

Master Plan Concerning the Development of Official Statistics

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I. Basic Policies in Developing Measures

1 Basic philosophy for formulating the 4th Term Master Plan

Official statistics should be utilized in society as an essential social information infrastructure that supports rational decision-making by the people. Official statistics can contribute directly to the future of Japanese society by providing appropriate information to support Evidence-Based Policy Making (hereafter referred to as "EBPM"), including helping to plan administrative programs that contribute to the sustainable improvement of the people's lives, the creation of new industries, and so on. In addition, official statistics, which accurately represent socio-economic conditions, are a source of decision-making for the people to plan their future lives, make expenditures, manage their assets, etc., as well as a fundamental resource for companies to make production and sales plans, carry out investments, raise funds, etc. Furthermore, when official statistics are utilized for academic research, fundamental resources that contribute to the sustainable growth of society can be widely disseminated to the world.

As described above, official statistics are utilized by various actors in society, and in order to help users make appropriate decisions in the midst of drastically changing socio-economic conditions, it is necessary to continuously produce high-quality statistics that accurately respond to the changes and are useful to society and provide them in a more user-friendly manner. Official statistics must be more useful for socio-economic development and improvement of the people's lives as an essential information infrastructure of society, which the people recall first among various information sources, trust, and use universally. The government is expected to continue its tireless efforts to improve the overall quality, aiming to provide reliable, useful, and easy-to-use statistics, namely, "comprehensive and high-quality official statistics" in a timely and reliable manner so that official statistics fully fulfill their role. The new Master Plan Concerning the Development of Official Statistics starting from FY2023 (hereafter referred to as the "4th Term Master Plan") should further promote such efforts by the government.

2 Review of the 3rd Term Master Plan and its implementation

(1) Formulation of the 3rd Term Master Plan and status during the planning period

During the process of formulating and implementing the Master Plan Concerning the Development of Official Statistics starting from FY2018 (hereafter referred to as the "3rd Term Master Plan"), there have been extraordinary developments in the field of official

statistics.

Following the decision of the Basic Policy on Statistics Reform¹ by the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy in December 2016, the 3rd Term Master Plan was formulated one year ahead of the schedule. The plan reflects major changes in the socio-economic situation surrounding statistics and outlines various measures to promote statistical reform, including improvement of economic statistics centered on GDP and the establishment of an EBPM promotion system.

In addition, during the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, two inappropriate cases occurred that caused statistics users and society to distrust the official statistics, and measures have been taken to address these cases. In other words, in response to the decline in trust in official statistics, which had been triggered by the Monthly Labour Survey inappropriate case², the Statistics Commission made a proposal to prevent the recurrence of similar problems and to ensure and improve the quality of statistics (“Measures Aimed at Comprehensive Quality Control of Official Statistics (Proposal)” (September 30, 2019). Based on this, the 3rd Term Master Plan was revised in June 2020 during its period.

Furthermore, in December 2021, it was found that there had been an inappropriate case³ in the Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction, and in this regard, the Statistics Commission also issued a proposal (“Toward Comprehensive Quality Improvement of Official Statistics (Proposal)” (August 10, 2022)), and based on this proposal, efforts have begun to improve the comprehensive quality of official statistics.

¹ The policy includes specific initiatives for more accurate economic assessment, such as improving statistical source data used to compile GDP and compilation method of GDP, as well as the revision of the Master Plan Concerning the Development of Official Statistics ahead of schedule.

² A case in which a survey design was changed without sufficient consideration and the change was not reflected in the survey plan through the procedures specified by the Statistics Act (Act No. 53, 2007). Even after the error was recognized, it was not addressed or information was not provided to minimize the impact on society and statistics users, etc.

³ A case in which changes in the method of estimate in the operation manual, which is directly related to the quality of the statistics like the survey plan, were not consistent with the processing of the past month's questionnaire submitted after the submission deadline (exception processing). In addition, as in the case of the Monthly Labour Survey, there was no action taken or information provided to minimize the impact on society and statistics users, etc.

(2) Priorities of the 3rd Term Master Plan and its evaluation

With this background, various measures have been developed from the following basic perspectives under the 3rd Term Master Plan : (1) accurately responding to EBPM and statistical needs, (2) promoting cross-ministerial statistical development including improvement of the National Accounts and economic statistics, (3) securing and improving international comparability and the mutual consistency between statistics, (4) promoting the use of statistical data, etc., from the user perspectives, and (5) developing and enhancing infrastructure toward the promotion of statistical improvement. The outcomes of the efforts made during the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan are manifold, and the following reviews some of the main outcomes of particular importance.

(Promotion of cross-ministerial statistical development including improvement of the National Accounts and economic statistics)

The National Accounts are extremely important indicators not only for accurately grasping economic trends but also from the perspectives of overviewing the economic situation and making international comparisons. In terms of improving the National Accounts and economic statistics, it was requested that the National Accounts should more accurately reflect the actual state of the economic structure, improve the accuracy by utilizing data with information that is easy for companies to report, and systematically develop the source statistics by clarifying the correspondence between the source statistics and GDP.

To this end, it was decided to transition⁴ the foundational Input-Output Tables to the Supply and Use Tables (hereafter referred to as “SUT”) system, as well as to improve and expand the source statistics used for estimation. This major project aims to fundamentally transform the system of economic statistics by FY2030.

In this project, various efforts have already been made, such as compiling the general framework of the basic structure concerning the benchmark year of SUT and the Input-Output Tables and the intermediate year of SUT; developing the Product Classification;

⁴ In the compilation of the National Accounts, the current system based on the Input-Output Tables will transition to a new system based on SUT, which are prepared from source statistics without leveraging the Input-Output Tables.

establishing the Annual Business Survey to be conducted across industries in the intermediate year of the Economic Census for Business Activity; and systematically developing economic structure statistics. In addition, as part of the efforts to build a foundation for the improvement of economic statistics, there has been steady progress in the development and enhancement of the Business Register⁵ through the use of administrative record information, etc., and the Enterprise Survey Support Project, which is an initiative to make it more convenient for companies to respond to economic statistical surveys.

(Promotion of utilization of statistical data, etc., from user perspectives)

In order to promote the use of statistics and to improve the environment from user perspectives, it was decided to take measures such as promoting the use of questionnaire information, sharing and providing statistical data through the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics⁶ and other tools, and preparing for large-scale disasters.

In this regard, following the revision of the Statistics Act in 2018, for example, the environment for on-site use that contributes to the use of micro-data is being developed, and the contents and functions of the Portal Site of Official Statistics of Japan (hereafter referred to as “e-Stat”) are being enhanced. During the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in 2020, basic statistical surveys, such as the Population Census, were conducted without any major hindrance to their use. However, some surveys had to be canceled or changed.

⁵ A database developed under Article 27, Paragraph 1 of the Statistics Act to provide and manage directory information on establishments and enterprises for the accurate production of economic statistics. This database integrates the results of statistical surveys, such as the Economic Census, with information from administrative record information (labour insurance information, commercial and corporation registration information, etc.) and is updated on a regular basis to capture all establishments and enterprises and keep the information up to date.

⁶ A common statistical system for all government ministries and agencies, which was established to improve the efficiency of investment and operation of statistical systems for the entire government by consolidating the statistical systems maintained by each ministry (in operation since 2008).

(Developing and enhancing infrastructure toward the promotion of statistical improvement)

With regard to ensuring and improving the quality of statistics, based on the proposal of the Statistics Commission in September 2019 and other suggestions, the government decided to promote the establishment of the PDCA cycle⁷ under the concept of comprehensive quality control⁸, the improvement of the statistical production process, the securing and training of statistical specialists, and the building of a workplace culture. These measures were adopted in a partial revision of the 3rd Term Master Plan in June 2020. In addition, as for matters not included in the 3rd Term Master Plan, the government decided to promote efforts in a more earnest manner to improve the comprehensive quality of the official statistics in accordance with the proposal by the Statistics Commission in August 2022.

These measures are steadily being implemented, starting with those that are feasible so far, but they are still in the early stages of implementation and must be further enhanced in the future. Ensuring and improving the quality of official statistics is an enduring issue common to all periods, and it is necessary to continue efforts over the long term, putting society, statistics users, and other stakeholders first.

In doing so, it should be noted that statistical quality is essentially a broad concept that includes not only accuracy, such as precision, but also usefulness and ease of use that meet the needs of users. It is important that efforts to ensure and improve the quality of statistics are oriented not only to reduce errors in statistics but also to develop and provide statistics that meet the needs of users in a user-friendly manner in addition to other aspects.

(3) Summary of 3rd Term Master Plan efforts

As described above, it is recognized that efforts based on the 3rd Term Master Plan have achieved a certain level of results. However, there are many challenges regarding official statistics for the future, as the social and economic situation is drastically changing,

⁷ A Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle.

⁸ It aims to improve the capability of the enterprises by deploying and applying various methodologies related to quality control in a comprehensive and company-wide manner, and by leveraging the total capacity of employees (Japanese Industrial Standards Committee, “Glossary of Related Terms and Abbreviations”).

including the rapid expansion of the digital economy and the progress of globalization, and the needs for statistics are growing more diverse and sophisticated along with changes in the survey targets and survey environment. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen efforts to ensure and fully improve the quality of official statistics in the future.

In order to appropriately respond to these changes in the circumstances surrounding official statistics and to resolve various issues, including those ongoing from before, it is necessary for the government as a whole to continue to work together, considering the society and users of statistics first.

3 Basic perspectives in developing measures in the 4th Term Master Plan

The 4th Term Master Plan sets its goal as improving the quality of official statistics comprehensively through measures to reform the National Accounts and economic statistics, which are currently underway, to develop useful statistics that accurately respond to socio-economic trends, and to establish a system for the production of reliable statistics by means of proper management and appropriate production processes. These measures shall be promoted based on the following basic perspectives.

It should be noted that basic perspectives (1) and (2) indicate properties that must be satisfied by the statistics production. Also, perspective (3) indicates the nature of the statistics, such as being user-friendly, while perspectives (4) and (5) indicate how such statistics are realized by the statistics departments and other sections.

[Basic Perspective]

(1) Promoting cross-ministerial development of official statistics that accurately respond to socio-economic changes

In order for official statistics to support rational decisions and activities by various actors in society and to be useful for socio-economic development, it is necessary to provide statistics that can accurately reflect socio-economic conditions and changes in our country.

In order for official statistics to fulfill its role as such an important information infrastructure, the development of useful statistics that respond to changes over time and the needs of users of statistics and others shall be promoted.

In particular, the government shall develop and improve statistics that provide a picture of the social economy, which is changing due to such factors as the progress in services as

approximately 70% of GDP is accounted for by tertiary industries; globalization of economic activities, including the global expansion and the expansion of supply chains based on material procurement across multiple countries; and digitalization, including the expansion of e-commerce and business model reforms. In addition to advancing these efforts, the government shall steadily implement reforms to the National Accounts, including the transition to the SUT system.

The government shall also provide the information necessary to address the declining birthrate, aging and declining population, take steps toward a decarbonized society in response to global warming, revitalize local regions using digital technology, and promote tourism, which supports local economies and employment. At the same time, the government shall improve statistics in socially important areas for the purpose of accurately grasping the diversification of work styles in light of the needs of workers, such as remote working, and the social changes brought by the spread of COVID-19.

In doing so, relevant ministries shall address cross-cutting issues in a coordinated and cooperative manner.

(2) Improvement of the international comparability of statistics

The government shall promote mutual understanding in the international society and contribute to its development as socio-economic activities become increasingly globalized. In addition, in order to contribute to the understanding of the current situation and issues in Japanese society through international comparisons and to help resolve such issues, the government shall provide data that supports the international social development and promote efforts to improve the international comparability of data.

In particular, the government shall be actively involved in the process of formulating international standards, including the National Accounts, making international contributions, developing indicators related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁹, and so forth.

In addition, as digitalization and other changes are progressing worldwide, the Ministry

⁹ The indicators that are listed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted at the UN Summit in September 2015, are international goals for a sustainable and better world by 2030. They consist of 17 goals and 169 targets.

of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) shall take the lead in understanding international discussions and advanced trends in statistics to respond to such changes, share them with other ministries, and reflect them in improving and enhancing statistics in Japan.

(3) Promoting the use of statistical data, etc., from user perspectives

Statistical data is valuable only when used by statistics users. Therefore, the government shall make improvements and enhancements based on user perspectives in order to make the data more accessible and convenient for statistics users, etc.

In particular, the government shall continue to address such issues related to e-Stat, the Portal Site of Official Statistics of Japan, by enhancing its functions and ease of use to meet diverse needs for utilization and expanding the provision of data in machine-readable formats. In order to respond to various analytical needs that contribute to the public interest, the government shall work on speeding up and facilitating the provision of questionnaire information, etc., by using digital technology, while ensuring thorough information management.

Additionally, the government shall work toward the improvement of statistical literacy¹⁰ in the whole society, which is important for the effective and appropriate use of statistics.

(4) Development of infrastructure for the production of high-quality statistics

In order for official statistics to fulfill their role as society's information infrastructure, it is essential that reliable and highly useful statistics are continuously provided to statistics users. Therefore, the government shall develop the required infrastructure to ensure the production of high-quality statistics.

In particular, each ministry, under the leadership of its executive staff, shall proactively work on the comprehensive quality control of statistics (Total Quality Management, hereafter referred to as “TQM”), the standardization of the statistical production process, and the improvement of the quality of information provision, including metadata¹¹, with society and statistics users, etc., as its first priority. In addition, recognizing that statistics

¹⁰ Ability to understand the usefulness of statistics and to make use of statistical data.

¹¹ Information that accompanies statistical data and contributes to the use and interpretation of data, efficient management and searches, rather than the statistical figures themselves.

represent a “comprehensive project” in which many people are involved, and statistical quality problems may occur at any time, the government shall promptly respond to such problems with sufficient preparation if they should occur. Furthermore, the government shall systematically work on securing the necessary resources including a quality control system and developing human resources with high expertise.

The MIC, as the central statistical systems¹², shall provide each ministry with human resources and technical support, including consultation services, and expand the provision of systems that can be shared by each ministry, as well as support local governments and enumerators, which are at the forefront of statistical surveys, in conducting surveys and examinations and improving the survey environment.

(5) Accurate and efficient production of statistics through the use of digital technology and diverse information sources

Considering the evolution of digital technology and the progress in the environment for data utilization while responding appropriately to changes in the survey environment and other factors, the government shall work on making statistical surveys and statistical production methods more efficient and reducing the burden on respondents, as well as aim to produce more accurate statistics. In doing so, the government should address the issue with the awareness that improving efficiency and reducing the response burden will benefit not only respondents but also statistics users, as the increased collection rate can improve the accuracy of statistics.

In particular, new digital technologies shall be effectively introduced into statistical surveys and productions. As for online surveys, the actual utilization rate has declined despite the fact that the introduction rate has reached about 90%. Therefore, over the next five years, the government shall work to improve the system with the aim of achieving an online response rate of at least 80% for surveys targeting establishments and at least 50% for surveys targeting households as a percentage of the total number of responses in the Fundamental Statistical Survey.

In addition, with regard to administrative record information and big data, which are

¹² It refers to the Statistics Bureau, the Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Policy), the Statistical Research and Training Institute, and the National Statistics Center.

considered to be effective for accurate and efficient statistical production, the government shall resolve various issues related to their utilization, such as legal restrictions, characteristics including data bias, and the progress of digitalization. These efforts shall be coordinated with other government's initiatives, such as the development of infrastructures for data utilization implemented as a part of works to realize a digital society.

II Matters Concerning the Development of Official Statistics

1 Improvement and enhancement of the accuracy in the National Accounts

(1) Reforms toward FY2030 set forth in the 3rd Term Master Plan

The 3rd Term Master Plan inclusively organized the issues and placed “promotion of the development of cross-cutting and systematic economic statistics focusing on the National Accounts” at the top of the Matters Concerning the Development of Official Statistics. In this context, with respect to the improvement of the National Accounts, the goal is to “develop and improve source statistics and enhance and improve the accuracy of the National Accounts.” Specifically, the tasks are to develop source statistics, improve the compilation methods of the National Accounts, and transform the Input-Output Tables and the National Accounts to the SUT system.

The transition to the SUT system in the production of the National Accounts is a significant shift from the current system based on the Input-Output Tables to a new system based on the SUT, which is produced from source statistics without leveraging the Input-Output Tables and aligns with international trends. This is expected to contribute to improving the accuracy of the National Accounts, including GDP, through measures such as improving the consistency of estimation methods for the benchmark and intermediate years.

During the 3rd Term Master Plan period, various efforts related to the aforementioned have been vigorously promoted, and certain results have already been achieved.

Here are the main examples. In relation to the development of source statistics and improvement of compilation methods, the government improved the Integrated Statistics on Construction Works, enhanced the Quarterly Estimate of GDP (hereafter referred to as “QE”) and annual estimate, published the Quarterly National Accounts for Value Added by Economic Activity QNA by production approach in addition to the Quarterly Estimates of Household Disposable Income and Household Saving Ratio, and so forth. Also, in relation to the transition to the SUT system, the government compiled the general framework for the basic structure of the benchmark year of SUT and the Input-Output Tables along with the intermediate year of SUT, formulated the product classification, improved the accuracy of the 2015 Input-Output Tables, and the like. All of these are significant steps forward.

However, in the case of the National Accounts, which are processed statistics, constant

efforts are needed to improve source statistics and compilation methods, and the government plans to fully transition to the SUT system in FY2030. The government shall continue some of the tasks under the 3rd Term Master Plan toward FY2030, including improving the accuracy of distributional aspects, such as operating surplus and compensation of employees in annual estimates and enhancing the accuracy of deflators, especially for services, in addition to reviewing whether or not to publish the Quarterly National Accounts for Value Added on the income side (QNA by income approach). In addition, new issues have emerged as a result of changes in economic and social conditions during this period.

Therefore, the 4th Term Master Plan addresses these issues.

(2) Efforts toward FY2030: two pillars

The following two major pillars run through the entirety of specific efforts related to the National Accounts in the 4th Term Master Plan. Please note that (2) is positioned as one of the means for (1).

(1) Improving the accuracy at each stage of the process, from QE to revised base.

(2) Planned transition of the Input-Output Tables and the National Accounts to the SUT system

First, in relation to (1) above, the following efforts shall be promoted: the refinement of compilation methods in QE and annual estimate, the seamless use of compilation methods, etc., at each stage, and the development of source statistics, including the establishment, revision, or abolition of survey items. In addition, while taking into account the state of development of source statistics for each period, the government shall work to achieve a seamless approach to the sectors and estimation methods for SUT, including improvements in consistency between the benchmark year and the intermediate year. In addition, the government shall also work to improve the deflator, which does not always adequately reflect changes in market prices and quality.

During the 4th Term Master Plan period, the government plans to publish the 2020 Input-Output Tables (in 2024) and compile the 2025 tables (scheduled for release in 2029). Then, the transition to the SUT system set forth in the 3rd Term Master Plan shall be completed with the 2025 benchmark revision of the National Accounts (scheduled for release in

FY2030), which shall be in accordance with the 2025 tables.

