



Towards a Stronger National Statistical System

2020 Annual Report

– GENERAL SUMMARY

Canadian Statistics Advisory Council

Why and how we produce statistics in Canada

The need for statistics

Canadians, governments and other organizations make thousands of decisions every day. Having accurate information, including relevant data and statistics, are critical to good decision making.

Knowing that data and statistical information are accurate, reliable, and produced by a trusted and independent source are important, especially when it comes to government decision-making.

The vital role of Statistics Canada

Statistics Canada is Canada's national statistics organization. As an independent agency, it ensures that data are produced using sound and objective methods, free from political or interest group pressure, with the results available to everyone.

By law, Statistics Canada is authorized to collect information and is also required to protect the confidentiality of that information.

From data collection to decisions that affect our daily lives

Every month Statistics Canada collects data from across the country on the price of a huge number of goods and services that Canadians purchase. These data are compiled into an overall measure of how prices are changing, known as the Consumer Price Index or CPI. This information is used in many ways by different individuals and organizations, such as to adjust wages and pensions to reflect increases in the cost of living and as an input to setting interest rates in Canada.



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Evolving statistics for the changing needs of Canadians

The need to change how data are collected and made available

As our society changes, and information is becoming more digital, we need to change what data we collect, how we collect information, and how this information is shared. Traditional methods such as surveys are no longer sufficient on their own.

This requires organizations like Statistics Canada to develop new ways to access information, such as collecting more administrative data

from government programs and linking these data to the census, surveys and other data sources.

In doing so, Statistics Canada must find ways to assure Canadians that their personal information will continue to remain secure. It also means that the agency must modernize the statistical output made available to Canadians and researchers so that they are easy to access and understand.

The need for Statistics Canada to play a leadership role

With its expertise and mandated role to produce and share data, Statistics Canada must play a central leadership role in helping to coordinate the compilation of data from governments

and other organizations to produce coherent national statistical information for the benefit of all Canadians.

The unfortunate consequence of data gaps

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and researchers lacked access to much information they needed in a timely manner. It is important to ensure this information is available to help policy makers and health care providers help save lives.

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Steps to improve Canada's statistical system

Our recommendations

Canadians already benefit from access to a vast range of information produced by Statistics Canada. The agency is in the middle of a multi-year modernization initiative to enhance its statistical programs.

During the pandemic Statistics Canada has been able to leverage new statistical methods and tools to respond quickly to help meet and support the need for critical data.

To further strengthen Canada's statistical system, we made recommendations in several areas.

- 1. Good data and information are vital to develop, implement and evaluate federal government programs.**

We recommend ensuring that the development of relevant statistical information is considered for all federal programs.

- 2. Gaps in the availability of data impede decision-making, including critical areas such as health and health care; and economic and social issues faced by demographic groups such as racialized groups and Indigenous Peoples.**

We recommend measures to ensure timely, consistent and coordinated data are available across Canada's statistical system.

- 3. Statistics Canada receives ad-hoc funding for many of its key statistical programs.**

We recommend changes to its funding model to ensure stable core funding is available for the wide range of key social, economic, environmental and energy statistics.

- 4. Statistics Canada is required by law to collect information and preserve the confidentiality of this information.**

We recommend steps to ensure Statistics Canada has access to the information it needs while respecting the privacy of Canadians.

- 5. Researchers require detailed statistics to provide insights and advice to governments and Canadians.**

We recommend ways to ensure authorized researchers have secure remote access to the data they need for their work.

The role of the Canadian Statistics Advisory Council

About CSAC

[[Website](#)]

The Canadian Statistics Advisory Council (CSAC) is a newly created body, established to enhance the independence of Statistics Canada, Canada's national statistics organization.

- We provide impartial and independent advice on how to ensure the relevance, quality and accessibility of Canada's statistical system.

- We provide advice to the Chief Statistician and the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada.
- We are required to produce an annual report to inform Canadians on the state of the national statistical system.



About our first report

[[Annual report 2020](#)]

We recently released our first annual report [[Annual report 2020](#)] which provides a detailed assessment of Canada's statistical system and advice on how it could be strengthened. This document provides a high-level

summary of what we found and recommendations to support better decision making in Canada.



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