

Japan: Data governance profile



1. Vision and policy intent

The [Statistics Act \(2007\)](#) shifted the concept of official statistics from “statistics for administrative organizations” to “statistics as an information platform for society.”

This included the “Basic Act on the Advancement of Public and Private Sector Data Utilization” and the “Basic Act on the Formation of a Digital Society” which have provisions that the national and local governments implement measures in relation to data they own so that it can be easily used by citizens. The [Priority Policy Program for Realizing a Digital Society](#) decided by the Cabinet based on the two laws gives more detail.

“Statistics for administrative organizations” is still important and the Basic Act on the Advancement of Public and Private Sector Data Utilization also states that the advancement of public and private sector data use should be conducted to promote effective and efficient administration by ensuring that national policies are based on information obtained through public and private sector data use. Relevant statements can also be found in the aforementioned priority policy program.

2. Data Management: policies, rules & institutions

Statistics produced by the national and local governments and incorporated administrative agencies are given the status of “official statistics” in the Statistics Act, and the Act establishes overarching fundamental principles of official statistics that cater to the Fundamental Principle of Official Statistics.

Specific rules for the management and utilization of microdata from statistical surveys conducted for the purpose of producing statistics are stated in the Act, and detailed rules are established in a ministerial order and guidelines.

On the other hand, in principle, management rules for administrative records assembled through methods other than statistical surveys are based on the law that provides the legal foundation for the particular record. For utilization, general rules are established in the Basic Principles on Open Data.

To drive the utilization of statistics in policymaking, the Evidence-Based Policy Making Promotion Committee, chaired by the Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary, is held under the Administrative Reform Promotion Council of the Government of Japan.

3. Data custodians and data stewardship

For statistical surveys conducted for the purpose of producing statistics, the respective ministries take responsibility for data collection processes.

The [Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications](#) (MIC), goes over the survey plan submitted by the ministry before the implementation of the survey and promotes the introduction of a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle to the data collection process by providing information based on professional advice from the Statistical Commission, an advisory board in the MIC.

In addition, to promote the systematic development of official statistics, the Government revises the Master Plan Concerning the Development of Official Statistics every five years, and the MIC prepares its draft after a public comment process. Progress toward the Plan is reported by each ministry to the MIC. The MIC annually assembles these reports, releases a summary, and submits it to the Statistical Commission.

4. Data sharing, accessibility and integration

The Government of Japan runs the web portal “e-Stat” as a comprehensive website for the dissemination of government statistics. As of the end of March 2023, the number of statistics registered on e-Stat was 692, with about 944,000 statistical tables provided, and the website received about 40 million hits in FY 2022 excluding hits by web crawlers. Meanwhile, SDG global indicators are aggregated on “Japan SDGs Action Platform.”

As for the utilization of microdata from statistical surveys conducted for the purpose of producing statistics, the Statistics Act allows users to access microdata for secondary use.

5. Data sharing, risks & mitigation

Regardless of whether microdata contains personal information or not, the Statistics Act prohibits the use of microdata from statistical surveys for purposes other than the original purpose and states confidentiality obligations with penalties. These provisions are also applied to individuals who receive microdata for secondary use.

To defend against outside attacks, administrative records are protected by cybersecurity measures.

The screenshot shows the e-Stat website interface. At the top, it says "e-Stat Statistics of Japan" and "e-Stat is a portal site for Japanese Government Statistics." There are navigation links for "Browse Statistics", "Visualisations & Tools", "Resources", and "Links". A search bar is present with the text "Search by keyword : Example : Census". Below the search bar, there are several categories of statistics and tools:

- Browse Statistics** (Explore Japanese Government Statistics): Includes "Data", "Theme", and "Organization".
- Visualisations & Tools**: Includes "Graph", "Time Series Tables", "GIS", and "Region".
- Resources**: Includes "Developers" and "SDDS Plus".