

We argue that the way official statistics production is funded affects whether fundamental principles of official statistics are implemented and, therefore, reforms in funding modalities should be considered potentially in many national statistical systems. Reforms should include a major decoupling of the funding of official statistics production from the annual political process of proposing and adopting a specific government's budget, as such decoupling can have very positive effects on the institutional independence of official statistics production and thus on professional independence. We discuss how some of the current familiar modalities of funding official statistics production effectively amount to enabling conditions for official statistics to be produced with less than full independence, impartiality and objectivity and they can undermine high quality of statistics in general. We propose reforming the current funding model by shifting to approving multiyear funding for statistical production, which would span a period significantly longer than the term of a government in office and the sitting of legislative bodies. We also present arguments for approving of a lump sum for statistical production as a whole. We point to the risks of allocating funds for specific statistical works and of subjecting approved budgets for statistical offices to within-budget-period ceilings ratified by policy makers. We explore modalities by means of which the funds for official statistics production could be raised and then could be saved for their use by statistical producers in the context of a multiannual budget with a view to, on the one hand, avoiding political influence on statistical production and, on the other hand, ensuring accountability in the use of the funds.

Keywords: official statistics, funding, budget, statistical principles, ethics