Cooperation in official statistics between the different levels of government
– the German experience –

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Legal Foundations

The federal structure of Germany is guaranteed by the constitution.

In Germany there are three levels of government, central (federal), state and local government. The federal states have to observe and protect local self-government.

The organisation of official statistics in Germany resembles the structure of the federal state and the way it is embedded in the European Union.

Municipal self-government is the basis of municipal statistics.

German municipalities can decide whether or not and to what extent they want to operate their own municipal statistics. They have to comply with legal requirements to guarantee the same protection of individual data as statistical bureaus of the state.
Cooperation in official statistics between the different levels of government – the German experience

3 Levels of Government = 3 Levels of Official Statistics in Germany (+Eurostat)
Municipal statistics is part of the system of official statistics of the federal state of Germany

On each level of government there is a more or less independent level of official statistics:

- the Federal Statistical Office - Statistisches Bundesamt – for the federal government,
- the Statistical Office of the individual state - Statistisches Landesamt – for the state's government, executing federal law
- the Municipal Statistical Office - Städtestatistisches Amt – for the municipality.

There is no state law regulating municipal statistics only. But municipalities are requested by state laws to pass legal statutes for their official statistics in accordance with legal requirements for official statistics on state level.
Specific competences of municipal statistics

➢ In relation to the State Statistical Offices, there are no fields of statistics reserved to municipal statistical offices only. But the State Statistical Offices generally respect the exclusive right of municipal statistics to produce and distribute data for territorial units below the municipal level.

➢ Most municipalities are building up statistical information systems. Here, a standardised system of regional referencing down to the building block and to the individual building is one of its most important instruments.

➢ Contrary to state statistics, municipal statistical offices conduct opinion and perception surveys.
Relation between federal, state and municipal statistics

◆ In the federal state, each level of government has its specific competences resulting in information needs specific to their level.

◆ All state statistics is regulated by law, in principle by federal law. The competence to execute federal law is generally assigned to the federal states, also in official statistics.

◆ The Federal Statistical Office is the national coordinating authority for official statistics, representing German official statistics in the European Statistical System.

◆ In principle, federal and the state statists are also responsible for a sufficient provision of official statistics for the municipalities. However, this responsibility has not been taken very serious in recent legislation, the most striking example being the latest census that does not produce any information for the neighbourhoods.

◆ Although municipal statistics follows the same laws on statistical data protection, it still has no access to the micro data of official statistics.
Cooperation in official statistics between the different levels of government – the German experience

Municipal access to the statistical knowledge base in the federal structure of German official statistics – now and in future -

- official state statistics regulated by law
- occasional file transfer
- municipal statistics separated by law from non-statistical areas regarding location, personnel, organisation and content

federally split up
- now
  - database of the state statistical offices
    - (municipal registers)
    - (citizens’ surveys)
    - (stat. register of buildings)
    - address-based terr. reference systems

federally integrated
  - database of the state statistical offices
  - municipal registers, citizens’ surveys, stat. registers of buildings
  - address-based terr. reference systems
Empowering municipalities for more effective decision making in the national and in the European interest

- The EU makes great efforts - in order to realise its goals for competitive, socially balanced and sustainable development - to empower local governments to make them active partners of their development programmes.

- The German government needs to catch up in this respect.

- The cities are the centres of economic and social development. To empower the local actors is understood as the most promising way for success.

- The new EU cohesion policy makes this a precondition for funding.

- The Urban Audit as one of the basic information tools has therefore been extended to include all urban centres down to 50 000 inhabitants.
Towards a cooperative organisation of official statistics

- **Official statistics** relies on the possibility to compare and combine its data. In a federal system this cannot be based on legislation only. It must aim for mutual agreement and cooperation.

- Whereas **state statistics** have relied mainly on legal regulations and requirements, **municipal statisticians** have practised cooperation for more than 130 years.
Co-operation in Municipal Statistics in Germany

1879
Conference of the Directors of Municipal Statistical Bureaux

1904
Verband Deutscher Städtestatistiker e.V. (VDSt)

1982
VDSt + KOSIS-Verbund

1999
VDSt + KOSIS-Verbund + KOSTAT-DST GmbH

KOSTAT-DST GmbH

KOSIS

Products | Tools | Methods
Inter-city Co-operation in statistics

The **Union of German Municipal Statisticians** - founded in 1879 - is closely affiliated with the Union of German Cities („Deutscher Städtetag“).

The KOSIS Association of (mainly) municipalities for the Development of the Statistical Information System - **KOSIS-Verbund** – organises projects on a co-operative basis, sharing the cost and the benefits.

The **Urban Audit** has become one of the most challenging and most successful KOSIS activities.
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Organisation of the Urban Audit in Germany

Urban Audit organisation in Europa

- EC GD Regional Policy
- Eurostat
- National Statistical Office
- other sources
- cities

Urban Audit organisation in Germany

- EC GD Regional Policy
- Eurostat
- KOSIS-Ass.
- DESTATIS + State S.I.
- cities
Legal and financial framework of the European Urban Audit

Authorised producers of European official statistics

- Eurostat
- DG Regional Policy
- NSI
- NSI
- KOSIS-ASS.UA
- DESTATIS

Urban Audit in Germany

Authorised producers of European official statistics

- others

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Network for Urban and Regional Statistics in Germany

- **Municipal Statistics**
  - Union of German Municipalities
    - o VDSt
    - o KOSIS
    - o Urban Audit

- **Official Statistics of the State**
  - Federal Statistical Office
  - The Provincial Statistical Offices

- **Network**
  - Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning **BBSR**
  - Federal Labour Bureau BA with its Institute for Labour Market Research IAB

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Conclusions

➢ „Getting our message across“ can best be achieved if we provide information that is relevant, reliable, comparable, complete and up-to-date.

➢ A totally centralised system of official statistics may be reliable, comparable and up-to-date, but it can never provide all the information necessary to meet the specific needs of decision makers on all levels of government. – A totally decentralised system, on the other hand, will not satisfy the essential requirement of comparability.

➢ In a federal state like Germany, the aim must be, to take advantage of the chances of a decentralised system and organise it in such a way that it will also meet the essential requirements of reliability, comparability and completeness.

➢ City statistics of individual municipalities can not be a competent partner in such a system. It must get organised to agree on and articulate common goals and provide co-ordinated products.

➢ The organisation of the Urban Audit in Germany demonstrates that cooperation across the federal levels can lead to optimal results for all partners and last but not least for those to whom we are trying to get our message across.
Thank you for listening!