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## Towards more flexibility in responding to users' needs – obstacles, bottlenecks and options

Topic 1 – Bringing in information from where we can get it

Keywords: Legal basis, output orientation, consistency

### Introduction

One of the key objectives of the European statistical programme 2013-17 is “the development of appropriate instruments resulting in enhanced quality, a greater flexibility of the ESS and the increased ability to satisfy users' needs in a timely manner” . But are the lack of appropriate instruments and the need for developing an excellent dissemination and communication strategy (as mentioned in the ESS Vision 2020) really the key limiting factors in this context?

Major obstacles in reacting quickly to new needs are embodied in the legal framework on which statistics in Europe rest. A well-known bottleneck is the fact that it takes years to revise a Regulation.

The other key factors are the “output-orientation” of most legal acts and the lack of consistency across statistical domains. Because of the output-orientation many statistical projects are fit for the purpose of a single (often narrowly defined) analytical goal only.

The lack of consistency in concepts and processes hinders the reuse of already existing information for emerging questions.

### Methods / Problem statement

The role of the two key limiting factors “output-orientation” of most legal acts and the lack of consistency will be illustrated with the help of examples from business statistics. The trade-off between the goal of achieving ‘more flexibility in responding to users' needs’ and other objectives such as ‘flexibility in the production processes’ and key principles such as ‘subsidiarity’ will also be treated.

### Conclusions

Although the contribution will primarily deal with the two key obstacles “output orientation” and lack of consistency it will also highlight some of the very promising new developments in the ESS on the way towards more flexibility. Initiatives like FRIBS aiming at a modified legal framework are crucial for eliminating at least some of the obstacles. Progress in this direction is essential for the reputation of the ESS.

When no major progress can be achieved other “data producers” will step in.