

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS of the Singapore Department of Statistics

Official statistics in Singapore dates back 150 years to 1871 when the first Census of Population was taken. With the enactment of the Statistics Ordinance in 1921, a legal framework was established for data gathering, compilation and release of official statistics. Thus, 2021 marks the centennial anniversary for the Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS).

After independence in 1965, the Department's scope of statistical activities was broadened to meet the increased data demands. The expansion and diversification of Singapore's economic activities necessitated the collection of a wider range of statistics to chart and monitor the economic developments. In addition, to obtain comprehensive information on the population and households, the first post-independence Census of Population was conducted in 1970.

Singapore has adopted a decentralised statistical system since 1973, following the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on Statistical Activities appointed by the President. Since then, official statistics are gathered, compiled and released by DOS and Research and Statistics Units (RSUs) in various government Ministries and Statutory Boards. In 1973, the Statistics Ordinance was also repealed, and the Statistics Act was enacted in its place. The Statistics Act is the primary piece of legislation that governs statistical activities of DOS and the gazetted RSUs, and safeguards the confidentiality of information collected from individuals and companies.

The 1990s marked a period of technology applications as DOS launched the SingStat Website and enabled businesses to submit their survey returns via the Internet for the first time. In the 2000s, DOS improved the process of data collection by optimising the use of administrative data and leveraging technology to improve data processing, enabling DOS to meet the increasing demand for better quality and timelier data. DOS's digital services were expanded in the 2010s with the roll-out of the SingStat Table Builder and the launch of the SingStat Mobile App. Digital data services were continuously enhanced to improve users' experience in accessing DOS's data and data services. Data sources were diversified to include Big Data sources and new and more timely indicators were released to monitor the changing economic and socio-demographic landscape.

In the 2020s, DOS continues the digitalisation strategy with the use of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to improve operational excellence across the data value chain. At the same time, DOS officers are provided with training and opportunities to master their data science expertise and advance their analytic capabilities.

As DOS celebrates the centennial anniversary in 2021, we strive to extend our outreach to the public, with more data and better services offerings. We remain committed to delivering insightful statistics and trusted statistical services that empower decision making in this century and beyond.

DOS's Key Milestones

To commemorate the DOS's Centenary, let's look back on the key milestones:

Census of the Federation of Malaya and Colony of Singapore conducted

1947

1921 Statistics Ordinance enacted

1950s

- 1st Census of Population for Singapore conducted
- 1st Household Expenditure Survey conducted
- Occupational and Industrial Classifications developed

1960s

- Gross Domestic Product and Balance of Payments released
- Consumer Price Index released
- Survey of Services launched
- Yearbook of Statistics publication released

1970s

- 1st post-independence Census of Population conducted
- Decentralised statistical system adopted
- The Statistics Act, 1973 enacted
- Business Expectations Survey launched for new and more timely data
- Producer and International Trade Price Indices released
- Input-Output Tables released

1980s

- Sampling service for household surveys launched
- Survey of Singapore's Investment Abroad, and Monthly Survey of Retail Sales and Food & Beverage Services launched for new and more timely data
- Unit Labour Cost and Unit Business Cost Indices released



To learn more, check out: www.singstat.gov.sg/who-we-are