Therefore, in relation to (2), as a response to various issues that need to be addressed during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan in light of these plans, the government shall steadily and systematically implement the further utilization to the results of the Economic Census for Business Activity in the 2020 tables, transition to the SUT system for the services sector covering the same year, and develop a comprehensive version of the product classification that includes both goods and services sectors.

Since multiple issues shall be addressed during the 4th Term Master Plan period, careful attention should be paid to the priority for each of them. For example, it is not realistic to simultaneously review the improvement of QE accuracy and the acceleration of its publication, which has a binary relationship. In addition, given the resource constraints in the line ministries, it is practically difficult to address multiple issues of deflator improvement all at once.

Therefore, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall order, as concretely as possible, to refine the goals set forth as ideals into a feasible form, focusing on issues that are likely to cause complications in the work of review. With regard to the aforementioned QE, the government shall make improvements in accuracy first, and once it has reached a certain level, the government shall engage in a thorough review of earlier release of the QE. The government shall also prioritize issues on deflators where relative progress has been made in the planning of the implementation.

(3) Prior investment for the future

Needless to say, it is not expected that all efforts to improve the National Accounts will be completed in FY2030. It is also important to take the viewpoint of prior investment for the future without being bound by the deadline of FY2030. Therefore, the 4th Term Master Plan includes, as a prior investment for the future, responses to international discussions on the development of new international standards and to the major changes in economic and social conditions in recent years.

Currently, the United Nations and other organizations are working diligently to revise the international statistical standard regarding the National Accounts. A new standard (tentatively named 2025 SNA) is expected to be compiled by 2025 as a revision of the

current international statistical standard (2008 SNA). This new standard will have an impact on the National Accounts in the future.

Therefore, the government shall continue to be actively involved in the international work related to the revision so that it shall be useful and easy for Japan to adopt. Furthermore, basic research shall be steadily advanced toward the introduction of the 2025 SNA (tentative name) as soon as possible after its adoption.

In particular, significant changes in economic and social conditions in recent years can be seen in the acceleration of the digitalization of the economy and the rapid increase in interest in the global environment.

Hence, from the perspective of the National Accounts, new challenges include a more precise understanding of the impact of the economic transition to digitalization and greening, as well as research on indicators to reflect the environmental impact of economic activities on GDP from the perspective of decarbonization. Although it is difficult at this stage to determine the ultimate goal for these challenges, they are all considered to be areas that will become increasingly important in the near future. Therefore, the relevant ministries and Statistics Commission shall jointly take up the challenge with high goals, including the development of source statistics related to digitalization and the environment.

In addition, the government must not forget to scrutinize and verify the responses related to COVID-19 (e.g., processing of outliers in seasonal adjustment of QE and reviewing of allocation ratios for some items in annual estimates). In the short term, securing and improving the accuracy of the current estimate is the primary goal to be achieved for these responses. However, in the medium to long term, there is a possibility that some lessons learned and hints for new compilation methods can be obtained from these responses.

Thus, as a more proactive response to COVID-19 and as an important initiative for the future, the government shall examine and verify the responses after the pandemic and organize arrangements and procedures for the next economic crisis by compiling the findings from the examination and verification. Furthermore, the government shall improve the accuracy of estimates, not only in crisis response but also in normal times.

(4) Necessity of coordination with source statistics and the role of the

Statistics Commission

In order to increase the usefulness and accuracy of the National Accounts, which are processed statistics, there is inevitably a limitation to improving the compilation method of the National Accounts alone, and it is also essential to develop and improve source statistics. These two are, so to speak, wheels on a cart, and it is important to fortify their coordination through mutual feedback. For example, it is important to further promote the use of the Economic Census for Business Activity and the Annual Business Survey in benchmark year and intermediate year estimates, including in areas that have not yet made their use. In addition, it is important to utilize administrative record information (administrative statistics, etc.) and develop source statistics, as necessary. In addition, improvements to the input survey are necessary for the SUT estimate of the benchmark year.

In fact, as indicated in 1 (1), sufficient consideration was given to consistency with the National Accounts in formulating the product classification. Moreover, in the survey design of the Economic Census for Business Activity and the Annual Business Survey, which are the basis for the benchmark year and intermediate year estimates in the National Accounts, various attempts were put into place to make them easier to use for estimating the National Accounts.

As mentioned above, one of the future challenges in the National Accounts is to the study on earlier publication of QE. In order to realize this, in addition to examining the method of estimate for the National Accounts, an important factor is to publish source statistics earlier. In order to facilitate these efforts, it is necessary to review measures for improvement while taking into account the trade-off between the burden on respondents and the assurance of accuracy based on the situation of statistical source data, such as the burden on respondents and the survey system in the administrative ministries in charge, in addition to the necessity in the estimate of the National Accounts with regard to the early release of source statistics.

Thus, in improving the National Accounts, it is necessary to ensure the harmonization of Japan's statistical system as a whole, including source statistics. In order to achieve this, it is essential to train officials who possess a high level of knowledge about the National Accounts and SUT along with Input-Output Tables, with a view to transitioning to the SUT system.

Therefore, the Statistics Commission shall take the initiative by taking into account various needs and strongly promote efforts to realize the systematic development of statistics in Japan as a whole, or in other words, to realize the entire optimization.

2 Promotion of systematic development of economic statistics

(1) Development of statistics to understand the economic structure

Since Japan has a decentralized¹³ statistical production system, the systematic development of cross-cutting economic statistics has been a long-standing issue in Japan. In particular, in the past, large-scale statistical surveys were conducted in different years and cycles by industry, which made it impossible to comprehensively grasp the economic structure of Japan at the same point in time.

In response to this, since 2009, the Economic Census for Business Frame and the Economic Census for Business Activity (hereafter simply referred to as the “Economic Census”), which are surveys producing economic structure statistics that are fundamental statistics across industries, have been gradually established and enhanced in addition to the Annual Business Survey.

As a result, since 2022, it has been possible to obtain basic information, such as sales figures of companies, on a cross-industry basis every year at the same point in time. The same concept of economic structure statistics, which allows seamless connection, has also led to significant improvements in terms of results with accuracy and timeline comparisons.

In this way, so to speak, the Japanese version of the economic statistics system was established with economic structure statistics as its core, which led to the development of economic statistics by individual fields.

In order to further develop this system of economic statistics, it is necessary to continue to accumulate statistical source data, such as domestic production and the number of employees, by using the same survey items for the time being in order to improve the timeline comparability regarding the economic structure statistics that form the core of economic statistics for individual field.

¹³ Distributed statistical functions to each government agency.

On the other hand, in Japan, digital transformation (DX)¹⁴, which fundamentally changes business processes by utilizing digital technologies, such as big data analysis and AI, as well as e-commerce via the Internet, etc., has been advancing. As the economy becomes increasingly digitalized, it may become more difficult to grasp the actual state of the economy through surveys of economic activity based on location-based units, which was the basic method used in statistical surveys in the past. In addition to this, it is necessary to develop a methodology to capture economic activity from the perspective of "how" rather than "what."

In addition, efforts toward Green Transformation (GX)¹⁵, which focuses on climate change actions, are underway, but further review is needed on the methodology to monitor the status of these efforts.

Furthermore, as the global value chain¹⁶ further deepens, such as the cross-border division of labour between processes and the outsourcing of production and operations, the international transactions and business development of companies become more complicated. There is a growing need to statistically understand the further development of such globalization and the impact through the value chain from infectious diseases, large-scale natural disasters and other events that may occur domestically and internationally.

As described above, the reality is that there is no established methodology to grasp the actual status of changes that are important for understanding Japan's economy in a prompt, efficient and detailed manner.

Therefore, with regard to economic statistics for individual field, the government should continue to implement efforts to enhance statistics in line with growing needs and improve the accuracy of results of statistics for which the actual situation is difficult to grasp. In such cases, it is necessary to conduct constant research on how to deal with cases where there is insufficient data available through existing statistical surveys, administrative record

¹⁴ It refers to the creation and flexible modification of new business models by using new digital technologies for the future growth and increased competitiveness.

¹⁵ It refers to the transition from the fossil fuel-centered economy, society, and industrial structure that has continued since the Industrial Revolution to the clean energy-centered economy and society and to the implementation of the transformation of the entire economic and social system.

¹⁶ It refers to the chain of value added that is created between production processes across multiple countries until the goods or services are completed.

information, private data, and the like.

Based on the above, during the 4th Term Master Plan period, the government shall steadily accumulate key data on economic structure statistics. At the same time, the government shall improve and enhance related statistics so that they can contribute to the more accurate National Accounts and more timely analysis of the impact and other factors, such as the spread of COVID-19 and the changes in economic and social conditions in Japan and abroad in terms of price increases.

In addition, in light of rapidly changing needs, the government shall begin reviewing a framework that enables the rapid identification of necessary statistical data related to digitalization and other areas that are currently unavailable. In this effort, the statistics to be developed shall be examined in cooperation with the relevant ministries based on consistency and continuity with the survey items covered by existing statistical surveys as well as the needs of users. The central statistical organizations shall take the lead in reviewing survey implementation methods, such as utilizing the existing framework of economic structure statistics, in order to achieve efficiency and reduce the burden on survey targets.

Furthermore, the government shall continue to review the ideal survey unit for economic activities and the feasibility of capturing business activities on an activity basis¹⁷ while taking into account the status of the future transition to the SUT system, the implementation of existing statistical surveys, and the respondents' ability to complete the required information.

(2) Development of service industry and enterprise-related statistics

As the importance of the service sector in the national economy has been increasing, cross-industry structural statistics have been developed through the establishment of the Economic Census and the Annual Business Survey. As a result, the actual status of production activities in the service industry has been captured in detail each year in the Fundamental Statistical Survey, which has greatly contributed to the development of statistics in the service sector.

¹⁷ It refers to the process of ascertaining the actual situation in units of production activities that produce goods and services.

On the other hand, the development of dynamic statistics for the service industry can be said to be at a halfway stage, unlike the manufacturing industry. For example, monthly Fundamental Statistics have not been developed. It is also necessary to precisely respond to various needs, such as improving the accuracy of the results of the Monthly Survey on Service Industries, the Indices of Tertiary Industry Activity and others, as well as releasing them earlier from the perspective of improving QE and grasping economic trends.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall commence a review toward the development of monthly Fundamental Statistics for the service industry from the perspective of establishing a survey methodology to continuously and appropriately grasp the trends of the service industry, keeping in mind the fact that the service industry includes a wide range of business activities which are rapidly changing. At the same time, the government shall continue efforts to improve individual statistics, which are the fundamental data in the preparation of GDP.

(3) Efforts to improve the production of economic statistics (Establishment of Business Register)

It has long been an issue to develop the population to produce high-quality statistics within a limited budget. Under these circumstances, the position of the Business Register was clarified in the Statistics Act (Act No. 53 of 2007), which was fully revised in 2007, and it is one of the largest databases in Japan that covers all establishments and enterprises in Japan.

The Business Register is required to improve the accuracy of various economic statistics as population information for statistical surveys conducted by each ministry targeting establishments and enterprises. Furthermore, the Business Register plays an important role in reducing the burden on respondents and creating efficient statistics, and it is required to be a core infrastructure that constantly reflects the actual conditions of the establishments and enterprises at hand and to provide more user-friendly population information.

In regard to maintenance, the government periodically captures and updates information based not only on the results of statistical surveys, such as the economic census, but also on administrative record information, such as labour insurance information and commercial and corporation registration information.

In addition, the government has been working to develop and improve Business Register in conjunction with the development of economic structure statistics. In recent years, the coverage has been greatly expanded, and the accuracy has been improved by confirming the activity status regarding the approximately 1.6 million corporations, which had been added to the Business Register based on the information from the Corporate Number Publication Site, through the Economic Census for Business Frame conducted in 2019 and other measures.

On the other hand, since the activities of establishments and enterprises are constantly changing, it is one of the important issues to determine the extent to which the information in the Business Register can be updated, especially in the mid-year of the Economic Census for Business Frame, in order to make the Business Register more useful as population information.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall review ways to further enhance the scope and frequency of updating database information, including improvement of economic structure statistics, which form the foundation of the database information and further utilization of administrative record information.

Also, in conducting statistical surveys related to establishments and enterprises, each ministry shall continue to make efforts to obtain the corporate numbers that shall become basic information as a list and register this information in the Business Register.

Furthermore, in statistical surveys targeting establishments and enterprises, information from the latest databases should be used in principle while taking into account the characteristics of individual surveys.

It should be noted that such improvements in the Business Register will also affect the timeline changes in the statistics that utilize the Business Register.

In order to promote an appropriate understanding among users in this regard, the Statistics Commission and relevant ministries shall take opportunities to actively provide information.

(Review the possibility of utilizing the statistics production in the context of the digital transformation of enterprises)

Enterprises are required to store invoice information that includes sales amounts and consumption tax amounts under the consumption tax invoice¹⁸ system (qualified invoice preservation method) to be introduced in October 2023, and enterprises are now making progress in adopting the “digital invoice”¹⁹ system.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall continue to review the possibility of utilizing digital invoices for statistics production, while keeping a close eye on the prevalence of digital invoices.

(Efforts in the division of roles for enterprise-related statistics)

In the process of systematic development of economic structure statistics, from the viewpoint of reducing the response burden, the government has been reviewing the division of roles and correcting duplication between the Annual Business Survey and cross-industry surveys as well as industry-specific surveys that target enterprises.

So far, the government has taken measures to eliminate duplication in statistical surveys, such as the mutual use of common data (data transfer) among statistical surveys, in addition to measures to correct duplication by using the Business Register.

In addition, the government is promoting further coordination among statistical surveys along with among ministries by, for example, uniformly conducting the Survey of Research and Development and the Basic Survey of Japanese Business Structure and Activities of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry on the same list and the same date as the Annual Business Survey since 2022, and by mutually utilizing survey items that are common among those three surveys.

In addition to the above, for listed companies, which bear a large response burden and have a large impact on the results, the National Statistics Center has begun the Business Survey Support Program, in which a staff member dedicated to each company helps the company staff with answering the survey as they build trusting relationships.

On the other hand, there are persistent demands for further reducing the burden in

¹⁸ A means by which the seller informs the buyer of the exact applicable tax rate, consumption tax amount, etc.

¹⁹ A “digital invoice” is invoice data that is standardized and structured based on the assumption that it is automatically processed by a system, etc. The standard specifications have been developed and published by the Digital Agency.

various statistical surveys, and as mentioned above (1), it is expected that the burden on respondents shall increase in the future in order to ascertain new economic activities. While it is necessary to continue to respond accurately to the needs of statistics users, it is important to always pay attention to reducing and controlling the response burden from the viewpoint of obtaining more accurate statistical information as well as gaining understanding from the respondents.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall continue to review how the existing roles of various statistical surveys targeting enterprises should be divided and make efforts to eliminate duplication. At the same time, as described in Section 3-6 (1) below, the government shall promote initiatives to take into account the burden on respondents through the use of digital technologies and big data and through support for business surveys.

3 Development of statistics in response to globalization of economic activities, improvement of international comparability, and international contributions

(1) Improvement of statistics in response to globalization of economic activities

Amid the globalization of economic activities, the government has improved the convenience of Trade Statistics, which provide basic information on imports and exports, by creating a database on the e-Stat in May 2019. In addition, the government expanded coverage in the Survey of Overseas Business Activities by utilizing data from the private sector and other sources.

On the other hand, it has been pointed out that there is a necessity to continue addressing the development of statistics from the perspective of improving international comparability with foreign countries, given the fact that Japan has not yet registered information in the OECD.²⁰ database, such as information on what types of companies are importing and exporting and data on the activities of multinational enterprises.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall examine and review the feasibility of compilation of new statistics that link corporate characteristics (e.g., ratio of foreign capital) and import/export activities after examining

²⁰ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

the possibility of connecting information recorded in Business Register and the Trade Statistics database, from the perspective of impact on administrative procedures and confidentiality of information on individual companies and other factors.

Moreover, the government shall keep on improving related statistics and enhance the accuracy of population registers for foreign-affiliated firms operating in Japan and Japanese-affiliated firms operating overseas.

(2) Improvement of international comparability and international contributions

As it becomes more important for the international society to cooperate in solving global issues, it is imperative to make efforts to improve the international comparability of official statistics, including international exchanges on official statistics and the proper development and provision of official statistics that contribute to the international comparability.

Japan has been actively participating in international conferences, dispatching officials to international organizations, accepting government officials from foreign countries, international exchanges with East Asia and other countries, and cooperating in the operation of the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), and so on.

With regard to the development of the SDG global indicators²¹ set by the United Nations, the government is steadily making efforts to expand the coverage of indicators, for example, by studying the utilization of observation data through coordination among industry, academia and government. Of the total 248 indicators, 125 indicators were first published in August 2019, and 161 indicators have been published as of the end of November 2022.

In many cases, the MIC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) serve as focal points for the provision of data to international organizations, or the relevant ministries communicate directly with the international organizations, in response to their requests. However, it has been pointed out that the provision of data to international organizations and the understanding and information sharing on international trends are not necessarily sufficient.

²¹ Sustainable Development Goal global indicators

It has also been pointed out that the system for expanding the provision of statistical data should be enhanced with the cooperation of various ministries.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall promote efforts to further improve international comparability, such as by examining ways to expand the provision of statistical data to international organizations, including the OECD. The government shall further expand the coverage of SDG Indicators with the cooperation of third parties who have knowledge of these indicators.

Moreover, in light of the changes in the circumstances in which international conferences have rapidly switched to online formats due to the impact of COVID-19, the government shall continue to make international contributions through participation in international conferences, bilateral exchanges, and other means while effectively utilizing web conferencing systems.

Furthermore, the government shall be more actively involved in developing international data for official statistics and making the rules, such as the revision of the international industrial and product classifications, and shall develop human resources for international statistics so that they can lead international activities and further improve the presence of Japan in the international society.

4 Development of statistics on population and livelihoods

Japan is facing a population decline that is unprecedented in the world (natural decrease in population, low birthrate, aging population, and decrease in working-age population). It becomes more important to have statistics on realities and structural changes in population and society, government policies, and others in order to deal with various social and economic issues, such as the shrinking size of the economy and labour force shortages due to a decline in domestic demand, increased social security benefits and burdens, as well as increased government spending on medical care and public health due to the spread of COVID-19.

To date, the government has promoted efforts to review survey methods and expand the provision of survey results, centering on Fundamental Statistical Surveys, such as the Population Census and the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions, in order to appropriately grasp the actual state of the population and its living conditions.

On the other hand, many statistical surveys on population and living conditions are conducted

mainly on households, and these surveys are mostly conducted by enumerators who visit households. As a result, some statistical surveys had to be temporarily suspended against a background of an increasing number of single-person households and the recent COVID-19 situation has made it difficult to contact the respondents, as well as the fact that the staff members in charge of the survey are busy dealing with matters related to COVID-19.

In addition, under the Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2022 (Cabinet decision on June 7, 2022; hereafter referred to as “Basic Policy 2022”), it is stated that the construction of a social security system for all generations and the realization of social inclusion are important issues. In ascertaining the actual conditions of the older population, people with disabilities, and others, it is necessary to carefully design the selected respondents, the survey items, and the survey methods.

