methodologically sound and relevant across diverse national contexts.

Since its establishment, the Praia Group has made tangible progress in operationalizing its mandate. The publication of the [Handbook on Governance Statistics](#) in 2020 laid a foundational framework for countries to begin producing and using governance data more systematically. In addition, the Group launched in 2021 specialized task teams to deepen methodological development in the two critical areas of Participation in Political and Public Affairs and Non-Discrimination and Equality. These initiatives address some of the most pressing governance challenges today, underscoring the essential role of governance statistics in informing policy, strengthening institutions, and upholding human rights.

In his remarks, Mr. Cardoso invited members to reflect on three questions:

- *As National Statistical Offices (NSOs) face growing competition from new sources of analysis and data, how can governance statistics help NSOs remain relevant to their users?*

- *What types of governance statistics will be most in demand in the next 10 to 20 years? How can we make these statistics more granular, more timely and more accessible to meet urgent policy needs and help anticipate challenges?*
- *Can governance statistics help bolster public trust in NSOs by highlighting their role as impartial and reliable data sources – including on sensitive topics such as corruption, access to justice, political participation and the like?*

## Session 1: The Future of Governance Statistics

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### Speakers

- **Mr. Osama Rahman**, Director, Data Science Campus, UK Office for National Statistics
- **Mr. André Loranger**, Chief Statistician of Canada
- **Ms. Camilla Rocca**, Director of Research, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Moderated by **Mr. Arvinn Gadgil**, Director, UNDP Global Policy Centre for Governance

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*What kind of ‘data steward’ do we need in the field of governance statistics? The exponential growth in digital data sources is revolutionizing the potential for governance statistics. However, this expansion in data also necessitates robust data governance practices – ensuring data protection, privacy, and responsible use to maintain the trustworthiness of official statistics.*

-Mr. Arvinn Gadgil, Director, UNDP Global Policy Centre for Governance

### 1) Strengthening Trust in Governance Statistics and in National Statistical Offices

In a global context where building and maintaining trust in public institutions is a priority for many governments around the world, panelists identified three main pathways through which investments in governance statistics can help increase trust in NSOs and public institutions more generally:

- **Reliable and timely statistics are a critical element of good government decision-making.** In a world facing a plethora of governance issues – such as deepening political polarization, distrust in government institutions, stark inequalities, shrinking civic space and democratic backsliding – reliable and timely statistics are very much needed to guide politicians and public servants as they develop new policies, choose between options and allocate scarce resources.
- **Official statistics are known to drive governance performance.** Evidence from the [Mo Ibrahim Foundation](#) shows that African countries with stronger statistical capacity perform better on the governance indicators tracked by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance. In other words, NSOs play a critical role in enabling good governance, and as such, their technical and financial capacity to produce statistics, including on governance, must be supported.
- **Robust statistics are essential for accountability.** Without evidence of the impact of programmes and policies on different groups, parliamentarians, civil society and the media lack the evidence they need to highlight problems and call for improvements. Recent research shows that 1) people are more likely to trust a government that openly tracks its performance and is held accountable for it, and that 2) people who believe that their government uses statistics in national decision-making have significantly higher levels of trust in their government ([OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Institutions 2024](#)).

Mr. Gadgil reminded that “now, more than ever, it’s essential for NSOs to implement strong measures that safeguard their independence and credibility.” One key safeguard is adherence to internationally recognized methodological standards, which ensures that users can trust the integrity of the data. However, governance statistics still lag behind other domains in terms of standardized methodologies. This makes the Praia Group’s work in the coming years all the more vital.



*Transparency is really important. In Canada, we've developed a [Trust Centre](#) on our website as a place to announce all of our data collection intentions, explain our methodologies, our quality frameworks, and what we do with the data.*

-Mr. André Loranger, Chief Statistician of Canada

## 2) Innovation and Modernization of National Statistical Systems to Deliver Timely and Relevant Governance Statistics



*Three words: bigger, better and faster. Users want data that's more comprehensive, more granular and more timely. And cheaper too!*

-Mr. André Loranger, Chief Statistician of Canada

- **The increasingly competitive data landscape is an opportunity for NSOs to produce better statistics.** By tapping into the expanding array of data sources available nowadays, including from the private sector, NSOs can go beyond traditional methodologies to meet emerging information demands more rapidly and more efficiently. However, this shift must be underpinned by a strong commitment to transparency, privacy protection and data security.
- **Modern national statistical systems require a cultural shift towards agility, transparency and accessibility** – and this has implications for governance statistics too:
  - NSOs need to be **agile** not only in adopting innovative methods and new technologies, but also in meeting changing user expectations about governance statistics. For instance, as we face global challenges like climate change, digitalization and growing economic inequality, there may be a need to start measuring the effects of such trends on the various dimensions of governance.
  - NSOs need to be **transparent** about their methodologies and data sources, but they must also clearly communicate the limitations of governance data and guide users on its appropriate use – especially as many are still becoming familiar with governance statistics.
  - Official statistics need to be more **accessible** – not only to policymakers but also to the general public. Research shows that over one-third of people [in OECD countries] do not believe official statistics help them assess whether their government is delivering on its promises ([OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Institutions 2024](#)).
- **Public engagement in data processes can also strengthen trust in governance statistics and in statistical systems more broadly.** Involving policymakers, civil society, academics and the general public in indicator development, in citizen-generated data production and/or in external reviews on governance statistics can enhance both public trust in these statistics and their overall relevance and utility.



