International Statistical Institute

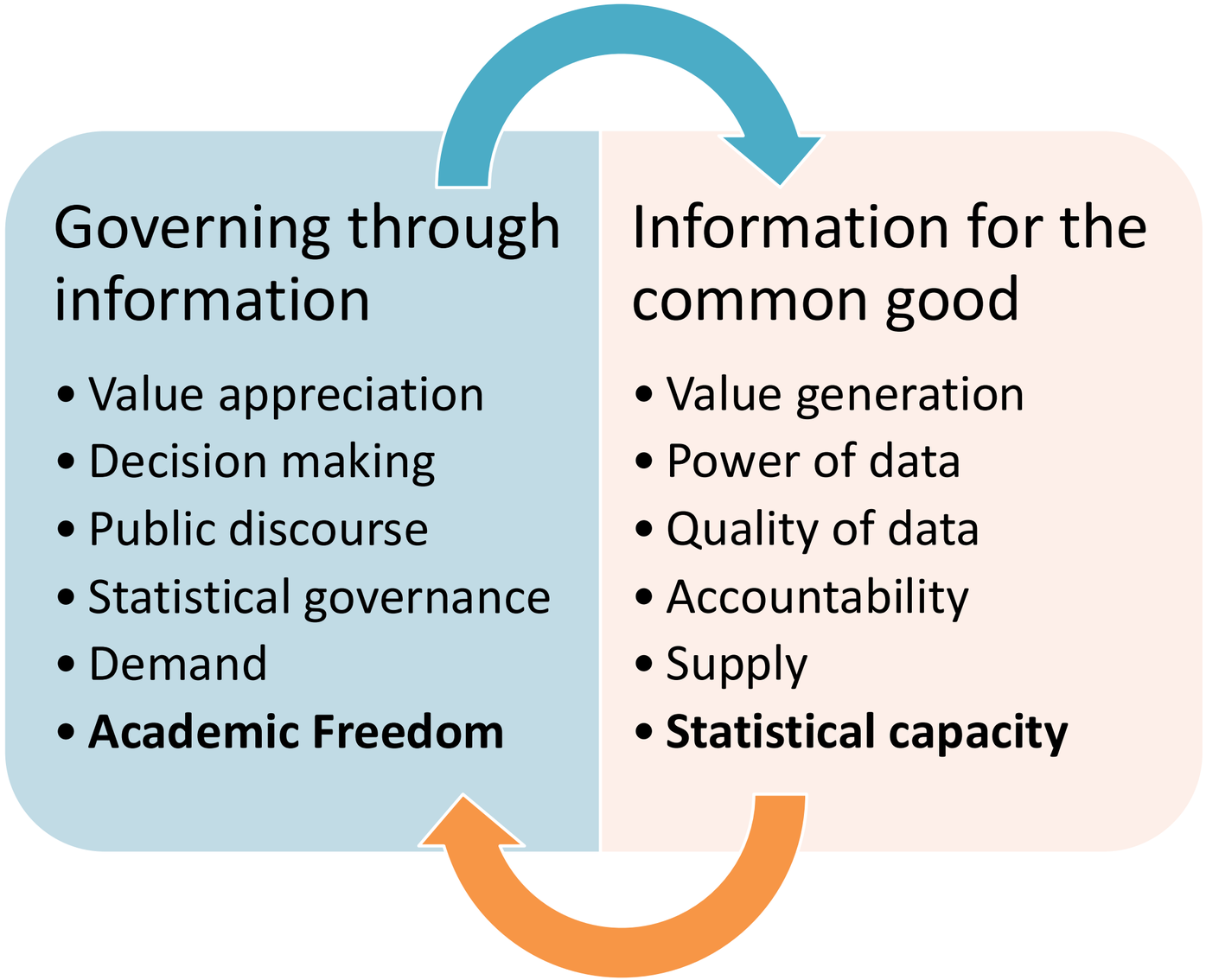
ISI Academy Webinar on Ensuring the Professional Independence of Official Statistics

Social and political foundations and conditions for a robust statistical governance