Therefore, it is important to advance efforts to stably and continuously collect basic information that has been obtained through the Fundamental Statistical Survey, and to enhance relevant statistics that contribute to the realization of social inclusion while coping with an increasingly severe survey environment in view of further decline in population, an aging society with fewer children in the future, and other factors.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, from the perspective of ensuring sustainability by coping with the severe environment surrounding household surveys, the government shall continuously promote efforts to reduce the burden on respondents, including the promotion of online responses, and to improve the efficiency of survey operations.

In addition, with regard to statistics on people with disabilities, the government shall promote the production and provision of statistics that contribute to analysis, mainly statistical surveys whose survey items have been enhanced, in light of the needs in implementing policies, including the Fifth Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities, which is scheduled to be approved by the Cabinet in FY2022.

With regard to statistics to objectively grasp the situation of men and women (gender statistics), based on the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality (Cabinet decision on December 25, 2020), the government shall continue to try to obtain data by gender and promote the provision of statistics that contribute to analysis by various categories, such as age and region. In addition, the government shall review the necessity of taking into consideration the diversity of gender in conducting statistical surveys.

Furthermore, while also utilizing administrative record information, the government shall examine the way to statistically monitor social security expenses in an accurate manner.

In addition to the above issues, in order to respond to various social needs that may arise in the future, relevant ministries shall coordinate to promote research on efficient and effective survey methods and other matters required.

5 Efforts to ensure comparability of statistics, etc.

It is beneficial to standardize the categories for representation in each statistics, such as industry, occupation and employee categories, in order to improve the consistency and comparability among the statistics. The government has periodically revised the Japan Standard Industrial Classification, Japan Standard Classification of Occupations, etc., as a statistical standard based on the Statistics Act.

In addition, during the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, the government has developed the product classification in the service sector in order to improve economic statistics and to shift to the SUT system. Furthermore, the government developed and announced the Guideline for the Classification of Labours in Statistical Surveys (Agreement at a conference among directors-general of the statistical divisions of each ministry on May 19, 2015), the Guideline for Representation by Region (Decision by the Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Standard) on March 28, 2019), the Standard Approach for Representation by Age (Decision by the Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Policy) of the MIC on June 20, 2022) and the Standard Approach for Representation by Establishment Scale (Decision by the Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Policy) of the MIC on June 20, 2022).

On the other hand, from the viewpoint of constantly providing appropriate and comparable statistics that reflect the social economy and the situation of the respondents to statistics users, it is an essential approach to revise and develop statistical standards, the future in statistical administration. It is necessary that such revisions and developments be made on a periodic basis to keep pace with the changing trends of the times in light of the timing of the implementation of the comprehensive survey as well. Also, in anticipation of the shift to the SUT system in 2030, it is required to complete the entire version of the product classification, which consists of the goods and service sectors, by conducting necessary revisions based on the contents of the 14th revision of the Japanese Standard Industrial Classification.

Therefore, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, in order to promote standardization of the data processing results of each statistics and efforts to shift to the SUT system, the government shall review the statistical standards, including the Japan Standard Industrial Classification and the Japan Standard Classification of Occupations, and revise them based on the results of the review. At the same time, the government shall provide follow-up and other support on the application of the Guideline for Representation by Region, the Standard Approach for Representation by Age, and the Standard Approach for Representation by Establishment Scale, and revise them, as necessary.

In addition, the government shall actively disclose industrial classification and other codes so that a data-driven society can be realized and the possibility of connecting with various types of information can be increased.

6 Efforts in each statistical field

(1) Development of new statistics on employment, labour environment, etc.

As Japan faces labour shortages due to the decline in population and the decrease in wages due to rising prices, the need for statistics on employment and labour force, which drive the economy, continues to be high, and the government is working to develop related statistics, focusing on the Fundamental Statistical Surveys: the Labour Force Survey, the Monthly Labour Survey, the Basic Survey on Wage Structure, and the Employment Status Survey.

So far, for the Labour Force Survey, the government has also published indicators on unutilized labour from the perspective of understanding the employment situation more multidimensionally since 2018. As for the Monthly Labour Survey, the government is working on the improvement of the accuracy, for example, by introducing rotational sampling²² starting in 2018, from the viewpoint of dealing with the gaps caused by sample replacements, which have been an issue for some time.

In addition, with regard to the Basic Survey on Wage Structure, the government makes it a rule to provide anonymized data for surveys from 2015 to 2019 in order to contribute to a variety of analyses.

²² A method to replace the sample respondents gradually rather than replacing them all at once. By doing so, it is expected that the impact on the data caused by the replacement of the samples shall be suppressed.

In addition, as part of the Basic Policy 2022, it is stated that various work styles are to be promoted, including the promotion of remote working and the development of an environment in which freelancers can work without anxiety, and the government is carrying out measures, such as adding related survey items in the Employment Status Survey in 2022.

On the other hand, as the employment and labour environment continues to change drastically, it is necessary to continue gathering and accumulating data so that timeline comparisons can be made while improving technical accuracy, as well as making constant improvement efforts for accurately grasping the actual situation by reviewing survey items, etc.

In particular, in the wake of the spread of COVID-19, it is necessary to understand the actual situation more accurately because of the further diversification of work styles. It is also necessary to address the issue that existing statistical surveys do not adequately grasp the actual situation of foreign workers, which has been increasing rapidly in recent years.

Therefore, basic data on employment and labour should be continuously and stably obtained through the existing Fundamental Statistical Surveys. On this basis, it is necessary to promote efforts to develop related statistics and review certain survey items of the Fundamental Statistical Surveys in order to accurately grasp new social trends and reflect them in statistics on employment and the labour environment.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall conduct a new statistical survey for the development of statistics related to employment and labour of foreign people, analyze and verify the results of the survey, and if necessary, try to collect information on the attributes of foreign workers, such as the status of residence in the existing statistical surveys.

In addition, the government shall continue promoting efforts to improve the accuracy of the Monthly Labour Survey. Furthermore, in order to understand the trend of diversified work styles, the government shall carry out reviews in order to accurately grasp the actual situation while capturing changes in social conditions and labour/employment systems.

(2) Development and improvement of environmental statistics

Amid the urgent social issue of combating climate change, accelerating green transformation (GX) has been positioned as a priority area of investment by the national

government in response to the pressure on corporate profits and the increased burden on the public caused by the rapid rise in raw material prices. There has been a dramatic increase in the priority of developing environment-related statistics that will be indispensable for the implementation of measures in the future.

To date, with regard to environmental statistics, the government has been working to improve statistical data on greenhouse gas.²³ emissions, absorption, and the like. For example, the government accumulates data by developing statistical surveys that are necessary to understand the actual status of carbon dioxide emissions from households and other means.

In addition, there has been progress in efforts to improve the accuracy of "Structural Survey of Energy Consumption," which are important for calculating corporate greenhouse gas emissions, and a certain amount of progress has been made in providing data to international organizations. As for the actual status of waste discharge, there has been progress in improving statistical surveys, such as increasing their accuracy and making them available to the public in a timely manner.

Among the aforementioned SDG Indicators, the government is also working on the calculation and verification of vegetation cover as a proportion of total mountain area (Mountain Green Cover Index²⁴) by utilizing satellite data.

At the same time, in order to visualize the relationship between economic activities and environmental loads, as mentioned in 1 (3) above, the government is also studying indicators to reflect the impact of economic activities on the environment in GDP from the perspective of decarbonization.

In light of this situation, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall continue to develop and enhance various statistics related to the environment and energy from the perspective of systematic development of environmental statistics in order to further refine the calculation of greenhouse gas emission and absorption data, as stated in the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures (Cabinet decision on October 22, 2021).

²³ It refers to gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, which characteristically absorb heat from the atmosphere.

²⁴ The percentage of green cover (vegetation cover) as a proportion of total surface of the mountainous area.

For this reason, the government shall continue to work on stabilizing the time-series and refining the data of the Structural Survey of Energy Consumption, including conversion to Fundamental Statistics in the future.

(3) Improvement of the accuracy of tourism statistics

Tourism demand, which temporarily declined significantly due to the spread of COVID-19, has partially recovered as a result of subsequent progress in vaccination and other factors.

The revival of tourism has become a serious concern for local economies facing a population decline, and there has been a growing expectation of inbound tourism demand on the back of the yen's depreciation.

In this context, the development and improvement of the accuracy of tourism-related statistics should be a high priority in the development of official statistics.

To date, certain efforts have been made to compile the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)²⁵, enhance the dissemination of statistical survey results, develop prefectural statistics on tourist arrivals, and so on, as the government has developed the National Tourism Survey and the Accommodation Survey from both the demand and supply sides.

On the other hand, the Basic Policy states that the government shall take measures to stimulate domestic demand and strategically restore the inbound demand. In order to grasp trends more accurately in visitor attraction and consumption in response to these measures, it is necessary to improve the accuracy of tourism statistics.

In addition, given the increased feasibility of big data, such as location data from cell phones, in order to measure rapid changes in the amount and destinations of human traffic in response to the spread of COVID-19, it is also important to effectively use big data in the development of tourism statistics.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall promote reviews to improve the accuracy of results and secure stable data focusing on the statistical surveys that have been developed so far and accurately grasp the actual situation

²⁵ Tourism Satellite Account. It is one of the satellite accounts of the SNA, which is produced by modifying and expanding the SNA concept and linking it to physical indicators to produce in-depth information on specific fields while maintaining consistency with the SNA's basic structure.

of the tourism industry in Japan.

In addition, the government shall conduct researches on the utilization of big data, such as the use of human flow data to predict lodging trends.

(4) Improvement of statistical production on construction and real estate

Buildings and lands are the foundation of business activities and people's lives, and housing investment and corporate capital investment constitute important expenditure items in GDP and are key factors in determining economic and business trends in a country.

In addition to dealing with social issues, such as the increasing amount of low and underutilized land and real estate, Japan also suffers from the frequency and severity of natural disasters. Thus, it is extremely important to understand trends in construction and real estate, not only from the perspective of economic measures but also from the perspective of planning and evaluating measures for disaster management and disaster risk mitigation.

The government is developing statistics related to construction, focusing on the Construction Starts Statistics Survey and the Construction Work Statistics Survey, which are the Fundamental Statistical Surveys. So far, in addition to these efforts to improve the sample design, methods to supplement missing data, the government has also taken a wide range of measures to improve the accuracy by reviewing the source data and the estimation methods for the Integrated Statistics on Construction Works, which has also contributed to improving the accuracy of the GDP.

Moreover, with regard to real estate-related statistics, the government is also organizing statistical surveys to grasp the structure of land ownership and use in the corporate sector more accurately and efficiently.

On the other hand, in the area of construction-related statistics, a problem in the statistical production process became apparent with the occurrence of an inappropriate case in the tabulation of statistical surveys.

From the perspective of improving the accuracy of GDP, it remains one of the issues to improve the accuracy of source data in the construction sector. Also, it is essential for the seamless connection between QE and annual estimates to improve the accuracy of the Integrated Statistics on Construction Works.

With regard to real estate-related statistics, there is also a growing need to properly understand the use or underutilization of land and buildings in Japan from the perspective of contributing to economic and social policies based on the local conditions.

In light of the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall give priority to enhancing the accuracy and the reliability of statistics so that statistics users can use them with confidence. Thereby, the government shall continue its efforts to improve the quality of the Integrated Statistics on Construction Works by improving the statistical production process and methods along with other measures. In addition, the government shall address challenges in grasping the entire picture of land ownership and use in Japan in a more detailed manner by effectively utilizing digital data, such as real estate registration information, taking into account the availability of these data.

(5) Improvement of statistics related to agriculture, forestry, and fisheries through digital technology, etc.

In Japan, the ratio of agriculture, forestry and fishery in GDP has been declining over the long term because the economy is becoming more service-oriented, the birthrate is declining, and the population is aging. On the other hand, amid an unpredictable international environment, from the perspective of ensuring food security, it is important to implement policies for the sustainable growth of the agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries, and accurate statistics of agriculture, forestry, and fishery is necessary to support such policy planning and other activities.

To date, in response to changes in the administration of agriculture, forestry, and fishery, the government has developed detailed statistics on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, which cover from the management of agriculture, forestry and fishery, and actual conditions in rural areas to production, distribution, processing and consumption of agricultural, forestry and fishery products, while also striving to reduce the burden on respondents and to conduct surveys more efficiently. The government has also taken initiatives to utilize new data, as an example of, using weather and satellite data to predict the yield of paddy rice.

On the other hand, statistics related to agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are facing more difficult circumstances than those in other fields due to the aging of survey targets and the

shortage of enumerators for actual surveys and measurements, etc. Therefore, it is an urgent issue to further improve the efficiency of statistical surveys and reduce the burden on respondents by outsourcing to private companies, further promoting online responses and effectively utilizing digital data, etc.

Therefore, in the future, statistics of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are expected to go beyond the conventional statistical production model centered on actual surveys and measurements, and to shift to a new statistical production model that can both improve the efficiency and sophistication of statistical work and ensure the usefulness and accuracy of statistics, by further introducing digital technology ahead of statistical surveys in other fields. Thus, it is expected to become a front-runner in the promotion of digital technology in the production of official statistics.

From the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall tirelessly review the survey method, which has become difficult to continue due to changes in the survey environment, toward a sustainable method. In addition, the government shall continue measures to reduce the burden on respondents, improve efficiency, and promote the use of data in each statistical survey while also incorporating advanced technologies. Examples of such measures include verifying the effective use of digital data such as satellite images and administrative record information, and examining the effectiveness of methodology to encourage online responses.

(6) Improvement of the process for statistical production on education

The statistical surveys on education are conducted mainly through four Fundamental Statistical Surveys: the Basic School Survey, the School Health Survey, the School Teachers Survey and the Social Education Survey in order to grasp the number of schools and students enrolled, the composition of the faculty, and other basic matters related to education.

Those statistical surveys targeting schools and other institutions have used an inflexible aggregating system for many years. This poses problems, including the significant time and effort required for reviewing the survey items. However, since the FY2022 survey, the government has been improving the survey practices, such as by shifting to a new system that can flexibly respond to changes in the survey items.

In addition, the Longitudinal Survey of Newborns in the 21st Century (2001 Cohort), which follows the same survey targets for many years, has been conducted continuously for five years since it became a joint survey administered by the relevant ministries while surveying the same targets as much as possible, even as their living environments change due to factors such as advancing to higher educational levels.

On the other hand, the Basic Policy 2022 includes such issues as strengthening high-quality education and the functions of universities and other institutions, preventing disparities among families and learning environments, and reforming the working styles of teachers. Additionally, in the next Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education starting in FY2023, reviewing how education and learning should respond to the needs of society has become another issue, which raises challenges for the development of statistics necessary for these purposes.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall develop statistics that respond flexibly to these needs, and as a means of creating an enabling environment for such effort, the government shall promote more efficient implementation of existing statistical surveys. This includes efforts to reduce the burden on survey targets through coordination with operational systems used at schools.

III. Development of the Infrastructure for Production, Provision and Use of Official Statistics

1 Basic approach to ensure and improve overall quality through the production, provision, and use of statistics

Ensuring and improving the overall quality of official statistics involves both aspects: ensuring and improving the usefulness of official statistics and ensuring and improving their reliability. Agencies that produce official statistics must work tirelessly to ensure and improve the overall quality of official statistics, placing statistics users first. At the same time, these agencies must be keenly aware that these goals cannot be achieved without securing and enhancing the understanding and cooperation of the public.

In Section II above, among the efforts to ensure and improve the usefulness of official statistics, the policies for the systematic development of statistics are indicated.

Section III presents efforts to improve the environment for the utilization of official statistics, to ensure and improve their reliability, and to strengthen the infrastructure for these purposes. First, Part 2 shows the policies for improving and strengthening the infrastructure toward utilizing statistics to ensure and improve the usefulness of official statistics, and Part 3 shows the policies for establishing a PDCA cycle to ensure and improve the reliability of official statistics. Then, Parts 4 and 5 provide the policies regarding the digitalization of statistical production to support above-mentioned efforts, as well as regarding the securing of statistical resources and human resource development. Lastly, Part 6 describes the policies for securing and improving the understanding and cooperation of the public.

2 Ensuring and enhancing the usefulness of statistics through improvement and reinforcement of the infrastructure for promoting the utilization of statistics

(1) Promotion of sharing and providing statistical data through the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics (IMISOS), etc.

In order to promote the use of statistical data in entire society, it is necessary to provide statistical data in a user-friendly form by developing and strengthening the infrastructure for utilizing statistical data. In doing so, it is particularly important to provide them in formats that are compatible with evolving form of utilization in line with the advancement of digital technology.

So far, for the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics, the government

has consistently promoted the one-stop service of providing statistical information and sharing statistical data compatible with digital technology. Specifically, throughout the period of the last three Master Plan, the government has been working to consolidate statistical data into e-Stat to realize the one-stop services, expand data provision in machine-readable formats by using digital technology, upgrade information provision services, such as APIs and the Statistical and Geographic Information Systems.

On the other hand, since only 40% of the statistics published in e-Stat are in database format, and some of the numerical data are not yet machine-readable, there is a need to further improve the quality of the information provided.

In order to further improve convenience for statistics users, it is desirable to expand the provision of official statistics in a friendly manner to users who prefer digitalized formats. For example, numerical data of official statistics should be made machine-readable, organized into a database as information with coded metadata, and provided as a one-stop service that allows searches at the level of numerical data.

Based on this, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall continuously promote consolidation to e-Stat and expansion of data provision in machine-readable formats with digital technology. At the same time, the government shall improve the user interface of e-Stat, enhance metadata development, and add a data catalog function, etc.

In addition, from the viewpoint of enhancing the possibility of data connectivity and comparability among official statistics and between other information and statistical information, the government shall enhance efforts related to code systems, such as regional classifications and classification items, by making survey items of various statistical surveys standardized, as well as linking them to non-statistical information.

In addition, the government shall proactively promote the utilization of statistics, by publicizing and disseminating examples of the use of e-Stat in order to promote effective use of statistics by more users.

In implementing these efforts, the government shall coordinate with efforts, such as the development of infrastructures for data utilization, to be implemented as part of efforts toward the realization of a digital society.

(2) Provision and use of questionnaire information, etc.

Allowing the use of questionnaire information after appropriately protecting personal information and individual information of companies and other entities will enable survey conductors to respond to needs that they did not assume in their initial survey planning.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, the National Statistics Center began to store and provide questionnaire information and anonymized data, and in order to improve the convenience and to ensure the safety and security of the public in the use of questionnaire information. In addition, the Micro Data Portal Site (“miripo”), a portal site for the provision and the use of questionnaire information, was established, and the government has started to provide information necessary for its use, as well as publish statistics and other items newly compiled from questionnaire information.

Additionally, the government has begun the on-site use of questionnaire information, which enables exploratory analytical research based on a wide range of questionnaire information under a high level of security measures. On-site facilities²⁶ were developed nationwide with the cooperation of universities and research agencies, and 20 facilities began operations by October 2022.