*We need to start thinking seriously about how not to draw on survey data as our starting point, drawing instead first on administrative and big data, and keeping survey and citizen-generated data to fill the gaps.*

-Mr. Osama Rahman, Director, Data Science Campus, UK Office for National Statistics

### 3) Integrating Governance Statistics into a Broader Statistical Framework



*Recent research found that, on average, investing one dollar in data systems delivers a return of \$32 in the form of economic benefits for the country.*

-Camilla Rocca, Director of Research, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

- **At a time of growing crises and shrinking budgets, when governments and donors need to make the most of every dollar**, it's particularly sensible to invest in official statistics, knowing that this investment can increase the efficiency and impact of all other spendings.
- **Governance statistics should be embedded within a broader, more holistic statistical framework** – one that integrates governance statistics alongside social, economic and environmental statistics. This approach more accurately reflects the reality that governance influences all aspects of people's lives. Canada's [Quality of Life Framework](#), for example, has a dedicated domain on 'Good Governance' alongside four other domains (Prosperity, Society, Health, Environment), and includes two governance-related cross-cutting lenses, namely Fairness and Inclusion, and Sustainability and Resilience.



*Once governance is identified as a key national priority, the next question must be: how are public institutions delivering on this commitment? To answer this question, in Rwanda, we work with the Rwanda Governance Board to produce a Governance Scorecard – a homegrown index that consistently gauges the state of governance in Rwanda.*

-Ivan Murenzi, Director General, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda

## Session 2: Update on the Methodological Work Led by the Task Teams

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### Speakers

- **Mr. Vebjorn Aalandlid** (Statistics Norway), Chair of the Task Team on Participation in Political and Public Affairs
- **Ms. Marjut Pietilainen** (Statistics Finland), Co-Chair of the Task Team on Non-Discrimination and Equality with **Mr. Arturo Arias Chumpitas** (INEI Peru)

Moderated by **Mr. Francois Roubaud**, Senior Researcher, Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD)

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The second session provided an update on the ongoing methodological work carried out by the two task teams of the Praia Group, on [Participation in Political and Public Affairs and Non-Discrimination and Equality](#). Thanks to support from Statistics Norway, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and UNDP, NSOs from Latin America, Europe and Africa will convene in Oslo, in May 2025, to discuss their results from the cognitive and field testing of the two survey modules currently being developed by the task teams, and to review the administrative data guidance also compiled by the task teams.



*How were the two dimensions of Participation and Discrimination selected? In a large consultation with Praia Group members and partners in 2020, we asked where you saw the greatest demand for governance statistics that couldn't be met due to a lack of readily available methodologies. Participation and Discrimination emerged as top priorities.*

-Mr. Francois Roubaud, Senior Researcher, IRD

## Task Team on Participation in Political and Public Affairs, supported by UNDP and UNWomen

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- Further to survey mapping and cognitive testing, the task team is now well advanced in designing a harmonized **survey module** covering participation in electoral processes, participation in political and civic life and the enabling environment of participation. The module includes a short set of core questions (max. 10) as well as some optional questions.
- Some **innovative survey questions** aim to shed light on 'new' forms of participation, such as showing support for a political or social cause on social media or boycotting certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons. Other questions try to capture various forms of political intimidation during elections as well as public attitudes towards minority and/or marginalized groups holding power.
- The questionnaire is currently being **field-tested by eight NSOs** (Burundi, Cabo Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mexico, Nigeria, Colombia and Uganda), with the last three doing so on nationally representative samples.
- Additionally, the task team is developing **guidance on using electoral administrative data to produce statistics on political participation**. This guidance considers various types of electoral registers and data systems, the role of NSOs in adding value to electoral data and effective models for data-sharing between NSOs and electoral management bodies. Members are invited to contribute by sharing national experiences at [group.praia@gmail.com](mailto:group.praia@gmail.com).

## Task Team on Non-Discrimination and Equality, supported by UNDP and OHCHR

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- Following a similar process, the Discrimination task team has also developed a harmonized **survey module** that can be attached to larger surveys. This module is mainly focused on personal experiences of discrimination and harassment based on internationally prohibited grounds (in line with SDG 16.b.1), including cyberbullying (incl. of a sexual nature) which has become widespread with the use of digital technologies.
- Other **innovative questions** aim to measure the impacts of discrimination and harassment on victims (from psychological problems to being unable to work), attitudes towards the changing gender roles, and levels of comfort when interacting with various marginalized groups.
- The questionnaire is currently being **field-tested by nine NSOs** (Mozambique, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Peru, Belize, Israel, Lesotho, Uganda), with the last four doing so on nationally representative samples.
- The task team is also developing a **guide on using administrative data to produce statistics on non-discrimination and equality**. Members are invited to share examples of how their NSO has established effective partnerships with administrative data holders, including those that fall outside the usual bounds of governmental administrative sources (e.g. from non-governmental organizations or private sector). Please contact [praia-equality-ohchr@un.org](mailto:praia-equality-ohchr@un.org).