Walter J. Radermacher, ISI Advisory Board on Ethics

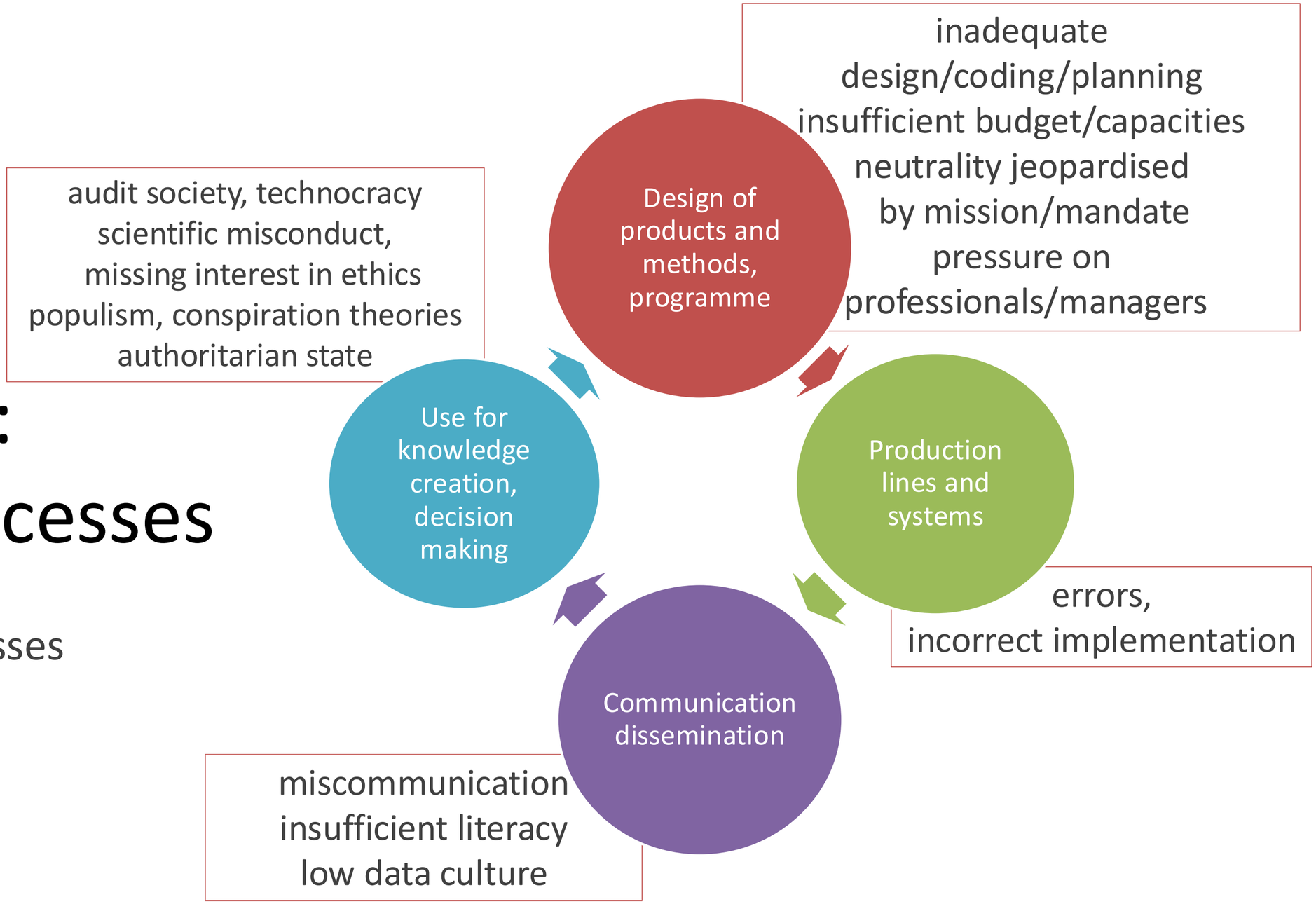
12 Mar 2026

Co-construction of statistics and society

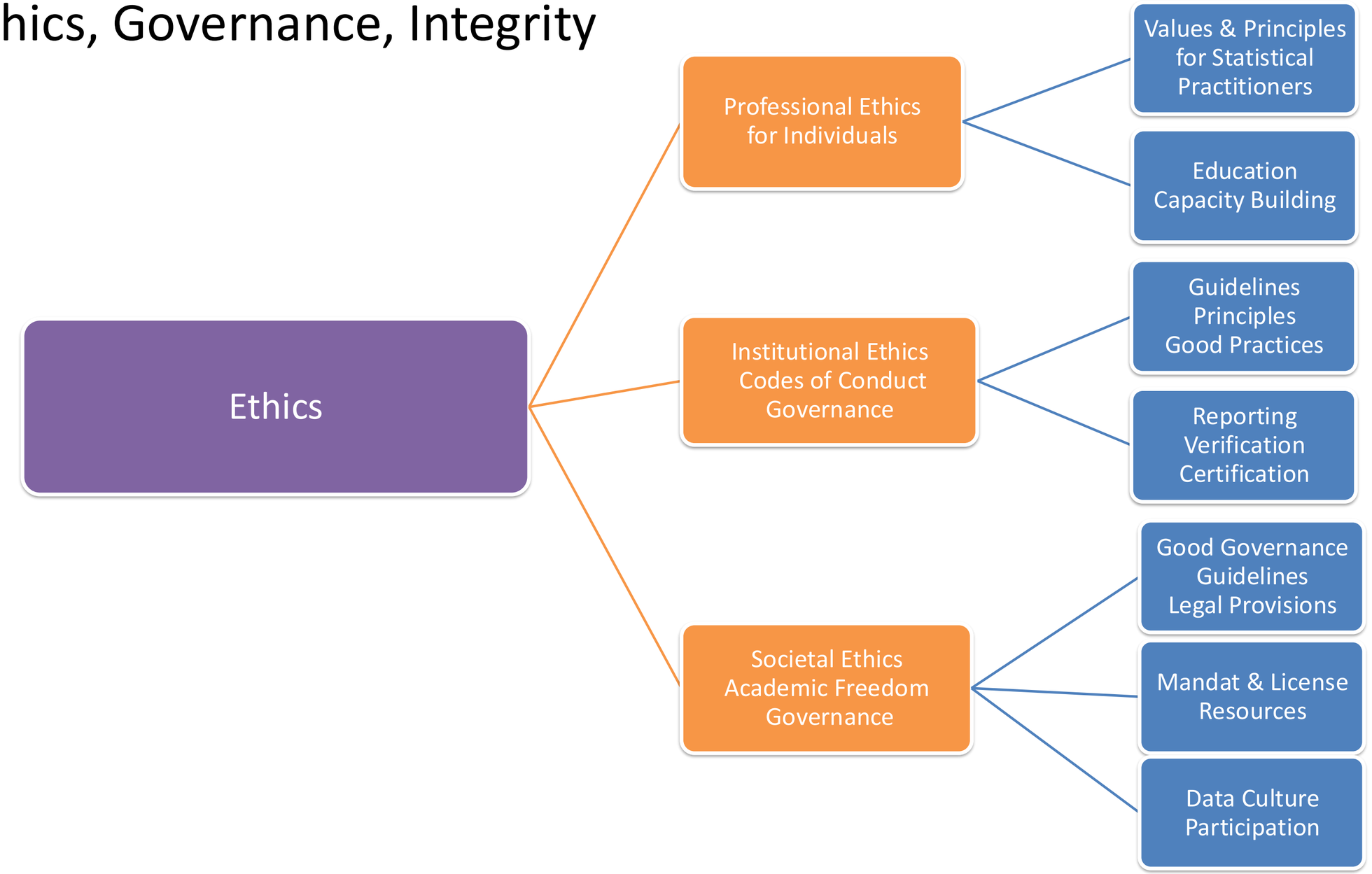


Statistics: Main Processes

Threats, weaknesses



Ethics, Governance, Integrity



Ethics, Good Governance Principles, e.g.

Professional Ethics

International Statistical Institute

DECLARATION ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

ADOPTED BY THE ISI COUNCIL
22 & 23 JULY 2010
REYKJAVIK, ICELAN

UPDATED VERSION
ENDORSED BY ISI EXECUTIVE C
17 JULY 2023
OTTAWA, CANAD

Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice

Prepared by the Committee on Professional Ethics of the American Statistical Association

Approved by the ASA Board in February 2022

ASA AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION
Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®

Institutional Ethics

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
28 October 2013

Substantive session of 2013
Agenda item 13 (*c*)

Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 24 July 2013

[*on the recommendation of the Statistical Commission (E/2013/24)*]

2013/21. Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

OECD

Recommendation of the OECD Council on Good Statistical Practice

As approved by the Council on 23 November 2015
[C(2015)128 - C(2015)128/CORR1 - C/M(2015)21]

Societal Ethics

INSEE AND OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The legal basis of European statistical governance