On the other hand, as there is a growing demand in the academic research field for the prompt implementation of diverse research toward solving social issues that are becoming more and more complex, researchers and their organizations require greater flexibility in the use of questionnaire information, as well as faster and simpler procedures for providing such information. Also, utilizing existing statistical data will reduce the burden on respondents caused by the introduction of new surveys, thereby preventing the decline in the collection rate of existing surveys, and will help the provision of high-quality statistics to statistics users.

Based on this, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, in order to respond to such requests from the academic research field while ensuring safety and confidence from the public in the use of questionnaire information, the on-site use of questionnaire information and on-site facilities shall be further enhanced and made more convenient. In addition,

²⁶ On-site facilities allow authorized researchers to conduct independent tabulation and analysis by using questionnaire information in an environment that ensures information security.

experimental studies for remote access.²⁷ shall be considered as a method to enable more flexible use of questionnaire information by researchers as well as to ensure the security of individual questionnaire information.

In addition, in order to facilitate procedures for the provision of questionnaire information, the government shall take measures, such as enhancement of progress management and consultation services related to the provision, securing of necessary resources for the provision, standardization and improvement of the efficiency of examinations related to the provision of the information.

In addition to the above, in managing questionnaire information, appropriate measures based on the Public Records and Archives Management Act (Act No. 66 of July 1, 2009) shall be thoroughly implemented.

(3) Promotion of EBPM and utilization of statistics

Statistics demonstrate their true value only when they are used effectively, and each ministry should not only focus on producing statistics but also on promoting their utilization.

In addition, if the utilization of statistics is promoted and statistics are exposed to many users, it is expected that users will make various comments and suggestions for improvement. This will also lead to early detection and improvement of statistical errors.

In recent years, it has become important to accurately utilize official statistics for EBPM, which has been advocated as necessary for policy making and evaluation in government agencies and local governments. The promotion of EBPM and the development and improvement of official statistics are like two wheels on a cart, so to speak, supporting each other.

As mentioned in (2) above, questionnaire information has also been used to review policies at government agencies and local governments and should be positioned as an indispensable element in the promotion of EBPM.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, some efforts were made by statistics departments to provide advice on the potential use of statistical data for EBPM practices in policy departments within the ministries. Also, other efforts were delivered to produce and

²⁷ An access method that allows access to the system that stores questionnaire information from outside the facility and facilitates analysis and tabulation while maintaining a level of security .

analyze statistical data that would contribute to the examination of policy issues within the ministries and to provide such data to policy departments within the ministries.

On the other hand, these efforts are being made only by certain ministries. However, positioning these as leading cases of EBPM practice and compiling such examples is extremely important for the promotion of EBPM in entire government. In addition, in order to further promote EBPM, it is necessary to simplify and promptly conduct procedures for the provision of questionnaire information to government agencies.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, each ministry shall promote EBPM and other efforts to promote the utilization of statistics in a manner that corresponds to the actual conditions of its administration, including the efforts described in (1) and (2) above, as well as those described in 6 below. Moreover, with regard to the provision of questionnaire information to government agencies, it shall be reviewed and concluded to simplify and promptly conduct the procedures, taking into consideration the opinions from the departments in charge of EBPM. Furthermore, the central statistical organizations shall provide the necessary technical support and human resource development assistance, including coordination and cooperation²⁸ with the Administrative Evaluation Bureau of the MIC, and shall horizontally apply good practices to raise the level of efforts as a whole.

3 Ensuring the reliability of statistics through the establishment of the PDCA cycle

(1) Establishment of the PDCA cycle

The quality of official statistics has several aspects, including accuracy and precision, usefulness, and ease of use. Among these, ensuring the accuracy and precision necessary for the rational decision making of public is an essential requirement that is naturally demanded by the public. On the other hand, there are various error factors in statistics, and there is always the possibility of the occurrence of unforeseen errors during the production process. Therefore, above all, it is necessary to make continuous efforts to ensure and improve the basic quality of statistics, such as the necessary accuracy and precision.

²⁸ See Report on Specific Measures to Realize Policy Formation and Evaluation Appropriate for the Digital Age: To better reflect policy evaluation in policy review and improvement by the Policy Evaluation Council.

If the basic quality of statistics is compromised and trust is lost from statistics users and survey targets, it is feared that cooperation in statistical surveys and statistical utilization activities will be undermined, and the value of statistics usage will be greatly compromised, even though efforts are made to enhance the statistics and to produce statistics with excellent content through the efforts described in Section 2 above.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, in response to the occurrence of inappropriate cases in Monthly Labour Survey and Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction, the Statistics Commission made proposals in September 2019 and August 2022 to deter the occurrence of such serious cases.

The case of Monthly Labour Survey began with the fact that the survey design was changed without sufficient consideration and the change was not reflected in the survey plan through the procedures specified by the Statistics Act. Even after the error was recognized, it was not addressed or information was not provided to minimize the impact on society and statistics users, etc. This resulted in adverse effects, for example, statistics users, including the administration, utilized information from incorrect results over a long period.

Therefore, efforts were initiated to provide high-quality statistics to statistics users a. For example, standardization of administrative procedures for approval application for conducting statistical surveys and descriptions in survey plans; introduction of the PDCA cycle, including self-inspections to ensure that statistical surveys are conducted in accordance with the survey plan; and establishment of rules for responding to detected.²⁹ In addition, it began to clarify items to be included in operational manuals for statistical production and enhance statistical training for field staff members, and quality control sectors were established in some ministries.

The case in Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction occurred when these efforts were about to be disseminated. The case occurred because the changes in the method of estimate in the operation manual, which is directly related to the quality of statistics like

²⁹ Rules for responding to errors are those rules concerning questions about errors in published figures, etc., and responses after discovering errors set by each ministry, based on the model provided in the Cabinet Secretariat's Response to Questions about Errors in Published Figures and Responses after Discovering Errors (June 17, 2020, Cabinet Secretariat, Office for Statistical Reform).

the survey plan, were not consistent with the processing (exceptional processing) of the past months' survey questionnaires submitted after the submission deadline (hereafter referred to as “delayed questionnaires”).

In addition, as in the case of Monthly Labour Survey, there was no action taken nor information provided to minimize the impact on society, statistics users, etc.

Therefore, it was decided to further deepen the preventive measures taken in response to the case in Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction while succeeding to the concept of TQM, which is the basis of the efforts in light of the case in Monthly Labour Survey. Specifically, it was decided to implement the following initiatives: preparation of operational manuals; sharing, reviewing, and updating the manuals within the organization; checking whether the actual the statistical production process was carried out in accordance with the operational manuals; and establishing rules for self-inspections to determine whether there are any points that need to be reviewed.

It was also recognized that there are limits to what can be done by field personnel alone to deter the occurrence of such serious cases and to ensure and improve the quality of official statistics.

Therefore, the executive staff members in top management positions, such as statistical secretaries, are to engage proactively and actively in appropriate management of the statistical production process by prioritizing society and statistics users.

On the other hand, ensuring and improving the quality of official statistics inherently aims not only to prevent errors but also to produce and provide useful statistics. Thus, in self-inspection conducted by each ministry, in addition to identifying problems that could lead to errors, it is important to confirm that the statistics accurately identify and analyze social and economic trends, and utilize the results not only for improvements in production methods, but also for changes in survey items and the development of new statistics.

In order for such self-inspection and autonomous improvement to take place smoothly and effectively, it is necessary for each ministry, which is well-versed in the trends of survey targets and changes in the survey environment, to proactively work to deter the occurrence of serious cases and to constantly improve statistics by establishing a PDCA cycle. In addition, the MIC and the Statistics Commission need to provide technical support for the efforts made by each ministry.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, each ministry shall establish a system to develop and update operational manuals based on the idea of TQM under statistical secretaries, and to conduct self-inspection and self-improvement efforts based on the results of self-inspection. In addition, the MIC shall enhance its function to support these efforts and put it on track. In doing so, each ministry shall give first priority to society and statistics users and enhance the provision of information to users by, for example, displaying the quality of official statistics and disclosing the results of the self-inspection.

Moreover, using digital technology is an important factor in efficiently promoting these efforts. Since digital technology is effective in reducing the occurrence of human errors and improving business processes in various aspects of statistical work, using digital technology shall be promoted by enhancing and strengthening the common platforms for the government, as described in 4 below, based on the operational outcomes of the PDCA cycle.

In order to steadily promote the above efforts, constant review and improvement of the efforts in quality improvement shall be carried out. For this purpose, with regard to indicators related to the following, monitoring shall be conducted by taking advantage of opportunities, such as the Report on the Situation of the Enforcement of the Statistics Act and submitting the results of self-inspection to the MIC.

- Status of systems for statistical production and improvement of quality
- Status of enhancement and utilization of operational manuals
- Status of occurrence by cause of errors and status of operation of rules for responding to discovered errors

(2) Improvement of management capacity to establish an organizational culture that prioritizes quality

In order to deter the recurrence of inappropriate cases and minimize the impact of such cases even if they occur, it is necessary for statistical production departments to establish an organizational culture that prioritizes quality, where society and statistics users are considered first.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, in response to the case in the Monthly Labour Survey, efforts have been focused on ensuring that field staff members respond

appropriately when a case is discovered and on raising awareness about quality among field staff members. Examples include the creation of Rules for Responding to Errors When They Are Detected, the dissemination of such rules through trainings, and the formulation of the Code of Conduct for Government Statistical Officials³⁰ to serve as a code for statistical officials.

On the other hand, before the full result became apparent, the case in the Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction was revealed. In these two cases, it is considered that the inappropriate actions taken by the organization after recognizing the errors resulted in the prolonged negative effects, such as the continuous use of incorrect results by statistics users, which worsened the situation.

Therefore, it is necessary to hasten the establishment of an organizational culture that prioritizes quality by focusing on changing the mindset of not only the field staff members of each ministry but also the executive staff members who manage the organization. Specifically, as pointed out in the proposal by the Statistics Commission, it is necessary for the executive staff members to recognize that “the problem is not the occurrence of errors itself, but the inability to respond promptly to errors by with putting society and statistics users first,” and the management reform to lead the formation of an organizational culture which prioritizes quality and allows for openness is necessary.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, in addition to changing the mindset of field staff members, training and personnel evaluation for executive staff members, including the statistical secretaries shall be strengthened, in order to ensure that the management of statistical administration is consistently and accurately implemented so that a workplace culture that prioritizes quality and allows for openness can be firmly established from the perspective of both executive and field staff members.

(3) Response to disasters, infectious diseases, etc.

Some official statistics, such as basic economic statistics and basic statistics on population, households, etc., are subject to change or discontinuation that could have a

³⁰ A code of conduct drafted jointly by statistical officials from each ministry with extensive experience in statistical work to provide support to statistical officials so that they can perform their daily duties with confidence and pride. The code was decided by the Council for the Promotion of Statistical Administration on February 12, 2021.

significant impact on administration, economic management, and the like. Also, there are some surveys that are essential to continue in order to assess damage from disasters, estimate impacts, formulate recovery plans, evaluate the status of recovery, and so forth. The spread of COVID-19 has had a great impact on the execution of these statistical surveys.

However, many statistical surveys were continued by partially changing the survey methods, timing, and publication dates. In particular, given the limited opportunities for in-person contact, online and postal surveys were utilized.

On the other hand, some statistical surveys had to be canceled or drastically postponed due to individual circumstances. Also, in recent years, there have been cases where the implementation of statistical surveys was made difficult by the disaster of extreme severity, which forced changes or even cancellation of the surveys.

Based on this, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, under the impacts of COVID-19, on the basis of the recent experience in which many statistical surveys were conducted continuously, even in the case of a large-scale disaster or infectious disease, statistics users should be able to utilize necessary statistics for the continuation of truly essential decision-making, thereby efforts should be made flexibly and accurately in accordance with the importance of statistics. Furthermore, in addition to the continuation of statistical surveys, preparations shall be made for crises by organizing the findings obtained to date on the various processing (processing of outliers in seasonal adjustment, use of alternative data, etc.) that was necessary for large-scale disasters, infectious diseases, and other such events.

Also, for statistics of high importance, the necessary action plans shall be developed, and other efforts shall be made to ensure the continuous implementation of surveys, the dissemination of results, and the like.

4 Promotion of digitalization of statistical infrastructure

Digital technology enhances user convenience in terms of the provision of statistics. In terms of the production of statistics, it is highly effective in reducing the burden on survey respondents, improving the efficiency of data processing, preventing human error, and ensuring data consistency.

So far, throughout the period of the last three Master Plan, the government has been

developing common platforms for ministries as follows in order to digitalize the statistical infrastructure:

- Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics consisting of e-Stat, the general contact point for providing users with official statistics from all ministries; and e-Survey³¹, the general contact point for online responses for statistical surveys.
- Business Register used to select survey targets in various statistical surveys on establishments and enterprises.

As a result of these digitalization efforts, there has been progress in standardizing the statistical production process as well as improving efficiency and quality through the development of systems in such operational processes as the preparation of population information, sampling, field operation, and the publication of produced statistics.

On the other hand, important issues related to digitalization still remain.

For example, statistical surveys that allow online responses improved from 82.9% in 2019 to 88.3% in 2021. However, looking at the percentage of online responses out of the actual number of responses, it accounted for less than 20% in 17 out of 50 Fundamental Statistical Surveys as of the end of 2021.

Among the tabulation systems that have been developed for individual statistics in each ministry, there are some cases where the data processing systems have become black boxes or where it is difficult to make flexible modifications according to the situation at any given time.

Also, even for issues that are expected to be resolved through further digitalization; in order to fully realize the benefits of digitalization, it is essential to make careful preparations, such as clarifying goals and creating detailed action plans.

Furthermore, in publishing survey results with digital technologies, it is necessary to consider the need to preserve record information as well.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the e-Survey shall continue to be modified so that it can provide smooth responses without being restricted by the information security and business structures of the target companies. In addition, to cope with

³¹ One of the subsystems of the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics, which allows online responses via the Internet about statistical surveys conducted by each ministry.

survey targets who have difficulty responding online, efforts shall be made to support online responses by enumerators, improve the ease of responding through online systems, receive questions about the operation of the online system through call centers, and so on.

Furthermore, with regard to the tabulation system, the MIC shall continue to develop a general-purpose tabulation tool, which is clearly specified and can be flexibly modified according to the actual conditions of each statistical survey in order to enable each ministry to jointly use the said tool.

Additionally, as mentioned in 2 (1) above, e-Stat shall be functionally improved for user convenience, such as by upgrading the user interface, as well as by enriching data, in coordination with efforts to develop the code system.

During the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, it is assumed that there will be a need for review and enhancement, for example, the maintenance of information storage function for statistical data prior to the revision associated with retroactive revision of timeline, and the expansion of time-series data maintenance, including retroactive revision of past data associated with changes in classifications. In such cases, each ministry shall work together to respond as promptly and systematically as possible, based on opinions from statistics users, as well as good practices from other countries, while coordinating and cooperating with academic societies and other organizations.

For these efforts, a system to promote the digitalization of the statistical infrastructure shall be established under the Council for the Promotion of Statistical Administration. This is to promote the digitalization of the statistical infrastructure in a strong and steady manner across the government by clarifying goals and formulating a detailed action plan in cooperation among ministries.

5 Securing statistical resources and human resource development

(1) Securing statistical resources

In order to provide statistics that are appropriate for society's information infrastructure, it is important to secure and effectively utilize statistical resources, such as human resources and budgets, that support the production and provision of statistics.

Policies for securing statistical resources were included in the 3rd Term Master Plan, from the viewpoint of realizing statistical reforms and solving various issues in statistical

administration, and in the 3rd Term Master Plan revised in 2020, from the viewpoint of preventing inappropriate cases. In response to these, during the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, the following efforts were made as examples:

- 2019: Added 14 staff members to improve the accuracy of GDP in the statistical reform and to strengthen the function of the Statistics Commission.

- 2019: Added 20 staff members for appointment of Director for Statistical Analysis Clearance³² in response to the Monthly Labour Survey.

- 2021: Added eight staff members to strengthen the function of the Central Statistics Organization (see (4)) of the Statistics Bureau of the MIC, the Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Policy), the Statistical Research and Training Institute, and the central statistical systems of National Statistics Center.

Meanwhile, in August 2022, a proposal by the Statistics Commission pointed out once again the need to ensure both quality and quantity in the statistical production system, and further improvement of the system is required as the House of Councillors' resolution on the settlement of accounts for FY2020 also warned as follows:

"In order to ensure confidence in whole government statistics, in addition to thoroughly reviewing inappropriate cases and preventing their recurrence, there should be measures to improve government statistics covering all fundamental statistics and general statistics, and the statistical administration system should be strengthened by increasing the number of personnel as necessary."

In the midst of major changes in the economy and society, each ministry shall constantly review survey content and production processes while taking into account changes in the survey environment and survey targets for statistical surveys under their jurisdiction and shall develop reliable statistics that respond to changes as well as provide

³² The Director for Statistical Analysis Clearance is a staff member assigned to the Cabinet Secretariat in response to a recommendation for measures to prevent the recurrence of inappropriate cases in the Monthly Labour Statistics. The Statistical Analysis Examiner is dispatched from the Cabinet Secretariat to each ministry and, in a position independent from those in charge of statistical surveys, progressively introduces analytical examination into the statistical compilation process in each ministry. Along with this, the Director for Statistical Analysis Clearance engages in work to maintain and improve the quality of statistics for the entire ministry to which the examiner is dispatched, such as by participating in efforts related to the PDCA cycle, providing guidance and advice on measures to prevent recurrence of statistical errors when they occur, and reviewing the need for fundamental improvements in the production process.

information necessary for their use. At the same time, there is a growing need to utilize information from the jurisdictional administration to promptly detect errors and other matters and, when they are detected, to take prompt action by placing the statistical users first.

Based on this, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, each ministry shall utilize outsourcing for routine tasks, while devoting sufficient resources to planning, quality control, evaluation and review of statistical production. In particular, in order to enhance the quality control system of statistics, the system of the Director for Statistical Analysis Clearance shall be reviewed, and the Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative name)³³ shall be newly established³⁴ in April 2023 to serve as the core of the entire statistical quality control. In addition, the central statistical systems (see (4)) shall support the efforts of each ministry by securing the necessary resources for a specialized system to maintain and improve the quality of official statistics in general.

In order to thoroughly ensure that statistical resources are available to respond accurately to these changing times, the Statistics Commission shall continue its Proposal for Priority Allocation of Statistical Resources, which has been in place since 2019, for the promotion of important issues in statistical administration.

(2) Development of statistical human resources

To ensure and enhance the quality of statistics, promote the utilization of statistics, and improve the research environment while avoiding serious cases, it is essential not only to enhance existing statistical resources quantitatively and utilize them effectively but also to strengthen them qualitatively, such as by improving the skills and expertise of statistical human resources involved in statistical production.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, statistical trainings and personnel

³³ The Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative name) shall be established through a significant review of the system of the Director for Statistical Analysis Clearance and serve not only for improving the examination prior to publication and responding to the discovered errors, but also as the core of overall statistical quality control. The Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative name) is placed in the MIC and dispatched to each ministry to carry out the duties.