## Session 3: Recent Developments in the Measurement of Selected Sub-Domains of Governance

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### Speakers

- **Ms. Maaike De Langen**, Senior Policy Advisor on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice, OECD
- **Mr. Santiago González**, Senior Economist/Policy Analyst, OECD
- **Ms. Alexandra Wilde**, Team Leader, Governance Data & Analytics, UNDP Global Policy Centre for Governance

Moderated by **Mr. Adrián Franco**, Vice-President, National Institute for Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico

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The third session provided an update on the recent progress made in measuring three other dimensions of governance – Access to and Quality of Justice, Trust, and Responsiveness – since the publication of the Praia Group Handbook. Panelists also identified areas requiring further development, for consideration by the Praia Group as it envisages extending its mandate for a third term.



*Of course, we all understand that this is not magic - simply including the Governance domain and its eight sub-domains in the revised CSA won't automatically result in countries producing these statistics. We still have a lot of methodological work to do. But it's very important that NSOs begin to treat this new domain as an integral part of their responsibilities."*

-Mr. Adrián Franco, Vice-President, INEGI

### Trust and Responsiveness

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- Since 2021, the OECD has been conducting a biennial **Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions** (2021, 2023) in more than 30 OECD countries (updated methodological guidelines forthcoming in 2025). This standardized survey has generated internationally comparable values for levels of trust in different public institutions and for public governance related drivers of trust.
- **Areas for future development of statistics on Trust** include:
  - Expanding the roll-out of this survey in non-OECD countries (in 2025: Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Romania) and assessing the international applicability of the instrument;
  - Further investigating the influence of cultural, cognitive and behavioral factors on levels of trust; and
  - Further probing the links between trust and public services, voice and participation.
- **Responsiveness**, as defined in the Handbook, is focused on two aspects: whether people feel they have a say in what the government does (political efficacy) and whether they are satisfied with the government's performance (satisfaction with public services). In recent years, the OECD has tested a population survey questionnaire to measure satisfaction with services through life events in 10 EU countries. The OECD has also developed an expert-based questionnaire to assess administrative processes and standards that governments have in place to support their delivery of public administrative services.

- **Areas for future development of statistics on Responsiveness include:**
  - Deepening the combination of survey and administrative data sources to measure responsiveness more comprehensively; and
  - Developing further guidance on the statistical use of digital data to help design a methodology focused on output measures, using digital transactions data.
- Reflecting on global progress in reporting on [SDG 16.6.2](#) (satisfaction with public services) and [SDG 16.7.2](#) (population who believes decision-making is responsive and inclusive), Ms. Alexandra Wilde from UNDP noted a significant increase in data availability. This progress has been supported notably by the [SDG 16 Survey](#), a joint initiative by UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR to support countries in collecting the data needed for most survey-based indicators under SDG 16. The survey can be administered as a standalone household survey or NSOs can choose to incorporate specific modules in ongoing survey operations. Training and technical support are available for interested NSOs.

## Access to and Quality of Justice

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- The understanding of access to justice has significantly evolved since the publication of the Handbook, including a growing consensus around the importance of **people-centred justice systems** to enhance access to justice and the quality of justice services. Since this approach is data-driven and evidence-based, the demand for reliable justice statistics is set to increase significantly in the coming years.
- Significant **methodological developments** in this area in the past few years include the [Guidance on Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice](#) (2019) and [Improving the Monitoring of SDG 16.3.3 – Towards Better access to Justice](#) (2023).
- In the SDG 16 indicator framework, [SDG 16.3.3](#) measures **access to dispute resolution mechanisms (formal or informal) for civil disputes**. Since it was only adopted in 2020, data coverage is still very limited. Data for this indicator can be obtained from legal needs surveys or from the dedicated module on Access to Justice in the [SDG 16 Survey](#).
- **Areas for future development** include:
  - Developing harmonized methodologies and standards for civil justice statistics;
  - Updating guidance on legal needs survey to reflect latest innovations, including from NSOs; and
  - Improving the collection of administrative data by legal service providers, notably by harmonizing definitions and classifications.

## Additional Resources

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- Osama Rahman (2025), [The Future of National Statistics Offices](#)
- OECD (2024), [OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions – 2024 Results](#)
- UNDP, OHCHR and UNODC (2022), [SDG 16 Survey Initiative](#)
- Civil Justice Data
  - OECD (2019): [Guidance on Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice](#)
  - Pathfinders (2019): [Justice for All: Report from the Task Force on Justice](#)
  - World Justice Project (2021): [Grasping the Justice Gap](#)
  - OECD & Pathfinders (2023): [Improving the monitoring of SDG 16.3.3](#)
  - UNDP, UNODC, OECD (2025): [From Data to Action: Strengthening Civil Justice with SDG 16.3.3](#)
- Praia Group (2023), [Governance Now a Domain in the Revised Classifications of Statistical Activities \(CSA 2.0\) – What's Next for Governance Statistics?](#)