



Towards establishing the role of Chief Data Officer within National Statistics Offices

The journey at Statistics Netherlands (CBS)

Florian Henning, Data Officer at Statistics Netherlands

UNECE Expert Meeting on Modernizing Statistical Legislation
17-18 November 2022, Geneva



Establishing the CDO role as a journey

Contents

1. CDO at NSOs: the what and the why
2. Lessons learned: how to approach the CDO journey
3. Initial findings
 1. CDO mission and role
 2. Positioning the CDO



What is a CDO? And why would we need one?



In a nutshell: what is a CDO?

- **Executive role** responsible for bringing the **entire NSO's data governance** to a higher level
- **Primary task domains:** data strategy and data governance along entire statistical process, data architecture, data services, AI and algorithms
- **Leader and interface** for data-centric working and culture
- Stimulate collaboration with internal and external partners (**data alliances**)



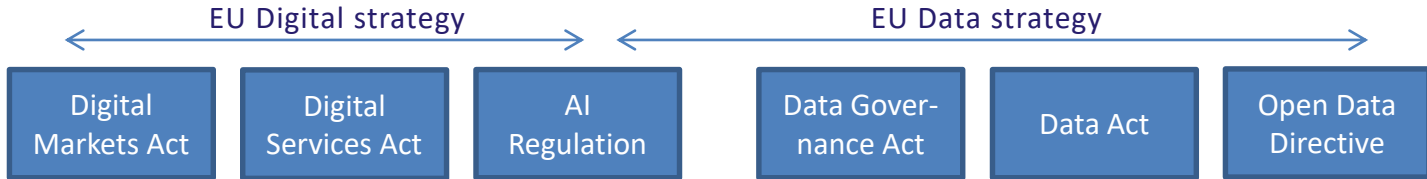
Drivers

Internal

- **Complex landscape** of innovation initiatives
- **Continuous improvement**: be better than good

External

- **Legislative developments**



- Focus on **data-driven government**: various NL government **data strategies**, Government-wide **CDO Council**
- Expectation for central role of CBS in these developments



Lessons learned at CBS: how to approach the CDO journey



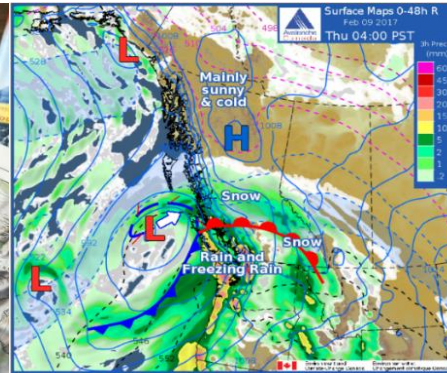
Preparation – creating a vision

- Have a **vision** on destination and goals:
no one-size-fits-all approach
- Often begins with a specific **need for change**
- **Desk research:** literature, frameworks, policies, trainings
- **Engage with peers:** participate in (inter)national platforms and learn from others



Preparation – Making a roadmap

- Establish **starting point**: baseline scan
- Check **destination**: specify vision
- Map the **route**: approach and strategy
- Check the **conditions**: inventorise stakeholders, policies, timing
- Assemble the **team** and needed **tools**



Getting there – adaptability and choices

- **Obstacles:** resistance, culture shift
- **Orientation** mid-way: (re)align strategy
- Travel companions: build **alliances**
- **Prioritise:** start small, build gradually



Arriving at the destination

- Destination is **not the endpoint**: ambitions for continuous improvement, evergreening strategies
- Keep **evaluating, learning, adjusting**
- **Do this together** with partners and stakeholders
- **Communicate** about goals and achievements



Initial findings (and questions)



CDO mission and role

– External role: wide consensus

- Manage **overview** of external developments and partnerships and **translate** into internal frameworks and solutions
- **Central contact point** for strategic management of **partnerships** and alignment between data **initiatives**

– Internal role: diverging scenarios

- Only **external role**, or also internal **data strategy**?
- Responsible for data governance **across entire statistical process and data life cycle**?
- Mandate: **only advisory role** to develop data strategy, or also for ensuring its **implementation**?



Positioning the CDO within the organization

- Should be **top management position** (director level or higher)
- CDO needs strong support and **mandate from highest level** (DG)
- Clearly **define position vis-a-vis other C-roles** and leadership roles
- **Under discussion:**
 - Position CDO on **same level/above CIO instead of under CIO?**
 - Position CDO **above or next to other chiefs** associated with subdomains of data management (e.g. CPO or CISO)?
 - Permanent seat in **Executive Board of Directors?**



Questions? Suggestions?



Get in touch: fb.henning@cbs.nl