³⁴ For the time being, the resource of the Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative name) shall be secured centrally in the MIC and assigned to each ministry by taking into account the adoption status of quality control operations in each ministry.

exchanges were enhanced to strengthen the quality of human resources. In particular, the Statistical Research and Training Institute of the MIC, which plays a specialized role in statistical human resource development for national and local governments, reviewed the training content based on the needs of training participants, and enhanced online training to respond to the spread of COVID-19.

In addition, the government has begun certifying Statistical Data Analysts³⁵ and Assistant Statistical Data Analysts³⁶ as qualifications within government departments, and as of February 2023, the government has certified 27 Statistical Data Analysts and 187 Assistant Statistical Data Analysts, respectively.

On the other hand, as for the case in the Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction, it was pointed out that one of the factors was that the staff members did not have sufficient knowledge of statistics.

It is necessary for the MIC and each ministry to be fully aware of the crisis regarding the shortage of professional human resources capable of producing high-quality statistics and to train statistical staff members who play a central role in individual statistical surveys by proactively designing the survey and tabulations. In addition, staff members targeted for such training should be given experiences in surveying and tabulation, as well as be provided with advanced statistical knowledge that shall enable them to cope with the deteriorating environment surrounding statistical surveys and declining collection rates.

On this basis, it is necessary to realize a management system with highly specialized personnel. For example, the design of statistical surveys should be conducted under the Statistical Data Analysts, and survey implementation should be handled under the Assistant Statistical Data Analysts or above.

However, at present, it is true that only about 40% of the total number of Fundamental Statistical Surveys have been conducted by the Statistical Data Analysts or the Assistant

³⁵ Statistical Data Analysts are statistical staff members with a certain amount of practical statistical experience who have completed the specified statistical training and have been certified as persons with advanced skills in statistics.

³⁶ Assistant Statistical Data Analysts are statistical staff members with a certain amount of practical statistical experience who have completed the specified statistical training and have been certified as persons with the ability to manage statistical surveys and perform a certain level of analysis and examination.

Statistical Data Analysts.

Also, as the importance of EBPM is emphasized in various fields, the ability of statistical staff members, who have knowledge not only in analyzing statistics but also in the characteristics of statistics on the basis of their experience in statistical surveys and statistical production, should be utilized in the practice of EBPM in various fields of public administration. In addition, it is appropriate to apply such administrative experience to the development and improvement of statistics.

In light of this situation, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, based on the recognition that a shortage of professional human resources will delay the response to the needs of statistics users, and will also affect them through inappropriate processing, efforts shall continue to enhance trainings for staff members and to accelerate the securing, the developing, and the placing of Statistical Data Analysts and Assistant Statistical Data Analysts.

Moreover, until efforts to develop human resources in each ministry are established, the MIC shall continue to accept staff members from each ministry and train them through on-the-job training in order to supplement such efforts.

In addition, from the viewpoint of actively securing and utilizing specialized human resources, each ministry shall develop career paths for diverse human resources, such as those with master's and doctoral degrees and those with expertise in international affairs (see above, Section 2.3 (2)), according to the abilities required for the work, and shall work to recruit and train such human resources.

(3) Cooperation with and support for local governments

(Cooperation with and support for local governments)

The work of statistical production is a “comprehensive project,” so to speak, which consists of multi-step statistical production processes involving many relevant parties. Local governments, in particular, are the principal partners of the national government in this comprehensive project.

They are also using official statistics, including the secondary use, as part of their regional revitalization and EBPM practices, and providing the results to the region. These efforts should provide information obtained from local respondents back to the region,

which is important from the viewpoint of ensuring the understanding and cooperation of respondents for statistical surveys.

Therefore, the following actions have been taken during the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan:

- training for prefectural officials dedicated to statistics;
- trial allocation of officials dedicated to statistics to prefectures³⁷ that newly implement their own measures to cope with the deteriorating survey environment and the aging of enumerators (FY2018 and FY2019);
- support for prefectures working to improve prefectural Economic Accounts, etc. (from FY2020 onward); and
- horizontal application of the results of the above efforts to other regions.

On the other hand, it turned out that there was a lack of communication between the national government and local governments in the inappropriate case in the Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction. This indicated once again that in order for statistical surveys, which are “comprehensive projects,” to be carried out smoothly, it is essential to share the purpose between the national and local governments and to ensure collaboration and coordination at the interface between the individual statistical production processes³⁸ undertaken by each of the national and local governments.

As the front line of statistical surveys, local governments are responsible for the first stage of quality control related to survey operations, such as ensuring accurate responses and collection rates. In order to ensure the quality of official statistics, it is important to improve the skills of officials of local governments in charge and secure their systems. In addition, the establishment of good relationships among local governments with respondents of statistical surveys and related organizations to cooperate with in statistical surveys shall contribute to improving the survey environment for all statistical surveys, including postal and online surveys.

Therefore, in order to maintain and improve the role of local governments, it is necessary

³⁷ One of the trial efforts to allocate a higher budget for dedicated statistical staff members to prefectures that review and upgrade their survey and examination methods in accordance with local conditions.

³⁸ Interface means “point of contact,” “boundary surface,” etc., and indicates the exchange of instructions, reports, information, and results between each statistical production process.

to enhance the function of the statistical departments in local public entities as well as the entire local statistical systems, which are responsible for statistical surveys, while adapting to the survey environment and survey techniques depending on circumstances.

Based on this, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the statistical production process, which is a “comprehensive project,” shall be constantly improved. In addition, from the perspective of securing the understanding and cooperation of respondents and providing high-quality statistics to statistics users, the government shall continuously provide from technical and resource aspects for local governments that are actively engaged in improving the survey environment, quality control of statistical surveys, further utilization of official statistics, and so on.

In addition, when local governments are involved in the statistical production process, the survey conductors should further activate the exchange of opinions and the provision and sharing of information on good practices through various opportunities with the local governments.

Furthermore, from the viewpoint of supporting local governments and enumerators responsible for statistical surveys, the MIC shall consider coordination with the post offices for statistical surveys.

Additionally, based on the outcomes of the inappropriate case in the Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction, the MIC shall conduct a research and study on the ideal local statistical systems and reflect the results in securing officials dedicated to statistics from 2024 onward.

(Support for enumerators)

Enumerators play an important role in ensuring and improving the quality of statistics at the operational stage of statistical surveys. In the future, it is expected that the role of enumerators shall continue to be important in dealing with survey targets who have difficulty responding online and in fostering understanding among respondents for cooperation requests and reminders in the face of a deteriorating survey environment.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, training was provided to registered enumerators to share the know-how of excellent enumerators.

In addition, in order to support enumerators, efforts have been made regarding the call centers for enumerators (see 6 (1)), and the effectiveness of these efforts has been recognized to a certain extent by local governments.

On the other hand, since the number of enumerators has been decreasing and each statistical enumerator receives a larger set of data, along with the increasing number of auto-locked condominiums and other factors that make the environment surrounding surveys even more challenging, the burden on individual enumerators has become greater than before. Moreover, as of March 31, 2021, approximately 40% of the registered enumerators are in their 70's or older.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, in order to secure the understanding and cooperation of respondents and provide high-quality statistics to statistics users, efforts related to call centers shall be promoted in addition to efforts related to securing and training enumerators, who are the direct interface with respondents. At the same time, the government shall enhance support for the local governments that secure university students as enumerators (hereafter referred to as “student enumerators”) and improve the environment for statistical surveys.

In conjunction with this, research and studies shall be conducted to eliminate bottlenecks in the activities of enumerators and to further enhance their functions.

(4) Improvement of the function of the central statistical systems

The verification triggered by the inappropriate case of the Monthly Labour Survey confirmed that the statistics departments of the MIC have a considerable number of officials with a high level of expertise and a wealth of work experience in official statistics. On the other hand, it was also found that many ministries have few such officials and that support from statistics departments is not always sufficient for other departments within the ministry to produce statistics.

Therefore, based on the 3rd Term Master Plan revised in FY2020, the Statistics Bureau of the MIC, the Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Policy), the Statistical Research and Training Institute, and the National Statistics Center were designated as the “central statistics systems,” and a scheme was established to support statistical operations of each ministry by the central statistics systems.

In doing so, the Statistical Production Support Center was established as a centralized consultation service to ensure a smooth response to consultations from each ministry that require assistance. By FY2021, the center received more than 50 consultations and provided necessary support.

On the other hand, concerning the inappropriate case in the Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism's Research Report on the Inappropriate Processing of the Current Survey of Construction Orders (January 14, 2022, Verification Commission of the Inappropriate Handling of the Current Survey on Orders Received for Construction) pointed out that “the problem lies in the fact that there are no professional staff members among officials in this statistics office who are readily available for consultation on questions and problems concerning statistics,” which requires further enhancement of the system for consultation at any time by each ministry. The Report on the Results of the Scrutiny of the Task Force of the Statistics Commission (January 14, 2022, Task Force on the Scrutiny of the Response to the Planning Subcommittee of the Statistics Commission), which was compiled simultaneously with the report, also called for the MIC to strengthen its function to advise and support the statistical production by each ministry while making efforts to further facilitate interactive communication among each ministry.

Furthermore, as mentioned in (1) above, as the economy and society will significantly change in the future, it is becoming increasingly significant for each ministry and agency to review the content and production process of statistical surveys under their jurisdiction, taking into account changes in the survey environment and survey targets, and to ensure and improve the quality of statistics. To put this into practice, technical assistance for each ministry is necessary, and the role of the central statistical systems in this regard is important.

Based on the above, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the central statistical systems shall continue to enhance consultation services through the Statistical Production Support Center in order to ensure that high-quality statistics are provided to statistics users from each ministry and that the impact on statistics users is minimized when inappropriate cases should occur.

In addition, the central statistical systems shall carefully communicate with each ministry and implement necessary support for each ministry by taking advantage of various

opportunities, such as approval examinations for new or changed individual statistical surveys as well as statistical production process diagnoses.³⁹

Furthermore, as digitalization and other changes are advancing worldwide, the central statistical systems, in cooperation with the Statistics Commission, shall follow international discussions and advanced trends in statistics to respond to such changes and share them with each ministry. Along with this, the results of the findings shall be reflected in the improvement and enhancement of statistics in Japan while also taking advantage of opportunities for consultation and support from each ministry.

In addition, the National Statistics Center (NSTAC), as one of the central statistical systems, shall enhance and strengthen its function to provide statistical information to statistics users through the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics and to provide survey questionnaire information.

6 Efforts to produce statistics that are easily supported and understood by the public

(Basic approach to statistical surveys)

In producing official statistics, it is common practice to use statistical surveys as well as administrative record information and other information sources as the source of official statistics.

When information such as administrative record information is available, there is no need to impose a new response burden on the public to obtain that information, and there is a great advantage in being able to efficiently compile statistics from existing information.

However, the fact is that the information necessary for the development of statistics that contribute to rational decision-making by the public cannot be covered because there are restrictions on the use of administrative record information by law from the viewpoint of confidentiality and other factors.

For this reason, statistical surveys are currently the main source of information for the

³⁹ Efforts to promote improvements as well as to diagnose and provide advice from a third-party perspective based on the “requirements” compiled by the Statistics Commission, including the viewpoints of whether or not the individual statistical production processes at each ministry are managed in accordance with the operational manuals and whether or not the manuals are being maintained, through sending a team of experts from the MIC. In addition, these “requirements” define the standards for diagnosing the statistical production process (e.g., what is described in the operational manual, whether the necessary results and operational records are stored, etc.).

production of official statistics, although the use of administrative record information and other information is encouraged to be utilized from the perspective of reducing the response burden to statistical surveys and the possibility of producing new statistics.

In order for this statistical survey to ensure the necessary accuracy of results, the collection rate, which guarantees the accuracy of the results, must be secured with the cooperation of respondents. Certainly, from the perspective of making official statistics useful, it is appropriate to include a wide range of survey items in statistical surveys that meet the needs of the public. However, if an excessive burden is placed on the respondents for this purpose, it will result in a decreased motivation to cooperate with the survey, a lower collection rate, and thus a decrease in the accuracy of the results of the statistical survey.

Therefore, in the case of planning a statistical survey, an appropriate balance between the statistical needs and the burden on the respondents must be made.

In addition, there are growing difficulties in conducting statistical surveys due to the increased awareness of privacy in the public. In order to cope with the current situation where contact with survey targets has become difficult due to the increase in the number of auto-locking condominiums and the diversification of lifestyles, it is more important than ever to respond to and consider the needs of each respondent in the survey.

In light of these circumstances surrounding statistical surveys, survey conductors need to listen more carefully to the voices of those who report on statistical surveys and work to reduce the burden on them from the perspective of conducting surveys that are easy to answer through the use of digital technology and other means, and actively utilizing administrative record information, by addressing restrictions on its use and reducing some survey items by utilizing big data and the like. In particular, with regard to the utilization of big data, even though there remain issues, the private sector continues to make efforts to overcome them, and continuous efforts are needed by government agencies as well.

In conducting the survey, it is necessary not only to endeavor to obtain the understanding of the respondents about the survey but also to explain the significance and necessity of statistical surveys in official statistics to the public in an easy-to-understand manner.

In order to maintain statistical surveys and ensure statistical accuracy in the future, it is essential to maintain and improve the collection rate of statistical surveys through these efforts. Therefore, in promoting these efforts, the status of the collection rate shall be continuously monitored, and improvements shall be made in a timely manner, including the incorporation of necessary measures and new innovations.

(1) Consideration for the burden on respondents

(Efforts under the framework of the Statistics Act)

Under the Statistics Act, when a government agency conducts a statistical survey, it is required in principle to obtain approval from the MIC in advance. In addition, in the examination conducted after receiving an application for approval, it is confirmed from the viewpoints of, for example, whether the survey items do not overlap with other statistical surveys, whether information in administrative record information can be substituted and whether the survey questionnaire is easy to understand and fill out so that the burden on the respondents is minimized in light of the purpose of the survey. In particular, in Fundamental Statistical Surveys, the Statistics Commission conducts opinion hearings during the examination process.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, 115 approvals (including 50 reports by the Statistics Commission) were granted for Fundamental Statistical Surveys during the four-year period until FY2021, and 345 approvals for General Statistical Surveys.

(Consideration of alternative possibilities by means of administrative record information, etc., and hearing of respondents' opinions)

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, a system to regularly solicit proposals for reducing the burden of national statistics was introduced, and so was a system to check the availability and location of existing data relative to each ministry at the planning phase of statistical surveys, in order to reduce the number of new statistical surveys.

Specifically, the Statistics Commission has been collecting opinions from the public via its website regarding the burden of respondents, etc., and has been publishing the measures taken by each ministry in response to these opinions. Consequently, there emerged examples of improvements, such as using requests for online surveys to improve the surveys and introducing data transfer of survey items that overlap between the two statistical surveys in response to the suggestion that there was duplication of survey items between them.

In addition, it is necessary to make more active and effective use of administrative record information than before. Therefore, for example, as a partial substitute for statistical surveys, it was decided that at the planning phase of statistical surveys, the Vice Commissioner for

Policy Planning of each ministry would confirm the availability of the data to be obtained through the survey from other administrative record information and other sources.

(Consideration for the burden on the respondents through the use of digital technology and support for enterprise surveys)

When it is necessary to conduct a statistical survey in order to produce statistics, it is important to adopt a survey method that makes it easy for respondents to answer as much as possible.

Therefore, as mentioned in 4 above, online surveys have been introduced in many statistical surveys through efforts based on the last three Master Plans.

Also, if the respondent has any questions when preparing the response, since the time required for the response may be longer than expected and a sense of burden may arise, it is necessary to respond promptly and accurately to the respondent's questions.

For this reason, call centers for respondents have already been introduced in several statistical surveys, and they have been confirmed to be used by a considerable number of people, which has led to positive outcomes. In some cases, these call centers are used to support local public entities and enumerators who are responsible for the survey.

Moreover, large companies are more likely to be targets for a full survey, which means that the burden on the respondents tends to be relatively large.

For this reason, during the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, the Enterprise Survey Support Project was launched in 2019, in which dedicated staff members of the National Statistics Center provides large companies with support for responses to surveys.

As a result, it was confirmed that there have been certain achievements, such as securing a high response rate for the companies that received support for their responses.

(Utilization of big data)

In producing statistics, there is a possibility of partially substituting the existing statistical surveys without placing any additional burden on the respondents through utilizing big data held by private companies and other entities. Along with this, it might be possible to produce and disseminate statistics earlier, which cannot be achieved in statistical surveys, and it might also be possible to gain a better understanding of the economic and

social situation that could not be grasped until now.

There are issues to be addressed in the utilization of big data, such as securing the data representativeness, grasping characteristics, establishing a method to continuously obtain the data, and developing systems and technologies. Meanwhile, since there are also advantages in terms of the detail and timeliness of the data, and as the private sector continues to make efforts and trial and error to overcome such issues, the government is also required to make efforts towards its utilization.

Therefore, during the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, the government established the Meeting of the Industry-Government-Academia Partnership Meeting for Promotion of the Use of Big Data and discussed.

In June 2022, the meeting produced a proposal for a future vision pertaining to the utilization of big data, which stated that it is necessary to review the possibility with a broader range of utilization, such as the following, rather than limiting the role of big data in official statistics to just a partial substitution:

- producing new indicators by using high-frequency and granular big data; and
- having survey conductors use big data when they analyze the survey results and publish the results, including the results of the analysis.

(Future efforts)

However, despite these efforts, the fact is that the response rate for statistical surveys continues to decline, and it is necessary to keep on providing high-quality official statistics by placing the users of statistics first, further reducing the burden on respondents and ensuring and improving the response rate.

Therefore, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall further advance the efforts that have been implemented so far while also improving and prioritizing them based on the opinions of the respondents.

In particular, with regard to the e-Survey of the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics, in order to increase the proportion of online responses among the total number of responses, the government shall continue to make improvements so that the respondents can fill in responses in a flexible manner that is not restricted by their security

environment (see 4 above).

With regard to administrative records information, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Administrative Reform Cabinet Secretariat compiled a comprehensive overview of surveys, except for statistical surveys, conducted by each ministry in November 2022. This overview is being used to promote the statistical use of information collected through such surveys.

In addition, the government shall work to actively utilize administrative record information, through such efforts as grasping economic performances and analyzing long-term economic trends through the use of administrative record information, researching and reviewing through the use of administrative record information for the statistical production, and addressing the restrictions on the use of administrative record information.

With regard to the utilization of big data, the MIC and each ministry shall promote efforts towards the utilization of big data for official statistics, including the gradual implementation of pilot projects (Big Data Trials) that utilize big data; the guidance on where to find case studies and sample data; the consideration of further utilization of POS data⁴⁰, web scraping data⁴¹ and satellite data; and experimental studies on various big data.

In addition, the government shall develop a broader code system from the perspective of enhancing the potential for medium- to long-term linkages among statistical surveys, administrative records information and big data, as well as making the above-mentioned utilization more effective.

(2) Development of the environment for statistical surveys and promotion of understanding of statistics among the public

(Promotion of understanding of the significance and necessity of statistical surveys, etc.)

