1.5 Check data availability

This sub-process checks whether current sources of data could meet user requirements and the conditions under which they would be available including any restrictions on their use. An assessment of possible alternatives would normally include research into potential administrative or other non-statistical sources of data.

- Determine whether they would be suitable for use for statistical purposes (e.g., the extent to which administrative concepts match data requirements, timeliness and quality of the data, security and continuity of data supply). 
- Assess the division of responsibilities between data providers and the statistical organisation.
- Check necessary ICT resources (e.g., data storage, technology required to handle incoming data and data processing) as well as any formal agreements with data providers for accessing and sharing the data (e.g., formats, delivery, accompanying metadata and quality checks).

When existing sources have been assessed, a strategy for filling any remaining gaps in the data requirement is prepared. This may include identifying possible partnerships with data holders. This sub-process also includes a more general assessment of the legal framework in which data would be collected and used, and may therefore identify proposals for changes to existing legislation or the introduction of new legal framework.

Quality indicators:
- To what extent do current data sources meet user requirements, taking into consideration the conditions under which they would be available and any restrictions on their use?
- If current data sources do not fully meet user requirements, to what extent has a strategy been proposed to fully meet user requirements?
- Evidence of an advance notification plan about the forthcoming changes to the data source.
- Is a contingency plan for changes to the data or data source in place?
- Completeness of data source(s), such as:
  - Percentage of units not belonging to the target population
  - Percentage of units missing from the target population
  - Coverage of the data
  - Absence of values for key variables
  - Missing values in the source
  - Total percentage of empty cells
- Availability of a unique key.
- To what extent does the timeliness of the delivery detract from its relevance?
- For AIS, has the data source been evaluated in terms of its cost effectiveness of data transmission interfaces?

For details, see Quality indicators for ONS/G (version 2.0).