

# Key factors for obtaining access to big data

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## **Abstract**

In spite of three years of testing and trying, the use of big data for the production of official statistics is still almost non-existent in the ESS. This relative lack of progress is not due, as was anticipated originally, to storage or processing difficulties or to methodological issues, but almost exclusively to a lack of sustainable data access. Big data are typically held by private enterprises who see them as valuable assets which for various reasons they are unwilling to share with statistical institutes.

Statistics Belgium has successfully implemented scanner data in its monthly CPI calculation. Three key factors were instrumental in reaching this result: high-level involvement, specific legislation and the creation of trust by providing absolute guarantees of confidentiality and respect for privacy. It is argued that this three-way approach can serve as a model for obtaining access to mobile phone data and similar big data types and to setting up statistical production chains based on them.