A decline in the willingness of respondents to cooperate in statistical surveys leads to a decline in the response rate for the survey, thus resulting in a decline in the accuracy of the

⁴⁰ Point Of Sales data, which is data on customer's consumption activities collected from POS cash registers.

⁴¹ Data collected through the use of computer software techniques that extract specific information from websites.

results of the statistical survey.

In order to ensure and improve the quality of statistics, it is an important factor that the people understand and cooperate with statistical surveys. High-quality statistics are necessary not only for the administration but also as a basis for rational decision-making by the public in general, and it is required to explain carefully to the public that their cooperation in statistical surveys will ultimately benefit themselves.

One of the main reasons why respondents feel unwilling to cooperate is that they find it hard to understand the significance and necessity of responding to statistical surveys. In order to deal with this, it is necessary to ensure the understanding by the public in general about the significance and necessity of official statistics and statistical surveys during normal times, not only by explaining such things to the people who are selected as the respondents every time a statistical survey is conducted.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, the following efforts were made to improve the environment for statistical surveys with the aim of ensuring understanding of the significance and necessity of statistical surveys:

- efforts to promote understanding of statistical surveys, such as creation and provision of teaching materials for primary education, statistical leadership training workshops for teachers nationwide, and calling for statistical catchphrases and holding a graph competition on “Statistics Day”;
- support for efforts to introduce student enumerators in collaboration with prefectures and universities, provision of information in advance to condominium management associations and real estate industry associations of the nationwide scale regarding the schedule for conducting surveys and requests for cooperation in surveys;
- in conducting surveys targeting households, such as the Population Census, requests for cooperation in surveys through condominium management associations so that surveys can be conducted smoothly even in situations where it is difficult for enumerators to work, including in auto-lock condominiums;
- in conducting statistical surveys, informing the people that there are reporting obligations and penalties for Fundamental Statistical Surveys and that there are rules for on-site inspections; and
- the use of foreign language questionnaires in 27 languages for the Population Census

to respond to the increase in foreign residents.

(Promoting understanding of statistical surveys through the utilization of statistics)

In addition, if official statistics are used more widely by the public as an important information resource for society, this will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the significance and necessity of statistical surveys and to the securing of cooperation for statistical surveys.

During the period of the 3rd Term Master Plan, in order to promote the use and application of statistics, the online courses on statistical analysis and application methodology were renewed, and in FY2022, about 50,000 people took these courses.

Also, in the statistical data analysis competition that has been held since 2018, the number of applications has been steadily increasing year by year, and the number of seminars in coordination with universities and other institutions, as well as workshops for teachers, has also been increasing.

On the other hand, there are some efforts to raise awareness and disseminate information, which take time to have an effect. These efforts should not be made temporarily but rather continuously.

Therefore, during the period of the 4th Term Master Plan, the government shall steadily continue such efforts, based on the fundamental concept of deepening public understanding of the significance and necessity of statistical surveys and steadily providing high-quality statistics to statistics users. Along with this, the government shall flexibly make necessary improvements in its efforts, while grasping the actual survey environment in individual statistical surveys and trends in the collection status.

IV. Promotion of the 4th Term Master Plan

1 Matters necessary to promote the Master Plan

Official statistics are an important source of information that serves as a foundation for rational decision-making by the public, and because they are relevant to any kind of field as the information infrastructure of society, they are also used to set indicators for evaluating the progress of measures in various government statutory plans from the perspective of promoting EBPM.

Therefore, in promoting the 4th Term Master Plan, it is necessary for each ministry to work together to develop statistics required for each policy area and to resolve issues for this purpose in order to contribute to ensuring the reliability and objectivity of policies while paying attention to consistency with various statutory plans and other related measures.

Furthermore, in developing official statistics, since it is essential to obtain the understanding and cooperation of the public widely, it is necessary to provide information to the public accurately by offering statistics in a form that is easy for them to use, as well as providing information on the statistical system in the governmental organizations related to statistics and the promotion of measures based on the 4th Term Master Plan in an easy-to-understand manner. In conjunction with this, it is necessary to grasp a wide range of opinions and needs of the public regarding official statistics, and to reflect the results in the development of official statistics.

2 Promotion system for the Master Plan

In light of the above, in order to make the 4th Term Master Plan effective, it is important to establish the necessary promotion system, as well as for each ministry to appropriately share information on the progress of efforts, issues and other matters and for the government as a whole to work on efforts.

Thus, under the Council for the Promotion of Statistical Administration, which consists of the Director-General for Statistical Secretaries (Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Policy) of the MIC) and the statistical secretaries of each ministry, the government shall address various measures set in the 4th Term Master Plan in close coordination and cooperation, including flexibly holding meetings with working-level officials of each ministry as needed.

In addition, the Statistics Commission shall actively present its opinions through the affairs under its jurisdiction specified in each item of Article 45 of the Statistics Act and shall endeavor

to promote and support the various measures listed in the 4th Term Master Plan by taking the following actions:

(1) from the perspective of developing and improving official statistics in response to changes in the socio-economic situation, identifying the issues and promoting pilot research and studies that contribute to the development of statistics, and based on the results of these surveys and studies, examining ways to develop and improve the necessary statistics;

(2) from the perspective of improving the possibility of international comparability of statistics, requesting timely reports from relevant ministries about information on international trends, and providing advice on necessary responses;

(3) from the perspective of promoting the utilization of statistical data, providing advice and other support to ensure that statistical data and questionnaire information used for academic research should be provided in a user-friendly manner from user perspectives;

(4) from the perspective of producing high-quality statistics through the process, compiling requirements for the statistical production process and its management, as well as promoting the optimization of the statistical production process by providing necessary advice and support based on the results of Statistical Production Process Diagnoses; and

(5) from the perspective of realizing high-quality statistics by improving statistical techniques, contributing to the improvement of statistical production techniques by flexibly providing guidance and advice based on the needs of the priority issues of each ministry in the Evaluation Subcommittee of the Statistics Commission, which conducts technical evaluations of such techniques.

3 Master Plan Follow-up

A follow-up on the implementation status of the 4th Term Master Plan shall be conducted by the Statistics Commission based on the Report on the Situation of the Enforcement of the Statistics Act compiled by the MIC in accordance with Article 55 of the Statistics Act.

In this case, in addition to checking the implementation status of the items included in the Master Plan, the Statistics Commission shall follow up to enhance the evaluation and encourage improvements, such as through monitoring with the effective utilization of relevant indicators, as the Statistics Commission takes into consideration the actual survey environment and future prospects of each statistical survey.

[Reference] Digitalization in the Development of Official Statistics

In order to respond to the digitalization of the social economy, official statistics are required to respond from various perspectives, including understanding the actual state of the digital economy, reducing the burden on respondents and improving convenience for statistics users by utilizing digital technology, improving the efficiency and accuracy of statistical production and producing new statistics using digital technology, and taking into consideration respondents who have difficulty responding to digitalization.

The 4th Term Master Plan also stipulates responses to digitalization from various perspectives. However, it is necessary to promote these responses consistently while interrelating them to achieve the goal of responding to the digitalization of the social economy. For this reason, the responses to digitalization described in the 4th Term Master Plan are listed again hereinafter⁴².

Furthermore, these measures should be promoted while verifying their effectiveness by utilizing indicators, such as the ratio of online responses to the total number of responses compiled in the Report on the Situation of the Enforcement of the Statistics Act.

I. Grasping the Actual State of the Digital Economy

- 1) Review of measures to accurately grasp the impact of the digitalization of the economy in SNA. (2-1-(3))
- 2) Review of a new framework for collecting the necessary data regarding the actual status of the digitalization of the economy, such as the expansion of e-commerce. (2-2-(1))

II Reducing the Burden on Respondents and Improving Convenience for Statistics Users through the Use of Digital Technology

(Reducing the Burden on Respondents)

- 1) System modification of the government-wide online response system (e-Survey). (3-4)
 - Flexible response format to accommodate companies' information systems, security, and work systems (e.g., HTML format and Excel format without macros to diversify electronic questionnaires), etc.
 - Implementation of a function for importing files from other software to reduce the time and

⁴² Correspondence related to multiple perspectives is organized under one of the perspective items for convenience.

effort required to input data into the questionnaire.

- Implementation of an online survey communication function that allows question-and-answer inquiries, etc., to be completed within the system.

2-1) Promotion of online surveys, including the active introduction of e-Surveys in individual statistical surveys, increasing the ratio of online responses to the total number of responses, and improving the efficiency of tabulation through online responses. (3-4)

2-2) Verify the effectiveness of methodology to encourage online responses in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries statistics and promote efforts to increase the ratio of online responses to the total number of responses. (2-6-(5))

2-3) In Survey on Port and Harbour, a full-scale implementation of Cyber Port, a system designed to enhance the efficiency of port-related operations, will promote online responses, reduce the burden on respondents by using administrative record information, reorganize survey methodology, and centralize the management of questionnaire information, etc. (3-6-(1))

3-1) Review further horizontal development of data used in existing official statistics, such as POS data (Consumer Price Index, Current Survey of Commerce, etc.), web scraping data (CPI, etc.), and satellite data (Crop Survey, SDG Indicators, etc.). (3-6-(1))

3-2) Conduct a review to improve the method of producing the Basic Survey On Land in order to obtain an overall picture of land ownership and use in Japan, taking into account the status of development and study of digital data of real estate registration information. (2-6-(4))

3-3) Promotion of efforts to reduce the burden of respondents by utilizing digital data for the Statistical Survey on Farm Management and Economy by farm type. (2-6-(5))

3-4) Utilization of advanced technologies, such as satellite data and administrative record information for Crop Survey. (2-6-(5))

(Improving Convenience for Statistics Users)

(1) Improvement of the portal site for government statistics (e-Stat). (3-2-(1))

- Promote registration of statistical data, such as the outcomes of statistical surveys, administrative statistics, and processed statistics.

- Expansion of data provision in machine-readable formats.

- Planned registration of statistical information databases that are compatible with API functions.

- Improve searchability, add data catalog functions, and improve the user interface.

- Promote registration of information necessary for using statistics, such as statistical survey summaries, regional classifications, and lists of classified and tabulated items.

- Preparation of metadata necessary to link multiple statistical tables for use.

(2) Secure Utilization of Questionnaire Information Using Digital Technology. (3-2-(2))

- Establishment of on-site facilities that can utilize survey information while ensuring security and gradual expansion of statistical surveys that can be handled at these facilities.

- A review of the demonstration experiments of a remote access method that enables the utilization of questionnaire information from a terminal in a laboratory while ensuring security.

- A study on establishing a mechanism to support the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) in storing data layouts, code tables, and other information necessary to utilize questionnaire information at on-site facilities, etc.

III Improving Efficiency and Accuracy of Statistical Production through Digital Technology and the Production of New Statistics

(Improving the Efficiency and Accuracy of Statistical Production)

(1) Improvement of the tabulation process using digital technology. (3-4)

- The MIC will review the development of a general-purpose tabulation tool, provide it to each ministry, and start training on how to use the tool, manage outsourcing of system maintenance, etc.

- The ministries will promote the digitalization of data examinations by visualizing the specifications of the tabulation system, improving the overall tabulation system through a general-purpose tabulation tool, and checking for errors using the system.

(2) Promotion of visualization of business processes, development of business manuals and standardization of statistical production processes as a prerequisite for digitalization of business. (3-3-(1), 3-4)

(3) A review of how to manage the updating status of business manuals, how to update and store them efficiently, and how to improve the efficiency of communication among related parties by utilizing digital technology. (3-4)

(4) In addition to electromagnetically recorded questionnaire information, the following information, etc., should be stored "permanently" (indefinitely). (3-3-(2))

- Information necessary to define the relevant data, such as data layout forms, code tables, etc.

- Multipliers for population estimation.
 - Information necessary to produce published statistics, such as administrative record information.
 - Information necessary for computer processing, specifications needed for creating tabulation programs and their handling procedures, survey summary materials, etc.
- (5) Enhancement of online training programs so that more people can take the courses, including staff members of local branches and local public entities. (3-5-(2))

(Production of New Statistics)

- (1) Sequential implementation of trial efforts (Big Data Trials) regarding the production of statistics using big data, publication of the results (beta version, trial values, reference values, etc.) and information on the data as much as possible, and further verification after obtaining feedback. (3-6)-(1)
- (2) Prepare a place where big data can be used on a trial basis (Big Data Sharing), and while coordinating with private companies that are big data holders, consider building a network of related parties, such as by holding events related to data analysis. (3-6-(1))
- (3) Prepare a place to consolidate and provide information on the use of big data in a centralized manner (Big Data Portal) and consider promoting efforts to create new examples of utilization by sharing information on the use of big data among various ministries, local public entities, private companies, etc., and by matching users with private companies that own big data. (3-6-(1))
- (4) Conduct empirical studies, etc., to solve various issues related to big data and report the results to the Meeting for Big Data Promotion. (3-6-(1)).

IV Consideration for Respondents Who Have Difficulty in Responding to Digitalization

- (1) As the digitalization of the statistical survey progresses, efforts should be made to secure and train enumerators (including measures for the aging of the population) who are responsible for responding to respondents who have difficulties in responding online, requesting cooperation, and encouraging online responses, etc. (3-5-(3))
- (2) Support enumerators using digital technology and call centers and share information on the status of such efforts among ministries. (3-5-(3))

Appendix: Specific Measures that Shall Be Implemented Over the Next Five Years

Part 2: Matters Concerning the Development of Official Statistics

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
1. Improvement and enhancement of the accuracy of the National Accounts (2) Efforts toward FY2030: two main pillars	1	◎ To improve the accuracy of QE, the government shall conduct an inclusive review of the method of estimate, including the subdivision of supply-side estimated items and the expansion of common estimation categories. In addition, the government shall verify, as needed, a series of measures addressing the impact of COVID-19 based on accumulated data. These measures include special adjustments in the primary QE, dummy processing in seasonal adjustment, and revisions of the allocation ratios for certain items in annual estimates.	Cabinet Office	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023. Conclusions on what is possible shall be reached by the end of FY2025.
	2	○ In order to reduce the burden on respondents and ensure the collection of useful data, the government shall evaluate the feasibility of utilizing the Business Outlook Survey for items considered to improve the primary QE estimation within the Financial Statements Statistics of Corporations by Industry and Supplementary Inquiry. Based on the results, the government shall review the items surveyed in the Business Outlook Survey, reach early conclusions, and then verify the necessary QE estimates. When reviewing the items surveyed, the government shall consider the progress made so far in the review of the Financial Statements Statistics of Corporations by Industry and	Ministry of Finance, Cabinet Office	The relevance of the Business Outlook Survey shall be assessed starting in FY2023, with conclusions to be reached promptly. The relevance of the primary QE compilation method shall also be addressed starting in FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
		Supplementary Inquiry, as the government will base its review on the history of past revisions in the Business Outlook Survey. ◎ Additionally, the government shall conduct research to improve the compilation methods for private enterprise equipment and private inventory fluctuations in the primary QE, including the aspects mentioned above.		
	3	◎ The government shall work to improve the accuracy of the distribution aspect in annual estimates by enhancing compilation methods related to operating surpluses, mixed income, and employee compensation. In parallel, the government shall expedite the review and production of estimated values for quarterly GDP reports on the distribution side based on the improvements reported to the Statistics Commission. This process shall determine whether these can be published as a reference series, and if so, establish the appropriate method of publication.	Cabinet Office	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023. For quarterly bulletins, conclusions shall be drawn as soon as possible before the end of FY2025.
	4	◎ Regarding the seamless integration of the compilation methods from the first annual estimate to the benchmark-year estimate, the government shall work towards reducing revision differences while ensuring consistency with the benchmark-year estimate in the next base revision, scheduled for implementation during FY2025.	Cabinet Office	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
	5	◎ Regarding the estimation of the intermediate input structure of education in the 2020 Input-Output Tables, the government shall improve the estimation accuracy based on the review conducted in 2022, utilizing administrative record information.	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Shall be implemented in FY2023.
	6	◎ Regarding the Input-Output Tables (transaction basic tables), the government shall continue to expand the use of the Economic Census for Business Activity while also working on transitioning to the SUT system in the service sector. The government shall produce and disseminate the SUT alongside the 2020 Input-Output Tables (transaction basic tables).	Ministries involved in the preparation of Input-Output Tables	Shall be implemented by the end of FY2024.
	7	○ Regarding the Japan Product Classification, to apply it to the 2026 Economic Census for Business Activity, the Input-Output Tables, and the SUT, the government shall conduct necessary reviews based on the revised contents of the next Japan Standard Industrial Classification and prepare a comprehensive version covering both the goods and service sectors.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented by the end of FY2023.
	8	◎ For the 2025 Input-Output Tables, the government shall review and revise sectors based on industrial classifications, product classifications, and the current state of statistical source data. The government shall also address a comprehensive transition to the Supply and Use Tables (SUT) system.	Ministries involved in the preparation of Input-Output Tables	Shall be implemented starting in FY2024.
	9	◎ The government shall review strengthening collaboration for the	Ministry of Internal Affairs	To reach a conclusion by

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
		2026 Economic Census for Business Activity and the Survey of Selected Service Industries and Non-Profit Institutions.	and Communications, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	the end of FY2024.
	10	◎ The government shall review ways to improve the consistency of cost items across surveys, taking into account the implementation experiences of the Annual Business Survey and the Survey of Selected Service Industries and Non-Profit Institutions.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	To reach a conclusion by the end of FY2025.
	11	○ Regarding the 2025 Input-Output Structure Survey, the government shall expand coverage in areas that are currently insufficient, taking into account the transition to the Supply and Use Tables (SUT) system. Additionally, the government shall consider revisions centered around the Survey of Selected Service Industries and Non-Profit Institutions.	Ministries involved in the preparation of Input-Output Tables	Shall be implemented starting in FY2024.
	12	◎ Regarding the output-type deflator for construction, the government shall advance the review of remaining issues based on a series of research results reported to the Statistics Commission. The aim is to implement this in the next base revision of the National Accounts. Furthermore, the government shall continue research towards implementation in the National Accounts on methods to capture retail service (margin) prices. This research shall be based on results reported to the Statistics Commission, and results from the Annual Business	Cabinet Office	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023. Conclusions to be reached by the end of FY2025. Retail Service shall be intensified starting in FY2025.

