

Statement concerning the excellent cooperation between the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG) and the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) in Germany

In Germany, the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) and the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG) are affiliated to the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community. Therefore, the ministry itself has an interest in good cooperation between its authorities.

Destatis and BKG have already been working together for years – on a national and international level within the UN and the EU. In 2016, it was decided to formally record and consolidate this beneficial cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding. In this context, an action plan was created including all ongoing and planned projects. Since then, the action plan has been yearly reviewed and updated. Requirements and recommendations from the international and national level are evaluated and analysed in order to derive actions for Germany.

The need for geospatially-enabled statistics for data-driven, evidence-based decision-making is higher than ever before. It has been understood that an improved understanding of social, economic, and environmental issues can be achieved by analysing integrated statistical and geospatial information.

The integration of geospatial and statistical data is one of the most promising paths to provide timely, reliable, relevant and detailed information. It enables the collaborating institutions to support the full policy lifecycle and forecasting. It allows policy interventions to be made at the level where they are most effective.

Europe is confronted with a specific mix of societal, economic and environmental challenges; some of which are global such as climate change and some of which are specific to Europe such as aging societies and massive immigration. Understanding these major cross-border challenges and taking the right decisions require different insights that can only be derived from new types of data and its integration.

Clearly, National Statistical Offices and National Geospatial Agencies need to investigate together how to have legislative and institutional arrangements in place to allow modern statistical production with the best possible mix of traditional statistical data, new data sources such as big data, administrative data and geospatial data. One example to formalise cooperation on a national level is our Memorandum of Understanding, which also supports the international actions. A valuable complement for us has been the acknowledgement of BKG as 'Other National Authority (ONA)' in June 2020. BKG is the first National Geospatial Agency registered as ONA. In our opinion, the ONA status supports the European and national data integration actions and includes the geospatial agencies better into the European Statistical System.

In a nutshell, we would like to advocate for a formalisation of the cooperation of the National Statistical Offices with the National Geospatial Agencies. We believe that integration of geospatial and statistical data is essential to find innovative solutions for the future challenges in understanding and monitoring the changes on Earth.

In Germany, we have made big progresses bringing both communities together and improving a common understanding of geo-enabled statistics. Our formalised cooperation supports the international and national vision towards better integration of statistics and geospatial data.