Background and rationale

The [Collaborative on the Use of Administrative Data for Statistics](#) (CAD) is a multi-stakeholder collaborative of countries and agencies from across the globe and region that are formally working together to improve knowledge on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. Established in May 2020 to respond to several countries' needs to increase the use of administrative data for statistical purposes, CAD members comprise more than 25 National Statistical Offices (NSOs) from developed and developing countries and representatives from numerous regional bodies, international agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Administrative data collected by governments and service providers in their day-to-day business is an increasingly important source of official statistics. In the data revolution era, administrative data provides opportunities for timely analysis and public policy development, savings on data collection, and increased efficiency and scope using available data e.g., birth and employment records. Indeed, the timing for the establishment of the CAD could not have been better as the pandemic highlighted the urgent need for better statistics in the absence of surveys and census. It also underscored the need for online sharing of experiences and best practices, as well as capacity building. Strengthening the capacity of national statistical systems (NSSs) to leverage the use of administrative data for statistical purposes is important in filling gaps in the data available to policy and decision-makers to monitor progress and implement the 2030 Agenda.

Jointly convened by the [United Nations Statistics Division](#) and the [Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data](#), CAD facilitates actors to share knowledge, developments, and regional and international best practices related to the use of administrative data. The Collaborative is also strengthening the capacity of countries in the region to use administrative data sources for statistical purposes.

Objectives and structure

CAD is working to address both urgent and long-term needs to access and use of administrative data for statistical purposes in a coherent and cross-cutting manner i.e., addressing common challenges such as institutional and legal frameworks, using a sectoral approach through which it builds on different partners advances in administrative data for various sectors including business, health, and education, and by level of maturity through which it provides materials suitable for stakeholders at different levels of maturity with regard to administrative data and statistical systems.

The CAD comprises three task teams:

1 Institutional framework, coordination, and partnerships

2 Data management and standardization

3 Technical interoperability and linking

Flagship initiatives

Inventory of Resources: CAD has established an [Inventory of Resources on administrative data](#) for statistical purposes using resources already available. The inventory is aimed at making materials on the use administrative data for statistical purposes more readily available. It includes a variety of materials, including recommendations and practical examples in different contexts and international guidelines, and tools.

Expert clinics: CAD holds regular expert clinics series to disseminate and discuss content on specialist areas with the wider statistics community. Recent clinics include: a labor statistics clinic and a data quality clinic where experts from Colombia, Norway, Canada, Slovenia, and Cameroon shared their experiences in addressing different aspects of data quality when working with administrative data sources; an interoperability and data linking clinic during which experts from Uruguay, Ecuador, the United Kingdom, Morocco, and Malaysia shared their experiences in organizing and systematizing the extraction, transformation, and load for administrative data, and the importance of state platforms for interoperability. CAD has also hosted an expert clinic on the engagement of NSOs with producers of administrative data during which experts from the State of Palestine, Vanuatu, the United Kingdom, and Ghana shared their experiences on the main challenges to effective coordination.

Self-assessment tool on legal frameworks:
Developed by CAD, this tool assesses the extent to which the statistical laws of a country facilitate access to and the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. It aims to help NSOs and other producers of official statistics understand how current statistical legislation facilitate the access and use of administrative data and explore aspects related to governance of the NSS with regard to access and use of administrative data.

Guidance on a memorandum of understanding for sharing administrative data: Many NSOs are struggling to access administrative data. Formalizing data access and sharing can help in initiating a dialogue and specify modalities for the data sharing. CAD has developed a template and guidance as a tool for countries which require increased capacity in this area.

Quality assessment template for administrative data: Engaging on the quality of administrative data can be a good way for administrative data holders and NSOs to jointly assess whether data can be used for statistical purposes. Gaps identified can then also jointly be addressed to improve the quality. CAD is developing a tool that can support countries in this respect. Is it expected to be published in early 2023.

Key messages

Administrative data is often an accessible and cost-effective resource for plugging gaps in the data available to policy and decision-makers to monitor progress, implement and report on the 2030 Agenda.

The Collaborative on Administrative Data is a valuable platform with rich expertise, diverse tools, materials, and resources to help strengthen countries' capacities to use administrative data for statistical purposes. It is a robust and credible vehicle through which to share and learn current developments and good practices on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes.

Collaborative and innovative approaches are available to tackle shared challenges including uncertainties and standards in using administrative data for statistical purposes. There is need for further collaboration and innovation as these are continuous processes.

Where possible and applicable, administrative data should be integrated with survey data for optimal results: while invaluable in robust NSSs, administrative data is not the silver bullet to countries' data challenges but should be integrated with survey data for optimal results. There is still an important place for surveys.

Sound interesting?
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