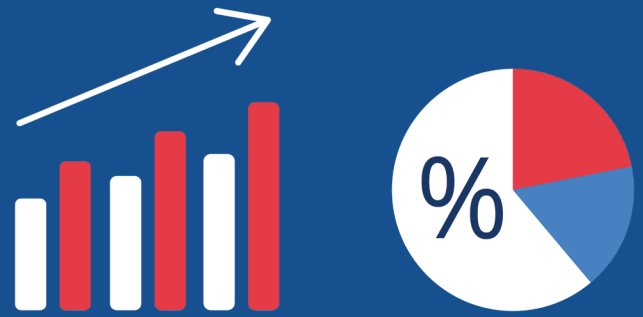


# EFTA-EU Statistical Cooperation



Official statistics are international in nature, whether they concern **economic growth** estimates, **energy** consumption, **migration** figures, data on **greenhouse gas emissions** or any other aspect of **our society**. They need to adhere to common standards and methodologies to be comparable across countries and to be useful for policy making, economic analysis and society at large.

Official statistics are an indispensable tool that underpin policy making and help monitor the impact of those policies.

## The EFTA Statistical Office

The role of the **EFTA Statistical Office (ESO)** is to serve as a liaison office between EFTA, the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) in the field of statistics. ESO monitors new EU statistics legislation, supports and coordinates the EEA EFTA NSIs in evaluating new EU legal acts, and facilitates the incorporation of the acts into the EEA Agreement.



ESO works closely with Eurostat on developing the **EEA annual work programme** and also monitors the inclusion of EFTA data in Eurostat publications. ESO, Eurostat and the EFTA NSIs co-organise courses in the European Statistical Training Programme for statisticians. They also provide statistics training and capacity building outside the European Statistical System, primarily in Europe's neighbouring regions. ESO's office is located at the same premises as Eurostat in Luxembourg.



## EFTA and the European Statistical System



EFTA and its Member States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) are active participants in the **European Statistical System (ESS)**, established to develop, produce and disseminate high quality, diversified, coherent and comparable European statistics. The ESS is a partnership between Eurostat, the NSIs and Other National Authorities responsible for producing European statistics in the EU-27 and four EFTA States. While the NSIs collect data and compile statistics at the national level, Eurostat's primary role is to lead the way in harmonising statistics, in close cooperation with its partners in the ESS. Eurostat also plays a vital role in the dissemination of European

statistics. A key body in the ESS is the **European Statistical System Committee (ESSC)**, which consists of representatives of Eurostat and the NSIs in the ESS. The EFTA States participate fully in the ESSC, without the right to vote. The European Commission, represented by Eurostat, consults the ESSC on measures it intends to take regarding the development, production and dissemination of European statistics, on work programmes, and the European Statistics Code of Practice. The EFTA NSIs help shape new EU legislation in the field of statistics by participating in the ESSC and other ESS bodies.

## Statistics in the EEA

These statistics provide answers to questions on matters such as the evolution of the economy, the standard of living, and the environmental status of a given sector. This broad application of statistical cooperation supports the core objective of the EEA Agreement, namely the **successful functioning of the Internal Market**. The purpose of statistical cooperation in the European Economic Area is to provide statistics to describe and monitor all fields of cooperation covered by the EEA Agreement. A key feature of EEA statistical cooperation is the obligation of the three EEA EFTA NSIs (in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) to produce statistics relevant to the areas covered by the EEA Agreement. Eurostat's obligation is to include these statistics in its regular dissemination channels, alongside statistics on the EU Member States. As part of this arrangement, the EEA EFTA States provide Eurostat with statistical expertise in the form of four long-term seconded national experts (SNEs). In addition, EFTA provides two SNEs to work on Eurostat's technical cooperation.

## Swiss – EU Agreement

Although legally and institutionally different, the bilateral Swiss-EU Agreement on Statistics provides for many of the same rights and obligations as the EEA Agreement. Like the EEA EFTA States, Switzerland contributes financially to statistical cooperation with the EU and provides its own SNEs to Eurostat. Hence, all four EFTA States are able to participate in Eurostat working groups and task forces and contribute to shaping policies with the EU Member States. Unlike the EEA Agreement, however, the Swiss-EU Agreement is a bilateral arrangement with no formal role for EFTA.



[www.efta.int](http://www.efta.int)