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		Survey conducted from 2022 onward.		
	13	◎ Regarding the possibility of advancing the publication of the primary QE, the research shall proceed based on overseas compilation methods, the timing and potential early release of statistical source data, the impact on estimation accuracy, and the review status of the method of estimate for the next standard revision.	Cabinet Office	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023, and work shall be intensified starting in FY2025.
	14	◎ Regarding the further development of the accounts by system sector, the government shall review it based on the international situation, domestic research, and needs, aiming to reach a conclusion by the time of the next base revision.	Cabinet Office	Shall be concluded during FY2025.
(3) Prior investment for the future	15	◎ Further review shall be carried out to achieve a more accurate understanding of the digitalization of the economy within SNA, taking into account the international situation and the domestic status of data development.	Cabinet Office	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	16	◎ Based on the Cabinet Office's previous research, the government shall study indicators that reflect the environmental impact of economic activities on GDP from a decarbonization perspective. The government shall also coordinate with relevant ministries and agencies to research and develop greenhouse gas emission accounts necessary for this	Cabinet Office	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
		and disseminate the results.		
	17	◎ The government shall continue to actively participate in international discussions regarding the formulation of the new international standard for National Accounts (tentative name: 2025 SNA), scheduled for 2025. The government shall also steadily advance basic reviews to ensure their implementation as soon as possible.	Cabinet Office	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	18	○ The methodology for determining prices that reflect changes in the quality of health care, nursing care, and education shall be reviewed by the government, including their feasibility, based on the series of research results reported to the Statistics Commission and the progress of international discussions.	Cabinet Office, relevant ministries	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
2. Promotion of systematic development of economic statistics (1) Development of statistics to understand the economic structure	19	◎ Regarding the next (2026) Economic Census for Business Activity, the government shall consider reviewing the items surveyed while paying attention to the review status of the transition to the SUT system and the relationship with the Annual Business Survey to grasp the actual situation of the mid-year.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	The conclusion shall be reached by the planning period for the 2026 Economic Census for Business Activity.
	20	○ The government shall begin reviewing the new framework designed to quickly respond to and address data needs in areas like e-commerce, DX, GX, and the multinationalization of enterprises—areas not fully covered by	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Economy, Trade	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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		existing statistical surveys, administrative record information, or private data. This shall be done while ensuring consistency and continuity with existing statistical items surveyed and taking user needs into account, with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry leading the efforts and collaborating with relevant ministries.	and Industry, relevant ministries	
	21	○ The government shall continue reviewing various issues related to improving the accuracy of the CPI and report the results to the Statistics Commission.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
(2) Development of service industry and enterprise-related statistics	22	○ Regarding the monthly statistical survey of the service industry, the government shall continue to review the relationships between relevant statistical surveys and the early release of statistics. Given the need for further systematic development of service sector statistics and the growing demand for utilization, such as QE, due to earlier releases, the government shall review the development of fundamental statistics. The government shall also address the burden on respondents by correcting duplications with existing general statistical surveys and drawing conclusions.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	Reach a conclusion by the end of FY2024.
	23	○ Regarding the Indices of Tertiary Industry Activity, the government shall continue to strive to enhance the usefulness of the statistics, including improvements in accuracy and convenience. This effort shall include	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
		utilizing administrative record information and private data based on the development and improvement status of the relevant statistical surveys that form the foundation.		
	24	◎ In light of the impact of COVID-19, the government shall continue reviewing ways to improve the handling of missing values in the Surveys for the Financial Statements Statistics of Corporations by Industry.	Ministry of Finance	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
(3) Efforts to improve the production of economic statistics	25	◎ To further develop the Business Register in the interim year of the Economic Census for Business Activity, the government shall consider increasing the scope and frequency of updates on basic information for establishments and companies. This shall include reviewing the Economic Census for Business Frame while also considering the burden on respondents and the administrative workload on local public entities and enumerators.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Draw conclusions by the planning period of the 2024 Economic Census for Business Frame.
	26	○ Regarding statistical surveys targeting companies, the government shall continue to review the role distribution among each survey and promote efforts to address duplication and other related issues.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, relevant ministries	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
3. Development of statistics in response to globalization of economic activities, improvement of international comparability,	27	○ Regarding the creation of new statistics that link company characteristics (such as foreign capital ratio) with import and export behavior, the government shall first examine the feasibility of connecting information from the Business Register and the Trade Statistics database. The government shall then review the	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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and international contributions (1) Development of statistics in response to globalization of economic activities		possibility of creating such statistics, taking into account the impact on administrative procedures and the confidentiality of individual company information.		
	28	○ In order to more accurately grasp the activities of overseas local subsidiaries, the government shall continue to work on developing and enhancing the population list used in the Basic Survey of Overseas Business Activities.	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
(2) Improvement of international comparability and international contributions	29	○ The government shall continue to expand its response to the SDG indicators by coordinating with the Statistics Commission and various ministries. At this time, due to the difficulties in calculating some indicators using existing statistical surveys, the government shall also review the possibility of using new sources of information in cooperation with knowledgeable third parties.	Cabinet Secretariat, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	30	○ By leveraging the expertise of the Statistics Commission and utilizing the government conferencing systems and remote working, the government shall further enhance the following efforts, thereby strengthening international contributions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participating in and disseminating information at international conferences and expert meetings • Regularly dispatch statistical experts to international agencies • Accepting government officials from foreign countries, primarily developing 	Each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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		countries, for training in statistics • cooperating in the operation of the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP)		
	31	○ From the perspective of further enhancing the international comparability of statistics, the government as a whole shall coordinate with various government ministries, with a focus on the Statistics Commission, to strengthen information sharing related to data provision and information dissemination to international agencies, as well as the status of discussions and coordination on statistical matters within international organizations. At the Working Group on International Statistics hosted by the MIC, the government shall focus on reviewing ways to expand the provision of statistical data.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
4. Development of statistics on population and livelihoods	32	○ Based on the declining birthrate, aging population, and changes in social conditions, the relevant ministries shall coordinate to promote research on necessary survey implementation methodology to flexibly respond to various needs for national life and social statistics.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and relevant ministries	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	33	◎ With regard to The Financial Statistics of Social Security in Japan, the government shall continue to collect and review information to improve the comprehensive understanding of local public entities' social security expenditures in accordance with the international base.	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
	34	◎ Regarding the introduction of the online survey for the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions, after addressing issues and implementing necessary improvements for a nationwide rollout, the government shall analyze the impact of the online introduction on the results, including online response rates by region and household attributes, and verify the effectiveness of the introduction.	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Reach a conclusion by the planning period of the survey in 2025.
	35	◎ Regarding the Vital Statistics, from the perspective of ensuring the continuity of statistical work, the government shall continue addressing the efficiency of data collection and statistical production through the enhancement of the online reporting system.	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	36	○ For the Consumption Trend Index (CTI), the government shall continue its efforts to make it more useful as a consumption-related indicator that supplements the Family Income and Expenditure Statistics.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
5. Efforts to ensure the comparability of statistics, etc.	37	○ The Japan Standard Industrial Classification shall be revised by the end of FY2023 to align with the socio-economic situation while considering the similarity of production technologies.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented by the end of FY2023.
	38	○ The Japan Standard Classification of Occupations aims to be revised by the end of FY2026, taking into account the status of the International Standard Classification of Occupations and trends related to occupations.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented by the end of FY2026.

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
	39	○ Regarding the Japan Product Classification, to apply it to the 2026 Economic Census for Business Activity, the Input-Output Tables, and the SUT, the government shall conduct necessary reviews based on the revised contents of the next Japan Standard Industrial Classification and prepare a comprehensive version covering both the goods and services sectors.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented by the end of FY2023.
	40	○ From the perspective of promoting further use of the Japan Product Classification, the government shall proceed with the review of establishing it as a statistical base while considering its application status in economic censuses.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	41	○ In addition to advancing the revisions of the classifications mentioned above, it is necessary to continue addressing further revisions of the Japan Standard Industrial Classification and the Japan Product Classification in FY2023 and beyond, focusing on timely and appropriate reviews of the statistical base. For this reason, the government shall comprehensively organize the issues related to both classifications and review the direction for their revision based on the issues.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
6. Efforts in each statistical field (1) Development of new statistics on employment,	42	○ To develop statistics on foreign employment and labour, the government shall conduct a new statistical survey while undertaking detailed reviews.	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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labour environment, etc.	43	◎ Regarding the Monthly Labour Survey, the government shall address enhancing the accuracy of the results by reviewing the methodology for estimating the population of workers and seasonal adjustments, among other improvements.	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	44	○ Regarding the Seafarer Labour Statistics Survey, the government shall initiate an early review to improve comparability with land-based workers and address statistical utilization needs, with the goal of reaching conclusive results. This review includes using administrative record information to reduce the burden on respondents, integrating it with other statistical surveys to understand the population, and considering the addition of items surveyed, tabulation, and target subjects.	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	The government shall reach a conclusion by FY2024.
(2) Development and improvement of environmental statistics	45	○ Regarding Structural Survey of Energy Consumption, the government shall continue to review issues related to stabilizing time-series data and enhancing the accuracy of the data.	Agency for Natural Resources and Energy	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
(3) Improving the accuracy of tourism statistics	46	○ Regarding the Accommodation Survey, the National Tourism Survey, and the International Visitor Survey, the government shall continue to review its efforts to ensure the stability of the survey results and improve accuracy, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry.	Japan Tourism Agency	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation Period
(4) Improvement of statistical production on construction and real estate	47	◎ The government shall review issues such as the sample design for the construction cost survey and the impact analysis of changes in the survey methodology, as outlined in the report of Consultation No. 162, Changes in the Construction Starts Statistics Survey (April 20, 2022). Additionally, the government shall provide timely and appropriate reports on the implementation status of the survey.	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	48	◎ Based on the results of the statistical production process diagnosis, the government shall develop and share work manuals for Construction Statistics and Construction Commencement Statistics.	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	Shall be implemented by the end of FY2023.
	49	○ To improve the accuracy of Integrated Statistics on Construction Works, a construction progress rate survey shall be conducted. The government shall also continue to review how to utilize the construction cost survey for this purpose.	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	50	○ To grasp the overall situation of land ownership and use in Japan, the government shall continue to review and improve the production method of the Basic Survey On Land. This shall be done with consideration of the development and review of digital data for real estate registration information.	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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(5) Improvement of statistics related to agriculture, forestry, and fisheries through digital technology, etc	51	◎ Regarding the management statistics by farming type in the Statistical Survey on Farm Management and Economy, the government shall review items surveyed that are less necessary, reduce the burden on respondents through the utilize of digital data, and promote efforts to alleviate the workload of local staff members by outsourcing to private entities.	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Shall be implemented sequentially starting in FY2023.
	52	◎ Regarding the Crop Survey, the government shall promote efforts to reduce the burden on respondents, simplify and streamline survey processes, and improve efficiency while ensuring the quality of the statistics through the use of advanced technologies such as satellite data and administrative record information.	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	53	○ To support the review of programs based on objective data for policy issues such as expanding exports of agricultural, forestry, and fishery products and revitalizing rural areas, the statistics department shall produce and analyze statistical data both within and outside the ministry. These efforts shall be promoted with the assistance of scholarly expertise to provide support to policy departments.	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	54	○ The government shall evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology to encourage online responses in agricultural, forestry, and fisheries statistics and promote efforts to increase the proportion of responses received online.	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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(6) Improvement of the process for statistical production on education	55	○ The government shall review the direction and content of future surveys to align with program needs, taking into account the educational progression of survey targets in the Longitudinal Survey of Babies in the 21st Century (2010 Cohort) and coordinating with relevant ministries.	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	The government shall reach a conclusion by the end of FY2023.
	56	○ Regarding statistical surveys for schools, the government shall continue to promote efforts to enhance survey efficiency and reduce the burden on schools by reviewing data linkage with the integrated school management support systems being introduced at each institution.	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Shall be implemented as soon as possible.
	57	◎ Regarding the improvement of items surveyed and methodology in the School Health Survey, the government shall continue to advance efforts based on the review and necessity assessed by experts at the research meetings.	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	Shall be implemented sequentially starting in FY2023.

(Note) In the column "Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.," items related to Fundamental Statistics are marked with "◎," while other items related to official statistics are marked with "○."

Part 3: Development of the Infrastructure for Production, Provision, and Use of Official Statistics

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
<p>2. Ensuring and enhancing the usefulness of statistics through improving and reinforcement of the infrastructure for promoting the utilization of statistics</p> <p>(1) Promotion of sharing and providing statistical data through the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics (IMISOS), etc.</p>	58	<p>○ Each ministry shall register the statistical data under their jurisdiction in e-Stat, including results from statistical surveys, administrative statistics, and processed statistics. Furthermore, in accordance with various policies on developing machine-readable statistical data, they shall systematically implement metadata preparation, expand data provision in machine-readable formats, and register data in statistical information databases to support API functionality. Additionally, in coordination with the MIC, they shall register in e-Stat the information necessary for utilizing statistics, such as statistical survey overviews, regional classifications, and lists of classification and tabulation items. The MIC shall periodically review the aforementioned policies in light of advancements in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and user needs. They shall also continue to support this work by informing ministries about statistical data registration and monitoring their registration status.</p>	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	59	<p>○ Regarding e-Stat, the government shall enhance its searchability, implement data catalog functionality, and improve the user interface. Additionally, the government shall enhance the usability, operability, and functionality of other Inter-Ministry Information System for Official</p>	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
		Statistics utilized by various ministries.		
(2) Provision and Utilization of Questionnaire Information, etc.	60	○ In coordination with the National Statistics Center, the government shall continue to gradually expand the network of on-site access facilities and the range of statistical surveys available for on-site use of questionnaire information. This effort aims to contribute to the promotion of Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) and the advancement of academic research. While considering the progress of these initiatives and user needs, the government shall explore ways to use and provide questionnaire information, including conducting pilot studies for implementing remote access methodology. These considerations shall be based on the premise of proper management of questionnaire information and confidentiality protection.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	61	○ In coordination with various ministries and the National Statistics Center, the government shall explore the development of a system to support the storage of not only questionnaire information but also data layouts, code tables, and other information necessary for statistical production.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	62	○ In coordination with the National Statistics Center, the government shall enhance the “mi ri po” to improve user convenience in accessing and utilizing questionnaire information. This	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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		enhancement shall include providing clearer information on access procedures and a list of available statistical survey questionnaires. The government shall also gradually implement measures such as improving progress management and consultation services related to data provision, standardizing and streamlining the examination process, and exploring ways to simplify access procedures. These efforts aim to contribute to increased user-friendliness in the provision and utilization of questionnaire information.		
	63	○ With regard to anonymized data and custom tabulations, the government shall expand the range of statistical surveys offered and add more years of data, taking into account user needs.	Each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	64	○ To enhance the utility of anonymized data and contribute to its efficient and stable production, the government shall conduct further research and review the methodology for anonymization processing, including perturbation techniques.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
3 Ensuring the reliability of statistics through the establishment of the PDCA Cycle (1) Establishment of the PDCA	65	○ Based on the results of efforts in FY2022, the MIC shall encourage the appropriate development of operational manuals in each ministry. To advance the standardization of statistical survey processes, the MIC shall decide Guidebook on Official Statistics that outlines the recommended content for these	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented by the first half of FY2023.

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cycle		manuals. Additionally, the MIC shall revise the Inspection and Evaluation Guidelines and the Requirements for Statistical Production Process Diagnoses to ensure accurate implementation of post-hoc verification (self-inspection) and Statistical Production Process Diagnoses. These revisions shall focus on effectively confirming and assessing the status of operational manual development and the quality of results produced based on these manuals.		
	66	○ Each ministry shall conduct post-hoc verification (self-inspection) based on the revised Inspection and Evaluation Guidelines. Additionally, they shall make necessary revisions to operational manuals in light of the newly developed Guidebook on Official Statistics. These revised manuals shall guide the execution of tasks, as well as the production, storage, and management of results and work records. In this process, statistical secretaries of each ministry shall take leadership in developing and updating operational manuals and establishing the PDCA cycle. They shall verify the status of manual development and sharing, provide necessary advice and guidance to staff members, and review the results of verifications and subsequent actions to ensure accurate implementation of post-hoc verifications (self-inspection).	Each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
	67	○ As each ministry implements post-hoc verification (self-inspection) based on the revised Inspection and Evaluation Guidelines, the MIC shall simultaneously conduct Statistical Production Process Diagnoses for all Fundamental Statistical Surveys in a planned manner. In doing so, the MIC shall consider the results of the Inspection and Confirmation carried out in FY2022 and aim for effective and efficient implementation by focusing on specific diagnostic areas according to the circumstances of each statistical survey.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	68	○ Guidebook on Official Statistics shall include a directive stating that when each ministry carries out their work, they should document any instances where they take exceptional measures not described in the operational manual or where they implement procedures different from those specified in the manual due to particular circumstances.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented by the first half of FY2023.
	69	○ During post-hoc verification (self-inspection) based on the Inspection and Evaluation Guidelines and other appropriate occasions, each ministry shall review whether to add exception clauses to the operational manuals and whether to revise their content.	Each ministry	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	70	○ To mitigate risks associated with modifications to the statistical production process, each ministry shall ensure the implementation of a practice to verify the potential impacts of changes on other operational	Each ministry	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
		processes, particularly when making significant alterations to the statistical production process (hereafter, "change control").		
	71	○ To support change control efforts across ministries, the MIC shall collect and organize cases where changes in operational processes have affected other processes, as well as instances where change control has prevented problems. This information shall be shared with all ministries. Based on the analysis of these cases, the MIC shall include change control methodology and examples in Guidebook on Official Statistics. Each ministry shall then make necessary revisions to the operational manuals for their respective statistical surveys, incorporating this guidance. The MIC shall continue to collect cases and enhance the content of Guidebook on Official Statistics. Furthermore, the MIC shall gradually incorporate change control methodology into the tiered training programs (basic, advanced, etc.) at the Statistical Research and Training Institute.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	72	○ Delayed questionnaires in accordance with the Guidelines for Handling Delayed Questionnaires provided by the Statistics Commission, taking into account the specific characteristics of each statistical survey.	Each ministry	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	73	○ Include procedures for handling delayed questionnaires in the	Each ministry	Implementation to be continued

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		operational manuals. Regularly verify the appropriateness of these procedures during the post-hoc verification (self-inspection) conducted in accordance with the Inspection and Evaluation Guidelines.		after FY2023.
	74	○ To ensure that delayed questionnaires are handled in accordance with the Guidelines for Handling Delayed Questionnaires, the MIC shall include relevant procedures in Guidebook on Official Statistics. Additionally, for Fundamental Statistical Surveys, the MIC shall verify that the handling of delayed questionnaires and related operational management align with these guidelines during their Statistical Production Process Diagnoses.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	75	○ When conducting statistical surveys where some processes are outsourced to local public entities or private entities, each ministry shall share the sense of purpose with local public entities and private contractors from the preparatory stage and maintain thorough communication. They shall seek improvement proposals in implementation status reports. Additionally, they shall collect opinions from local public entities and private contractors, including requesting improvement proposals during post-hoc verification (self-inspection) based on the Inspection and Evaluation Guidelines.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	76	○ The MIC shall monitor the implementation of opinion-gathering	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Implementation to be continued

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
		activities conducted by each ministry. Based on these results, the MIC shall promote the widespread adoption of best practices in improving the statistical production process that incorporate input from local public entities and private contractors. Furthermore, the MIC shall include the identified methodology and case studies in Guidebook on Official Statistics. The MIC shall also make necessary revisions to the Inspection and Evaluation Guidelines and the requirements for Statistical Production Process Diagnoses as needed.	and Communications	after FY2023.
(2) Improvement of management capacity to establish an organizational culture that prioritizes quality	77	○ Statistical secretaries and executive/managerial staff members overseeing statistical production in each ministry shall foster an organizational culture that prioritizes quality and open communication. This culture should encourage staff members to respond promptly and appropriately when errors are acknowledged or suspected, in accordance with established error-handling rules. Staff members who properly detect, report, and address errors should be positively appreciated. To promote these efforts, the MIC shall provide management training for statistical secretaries and executive/managerial staff members overseeing statistical production in each ministry. This training, developed in coordination with the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs and	Each ministry, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

