Rebuilding of the National Statistical System in Argentina: Some Lessons Learned

Hernan Daniel Munoz
Julien Dupont

UNECE/EFTA Expert Meeting on Modernizing Statistical Legislation
18 and 19 November 2021, Geneva (online)
Session 4: Implementing the Generic Law on Official Statistics (GLOS) – lessons learnt

The opinions expressed in this presentation and in the related paper are solely those of the presenters and not necessarily those of INDEC and the OECD.
A steady deterioration of the Argentinian NSS and NSO (2007-2015)

- Political interference between 2007 and 2015 damaged:
  - De facto professional independence of NSO
  - Credibility of official statistics
  - Institutional organisation of the NSO
  - Human resources
  - Implementation of methodological standards
  - Planning activities
  - Statistical infrastructure, including censuses
  - Technical capacity
  - Coordination within the NSS, in particular the leading role of NSO

- IMF “Statement of concern” (2012) and “Declaration of Censure” (2013)
- Situation widely reported in media, in particular for the official CPIs
Rebuilding process (2016-2019) - I

**Institutions**
- Declaration of Statistical Administrative Emergency (January 2016) for 12 months
  - Consecutive interruption of the statistical production for several months
  - Extended power of the Director general of the NSO
  - Accessing increased financial resources
- Institutional strengthening, including a new human resources policy and a significantly increased budget
- Strengthened coordination of the NSS by NSO

**Technical capacities**
- Thorough review of sources and methodologies for each statistical output
- Improved statistical production (censuses, records, surveys, sampling methods, etc.)
- Implementation of international statistical standards
- New dissemination and communication policy ➔ Transparency, facilitated access
International Cooperation

- Technical assistance (IMF, IDB, etc.)
- Bi-lateral cooperation with other NSOs
- Cooperation with international organisations (OECD, IADB, IMF, ECLAC, UNECE, etc.)
- Adherence to the OECD Recommendation on Good Statistical Practice
- OECD review of the NSS and key official statistics provided a number of recommendations, including:
  - Modernise the law on statistics
  - Improve access to administrative sources
  - Ensure impartiality, objectivity and transparency in the development and presentation of official statistics
  - Implement a comprehensive statistical quality management framework
  - Strengthen the statistical infrastructure
  - Reinforce users involvement
  - Strengthen the coordination within the NSS
Lesson 1 - importance of professional independence

- Laws on statistics should protect the professional independence of national statistical authorities
- Professional independence is multi-dimensional:
  - Guarantee *de jure* independence: explicit provision in the legislation to protect producers of official statistics from any interference
  - Exclusive authority and accountability of NSO for the choice of
    - Sources
    - Data collection methods
    - Statistical methods
    - Timing and format of the statistical releases
    - Authority to decide on sources and data collection methods
  - Autonomy and accountability of NSO in
    - Budget allocation
    - Human resources management
  - Appointment procedures and term of mandate of the head of NSO
  - Transparency and internal culture of independence and quality
  - Equal access to statistics (no pre-release access)
Lesson 2 - modernising statistics laws

- GLOS and OECD Recommendation have been key to provide guidance and models for the new draft law, with some adaptation for national circumstances:
  - Explicit provisions for professional independence clearly establish an exclusive authority of NSO to decide on sources, statistical methods and timing and format of releases
  - Clear mandate to collect data (including administrative sources), produce and disseminate statistics
  - Transparent procedures for the selection and appointment of the head of NSO
  - Efficient quality management system
  - Statistical confidentiality
  - Coordination of the NSS
  - Frequency of censuses
Lesson 3 – role of international organisations

- Support of international organisations is key but capacity of the international statistical community to intervene against deviations from fundamental principles on official statistics in countries is limited

- Play an important role in the rebuilding process
  - International guidelines towards modernising statistical legislations (GLOS, OECD Recommendation, UN Fundamental Principles, European Statistics Code of Practice, etc.) are crucial
  - Technical assistance for capacity building
  - Assist national statistical authorities to participate in the modernisation of the law on statistics and in monitoring its implementation, including by liaising with users and policy-makers
  - Promote a transparent and user-oriented dissemination policy

- Regular reviews of the NSS by international organisations and peers, based on existing international standards are important
  - Publication of the results
  - Monitoring implementation of the recommendations
Thank you