

The European Statistical System has invested in developing a common methodological [handbook](#) for business statistics. We know the costs, but what are the benefits? Does the investment pay back?

The handbook supports the modernisation of European business statistics. It covers all statistical business process steps and all types of business statistics (e.g. annual production statistics, short run statistics and foreign trade statistics). The handbook describes available methods and offers guidance on their application (including suggestion for tools to use). The key benefit of the handbook is the harmonization of statistical methods over statistical domains and over countries. This improves comparability of results and it supports sharing of tools, thus producing efficiency gains. The paper will describe the business case for creating methodological standards. Core benefits, however, will be visible only in the long run, as statistical methods are embedded in existing production processes.

Benefits will only arise when the handbook is visible and known. Recognition as an official standard is a quality label and supports the visibility. In this paper we will present an assessment of the current impact. As the handbook is not a physical book, but rather a site with a collection of structured documents, the impact can be assessed through web tracking. We will also analyse the references to the handbook in scholarly articles. Finally we will look into the feedback received.

The need to improve always exists. The handbook is broad in scope and rich in content, but it is impossible to be complete and on top of that user needs, methods and tools develop over time. In the paper we will discuss measures to improve the visibility and use. We will also discuss measures to maintain the value of the handbook.