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		experts in statistics and quality management, shall focus on enhancing skills to establish such an organizational culture. Additionally, the Ministry shall utilize opportunities such as Statistical Production Process Diagnoses to receive reports on initiatives and close-call incidents from various ministries. These sessions shall provide chances for expert guidance, and the results shall be shared broadly across organizations.		
	78	<p>○ The MIC and each ministry shall conduct training for staff members responsible for statistical production to ensure a thorough understanding of rules for responding to discovered errors.</p> <p>Furthermore, the MIC shall strive to ensure that personnel evaluations for statistical staff members across ministries (including statistical secretaries, executives and managers overseeing statistical production, and general staff members responsible for statistics) incorporate assessments of their appropriate handling of discovered errors.</p>	Each ministry, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	79	<p>○ To facilitate prompt analysis and verification of the cause of errors when they occur and to increase the possibility of restoring appropriate data through recalculation, the following information shall be stored "permanently" (indefinitely) in addition to the electromagnetic records of questionnaire information already</p>	Each ministry	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
		<p>designated for permanent preservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information necessary to define the data, such as data layout forms and code tables • Tabulation multipliers used for population estimation • Information necessary to produce disseminated statistics, such as administrative record information • Information required for computer processing, specifications needed for producing tabulation programs, their handling procedures, survey outline materials, etc. <p>Additionally, the government shall carry out work execution and production, storage, and management of results and business records based on the operational manual revised in Toward Comprehensive Quality Improvement of Official Statistics (Proposal) (August 10, 2022, Statistics Commission) IV Future Efforts 1-iv). To ensure thorough implementation of these measures, each ministry shall revise its own response rules based on the template for error discovery response rules, which was revised in FY2022 in coordination with the MIC and the Cabinet Secretariat.</p>		
	80	<p>○ Statistical secretaries and executive/managerial staff members overseeing statistical production in each ministry shall foster an organizational culture that prioritizes quality and promotes open communication in the workplace.</p>	Each ministry, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

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		They shall also actively appreciate staff members who appropriately detect, report, and address errors. To promote these efforts, the MIC shall clearly outline the expected roles of statistical secretaries in each ministry. Furthermore, with the cooperation of academics, experts in statistics, and quality management professionals, the ministry shall develop management training tailored to the characteristics of the statistical production process. This training shall target statistical secretaries and executive/managerial staff members overseeing statistical production. It shall be implemented effectively, such as by conducting sessions during staff rotation periods.		
	81	○ Efforts shall be made to ensure that personnel evaluations for statistical secretaries and executive/managerial staff members overseeing statistical production in each ministry include assessments of their performance in the following areas: efforts towards quality management of statistics, handling of situations when errors are discovered, and initiatives taken to enhance the capabilities of staff members under their supervision.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	82	○ To ensure that executive and managerial staff members outside the statistics departments of each ministry can learn about fundamental aspects such as the importance of statistics, the problems arising from statistical errors, and the necessity and methodology of managing statistical	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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		production, the MIC shall provide necessary information, case studies, and other content to existing training programs targeted at executive and managerial staff members across ministries.		
(3) Response to disasters, infectious diseases, etc.	83	<p>○ Each ministry, recognizing the crucial role of official statistics during large-scale disasters or disease outbreaks (such as assessing the situation, providing evidence for recovery plans, and evaluating reconstruction progress), shall continue addressing appropriate responses. These responses include the continuous implementation of statistical surveys and the reliable publication of results during such events while ensuring the safety of survey personnel, including enumerators conducting fieldwork. These efforts shall align with the Guidelines for Response in the Case of Large-scale Disasters and the business continuity plans or action plans of each ministry.</p> <p>Furthermore, led by the MIC, efforts shall be made to share best practices for conducting statistical surveys and disseminating results during large-scale disasters or disease outbreaks. This initiative aims to promote appropriate responses across ministries and advance overall preparedness.</p>	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
4 Promotion of digitalization of statistical	84	<p>○ The MIC and the National Statistics Center shall continue to explore and implement improvements</p>	Ministry of Internal Affairs and	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

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infrastructure		<p>to enhance the convenience for respondents using the e-Survey system of the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics. These improvements include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifying the formats of electronic questionnaires (such as HTML formats and macro-free Excel formats) to allow flexible responses that accommodate the information systems, security measures, and operational structures of surveyed organizations. • Implementing a file import function to reduce the data input burden on respondents. • Providing communication features within the online survey system to handle tasks currently conducted via telephone or email, such as making inquiries about response content to survey participants. <p>These enhancements shall be reviewed by the government further and progressively implemented.</p>	Communications	
	85	○ When planning statistical surveys, the government shall actively review the implementation of the aforementioned e-Survey system. This approach aims to promote online surveys, with the goals of improving response rates and enhancing the efficiency of tabulation and other processes.	Each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	86	○ The MIC, along with the National Statistics Center, shall review the development of a general-purpose tabulation tool. The results of this	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

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		development shall be made available to all ministries through Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics and other means. Alongside this provision, they shall initiate training programs on how to utilize these tabulation tools and on managing the outsourcing of system development and maintenance.		
	87	○ When developing operational manuals and related documents, the government shall enhance the visibility of tabulation system specifications by creating documentation that enables staff members to clearly understand current processing procedures. Additionally, the government shall utilize the aforementioned general-purpose tabulation tools to improve the overall tabulation system. The government shall also promote the digitalization of data examination processes, including implementing system-based error checking.	Each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	88	○ The government shall continue to conduct technical reviews in the following areas, leveraging digital technology: managing the update status of operational manuals, exploring efficient methodologies for updating and storing manuals, promoting the standardization of statistical production processes to support digitalization, and enhancing communication efficiency among stakeholders.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
5 Securing	89	○ To prevent the occurrence of	Each ministry,	Implementation

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statistical resources and human resource developing (1) Securing statistical resources		significant incidents in statistical production, each ministry shall ensure that their organizational structure is commensurate with their workload, including the implementation of measures outlined in the recommendation. In particular, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism shall promptly restructure its statistical production system in light of recent events.	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	to be continued after FY2023.
	90	○ Each ministry shall motivate staff members with the basic knowledge and skills required for statistical work to develop a sense of commitment to supporting the statistics sector. They shall implement planned personnel management strategies to adequately provide staff members, particularly those with relevant skills, professional statistical abilities, and project management skills for statistical operations. The MIC shall conduct necessary reviews to ensure that such staff members are properly evaluated and treated. Furthermore, they shall explore ways to effectively utilize these specialized abilities and skills in other administrative fields requiring similar knowledge, thereby expanding opportunities for staff development. Additionally, to ensure that the expertise and skills of long-serving staff members in the statistics sector are effectively passed on to the next generation, organizational strategies shall be devised. These may include utilizing the opportunity presented by	Each ministry, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

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		the raising of the retirement age for national civil servants, such as assigning experienced staff members as mentors for younger employees.		
	91	<p>○ The government shall strengthen the role of the Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative name) who supports statistical secretaries, enabling them to serve as the core of overall statistical quality management beyond just improving pre-publication reviews and handling error responses. To support statistical secretaries and the Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative name) in each ministry, the government shall secure technical advisors, including academics, private sector statisticians, and quality management experts. Furthermore, to ensure a stable supply and development of personnel for the Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative name) position, the government shall enhance training programs, provide opportunities for practical experience through personnel exchanges, and share best practices. Additionally, ministries shall collaboratively work on securing and developing the Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative name) by appointing individuals who have obtained Statistical Data Analyst or Assistant Statistical Data Analyst qualifications to these positions and ensuring that those in these positions receive the necessary training to</p>	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

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		obtain Statistical Data Analyst or Assistant Statistical Data Analyst qualifications during their tenure.		
(2) Development of statistical human resources	92	○ To promote the systematic utilization and development of personnel with statistical expertise in each ministry, the government shall review ways to manage information such as experience in statistical work, training attendance records, and the acquisition status of Statistical Data Analyst and Assistant Statistical Data Analyst qualifications. Additionally, the government shall review measures to encourage the acquisition of these qualifications, such as providing benefits for those who have obtained Statistical Data Analyst and Assistant Statistical Data Analyst qualifications.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	93	○ The MIC shall conduct tiered training for staff members of each ministry, incorporating the following content: a) Basic aspects of quality control, such as the importance of maintaining operational manuals and quality management and techniques for implementing the PDCA cycle b) Importance and methodology of change management c) The importance of early problem detection and response, and the content of error response rules d) Best practices in statistics and close-call incident examples The ministry shall also enhance training materials and content that can be used by each ministry to train	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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		statistical staff members. To enable wider participation, including employees from regional branches and local public entities, online training options shall be expanded. Furthermore, in coordination with research institutions and universities, the ministry shall review training programs that contribute to developing higher levels of expertise.		
	94	○ Staff training programs (including those for employees outside of statistical departments) shall incorporate fundamental contents such as the importance of statistical quality control, an overview of statistics-related laws and regulations, and rules for responding to discovered errors.	Each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	95	○ To enhance the statistical work experience and expertise of staff members across ministries, the government shall promote personnel exchanges between each ministry's statistical departments. This shall include accepting staff members from various ministries into the statistics sector of the MIC for on-the-job training (OJT), as well as dispatching staff members from the ministry's statistics sector to other ministries.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
(3) Cooperation with and support for local governments	96	○ Taking into account feedback from local public entities, the government shall review ways to support their efforts to improve and modernize survey methodology, aiming to enhance the overall environment for conducting statistical surveys.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	97	○ In coordination with relevant	Ministry of	Shall be

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		ministries, the government shall provide necessary support and conduct reviews for local public entities, taking into account their specific circumstances and data utilization needs. This shall include providing technical support, such as assistance in producing regional statistics based on national statistical expertise and conducting studies on estimation methodology and data provision approaches. Concurrently, as part of the technical support for local public entities, the government shall review ways to share information on exemplary analysis cases and estimation techniques from both national and local public entity statistical departments and implement prompt information sharing.	Internal Affairs and Communications	implemented starting in FY2023.
	98	○ Building on the experience of personnel exchanges between national and local public entities to date, the government shall continue to share success stories and challenges among relevant ministries, and local public entities. The government shall also promote flexible personnel exchanges with local public entities in response to their specific needs.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	99	○ The government shall review the granting of Statistical Data Analyst and Assistant Statistical Data Analyst qualifications to prefectural government employees who have accumulated significant statistical work experience and possess advanced statistical skills. This consideration	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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		shall be based on establishing an appropriate certification process. In doing so, the government shall take into account that the conditions and certification content for local public entity officials may differ from those for national government employees.		
	100	○ With the cooperation of relevant ministries, the government shall work to strengthen support for enumerators. This shall include monitoring the implementation of supportive measures using digital technologies and call centers and facilitating information sharing among ministries about these initiatives.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
(4) Improvement the function of the central statistical systems	101	○ To effectively respond to inquiries from ministries regarding the development and updating of operational manuals, post-hoc verification (self-assessment) based on inspection and evaluation guidelines, actions based on statistical production process diagnostic results, and change management, the government shall enhance its consultation services and individual support system. Additionally, to leverage specialized knowledge in these areas, the government shall establish an advisory function comprised of academic experts and professionals from the private sector.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.
	102	○ In coordination with the Statistics Commission, the government shall, for the time being, focus on statistical surveys from ministries where issues have been identified during recent	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

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		inspections, confirmations, and statistical production process diagnostics. When examining survey plans for these surveys, the government shall also verify tabulation processes and other elements not explicitly described in the survey plan, providing feedback as necessary. To ensure that this additional scrutiny does not delay the survey plan examination process, the government shall enhance the capacity of the examination department and strengthen coordination with the Statistical Research and Training Institute.		
	103	<p>○ To promote the initiatives outlined in the Statistics Commission's recommendations, central statistical systems (comprising the MIC' Director-General for Policy Planning (Statistical Policy), Statistics Bureau, Statistical Research and Training Institute, and the National Statistics Center) shall enhance the following functions while strengthening necessary organizational structures and securing resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the Director for Statistical Quality Management (tentative title) • Digitalization of statistical work through Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics and other means, including enhancing e-Survey functions and operations, exploring the development of general-purpose tabulation tools, improving e-Stat 	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
		<p>functionality, digitizing manuals, and providing training on tabulation processes, including examination and tabulation systems and specification development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering statistical training, responding to inquiries from ministries regarding statistical production, and providing individualized support based on these consultations (utilizing external academic experts and private sector professionals) 		
<p>6 Efforts to produce statistics that are easily supported and understood by the public</p> <p>(1) Consideration for the burden on respondents</p>	104	<p>○ In coordination with the EBPM Promotion Commission's efforts to solicit proposals for statistical needs, the government shall regularly gather feedback and suggestions from respondents regarding the burden of statistical reporting. Additionally, the government shall receive reports from ministries on respondent feedback and statistical needs they have collected, particularly those that require cross-ministerial review. Based on these solicitations and reports, the government shall coordinate with relevant ministrie to develop and disseminate response strategies. The Statistics Commission shall take the lead in conducting regular follow-ups on the implementation status of these strategies.</p>	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	105	<p>○ When planning and designing statistical surveys under their jurisdiction, ministries shall separately gather feedback from respondents and assess statistical needs both within and outside their organization. They shall</p>	Each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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		consider previously collected respondent feedback and identified statistical needs. While aiming to reduce the burden on respondents and accurately address statistical needs, they shall also consult with their respective Policy Planning Directors-General to verify the availability and location of necessary data. Through these efforts, they shall strive to reduce the burden on respondents and simplify survey procedures.		
	106	○ In coordination with various ministries, the government shall regularly conduct fact-finding surveys on the use of administrative record information in statistical production. The results of these surveys shall be published on the website, and the government shall work to enhance information sharing among ministries. Additionally, ministries that produce administrative statistics shall, in principle, disseminate these statistics on e-Stat and other platforms. They shall also strive to enhance the provided information based on user needs.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	107	○ The government shall strive to achieve more accurate insights into economic trends and analyze long-term economic developments by leveraging administrative record information. In particular, the government shall conduct comprehensive research into the potential use of tax information on income as complementary data for	Cabinet Office, Ministry of Finance	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

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		understanding wage trends.		
	108	◎ Regarding Survey on Port and Harbour, the government shall fully implement Cyber Port, a system designed to enhance the efficiency of port-related operations. This implementation shall further promote the use of administrative record information and reduce the burden on respondents. Additionally, it shall enable us to reorganize survey methodology and achieve centralized management of questionnaire information, etc.	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	The government shall reach a conclusion during 2023.
	109	○ While strengthening information sharing and inter-ministerial coordination with the Statistics Commission at the center, the government shall promote research and reviews on utilizing administrative records and other information for statistical production.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	110	○ The MIC and the National Statistics Center shall work to improve the operational efficiency of the Enterprise Survey Support Project and enhance the convenience of the Inter-Ministry Information System for Official Statistics, including e-Survey while reducing the burden on survey respondents. To achieve this, they shall promptly begin reviewing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifying the formats of electronic questionnaires (such as HTML formats and macro-free Excel formats) to allow flexible responses that accommodate the information 	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Implementation to be continued after FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
		<p>systems, security measures, and operational structures of surveyed organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a file import function to reduce the data input burden on respondents. • Providing communication features within the online survey system to handle tasks currently conducted via telephone or email, such as making inquiries about response content to survey participants. <p>Additionally, they shall review functions to further enhance convenience and security and shall proceed with system improvements accordingly.</p>		
	111	○ When planning statistical surveys, the government shall actively review the implementation of the aforementioned e-Survey system. This approach aims to promote online surveys, with the goals of improving response rates and enhancing the efficiency of data tabulation and other processes.	Each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	112	○ To enhance and develop the Enterprise Survey Support Project, which contributes to improving statistical accuracy, collection rates, and operational efficiency, the government shall establish the necessary framework. This includes planned training of dedicated staff members at the National Statistics Center and improving the environment for attracting and retaining talent.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	113	○ The government shall sequentially	Ministry of	Shall be

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
		implement pilot initiatives (Big Data Trials) utilizing big data. The results of these trials (including beta versions, estimated values, and reference figures) and information about the data shall be made public to the greatest possible extent. The government shall then gather feedback on these publications and conduct further verification based on this input.	Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	implemented starting in FY2023.
	114	○ To conduct pilot initiatives using big data (Big Data Trials), the government shall establish an effective environment, including a platform for the experimental use of big data (Big Data Sharing) and a centralized portal for aggregating and providing information on big data utilization (Big Data Portal). For the Big Data Portal, the government shall review the efforts to promote information sharing, facilitate matchmaking among stakeholders, and generate new use cases related to big data utilization across ministries, local public entities, and private companies. The government shall also regularly update information and add or enhance features based on user needs. To implement Big Data Sharing, the government shall review ways to build a network of stakeholders, which may include organizing data analysis events in coordination with private companies that primarily own big data.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
	115	○ The government shall review the expansion of data already utilized in	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Shall be implemented

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		existing official statistics, such as POS data (for the Consumer Price Index and Current Survey of Commerce), web scraping data (for the Consumer Price Index), and satellite imagery data (for Crop Surveys and SDG indicators). This expansion shall be considered based on factors including necessity and cost-effectiveness, with the aim of broadening the application of these data sources across different statistical areas.	and Communications, each ministry	starting in FY2023.
	116	○ To address various challenges related to big data, the MIC shall take the lead in conducting empirical research on various types of data, collaborating with other ministries and relevant organizations. The results of this research shall be reported to the Meeting for Big Data Promotion.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, each ministry	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.
(2) Development of the environment for statistical surveys and promotion of understanding of statistics among the public	117	○ Each ministry shall continue addressing the need to enhance and strengthen communication with respondents, including raising awareness about the necessity and importance of statistical surveys and informing them about reporting obligations, including penalty provisions. Additionally, the MIC shall work to facilitate a smooth implementation of statistical surveys in multi-unit residential buildings. To achieve this, they shall coordinate with relevant ministries, coordinate with local public entities, and strengthen partnerships with condominium management associations and related organizations.	Each ministry, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

Item	No.	Specific measures, Countermeasures, etc.	Ministry in charge	Implementation period
	118	○ To improve statistical literacy, foster a spirit of cooperation among citizens and businesses for statistical surveys, and develop statistical talent, the government shall coordinate with relevant ministries and higher education institutions. The government shall organize various projects and events centered around Statistics Day and support initiatives by local public entities. Additionally, the government shall create and enhance learning content tailored to different proficiency levels and job functions while diversifying the means of delivering this content. These efforts aim to provide more targeted and comprehensive statistical education and awareness programs.	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications	Shall be implemented starting in FY2023.

(Note) In the column "Specific Measures, Countermeasures, etc.," items related to Fundamental Statistics are marked with "◎," while other items related to official statistics are marked with "○."