Legislative and institutional framework

EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE

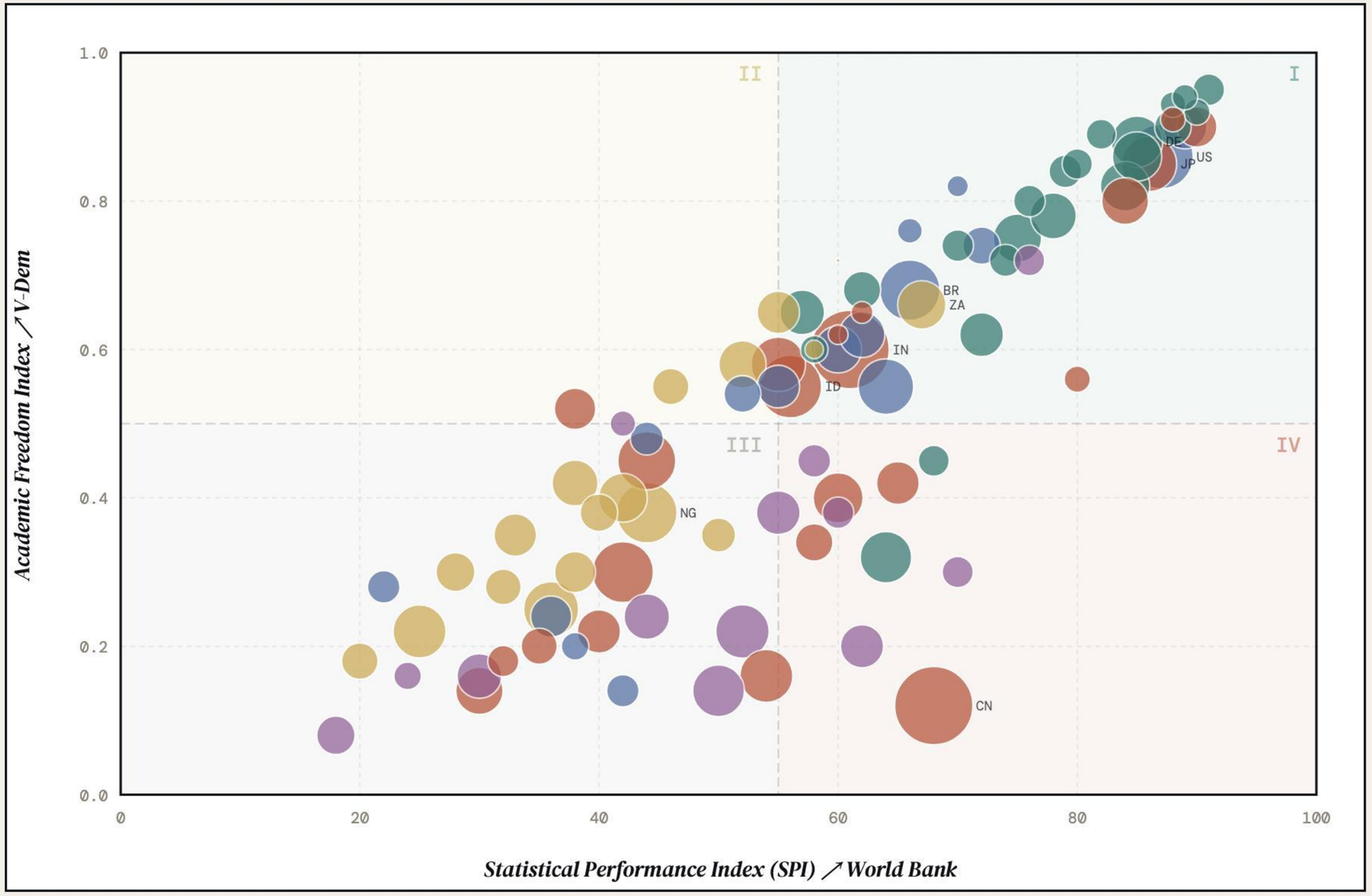
For the National Statistical Authorities and Eurostat (EU statistical authority)

What do we know?

EVALUATING AVAILABLE SOURCES WITH AI (CLAUDE) FIRST STEPS

Statistical Capacity × *Academic Freedom*

Country-level plot of **World Bank SPI Overall Score** (x-axis, 0–100) vs. **V-Dem Academic Freedom Index** (y-axis, 0–1) · Bubble size = population · Color = world region · Reference framework: **ISI Declaration of Professional Ethics (2010/2023)**



LEGEND — REGIONS

- Europe (22)
- Asia (22)
- Africa (18)
- Americas (16)
- MENA (13)

QUADRANT GUIDE

- **I** — **High SPI · High AFI** — ideal alignment with ISI ethics: robust data infrastructure + free inquiry
- **II** — **Low SPI · High AFI** — freedom without capacity; data quality gaps persist
- **III** — **Low SPI · Low AFI** — double deficit; statistical integrity severely constrained
- **IV** — **High SPI · Low AFI** — capacity without freedom; ISI objectivity principle at risk

Produced with Claude; Sources: World Bank SPI 2023 · V-Dem Academic Freedom Index v14 · ISI Declaration on Professional Ethics 2010/2023

Statistical Capacity × *Academic Freedom*

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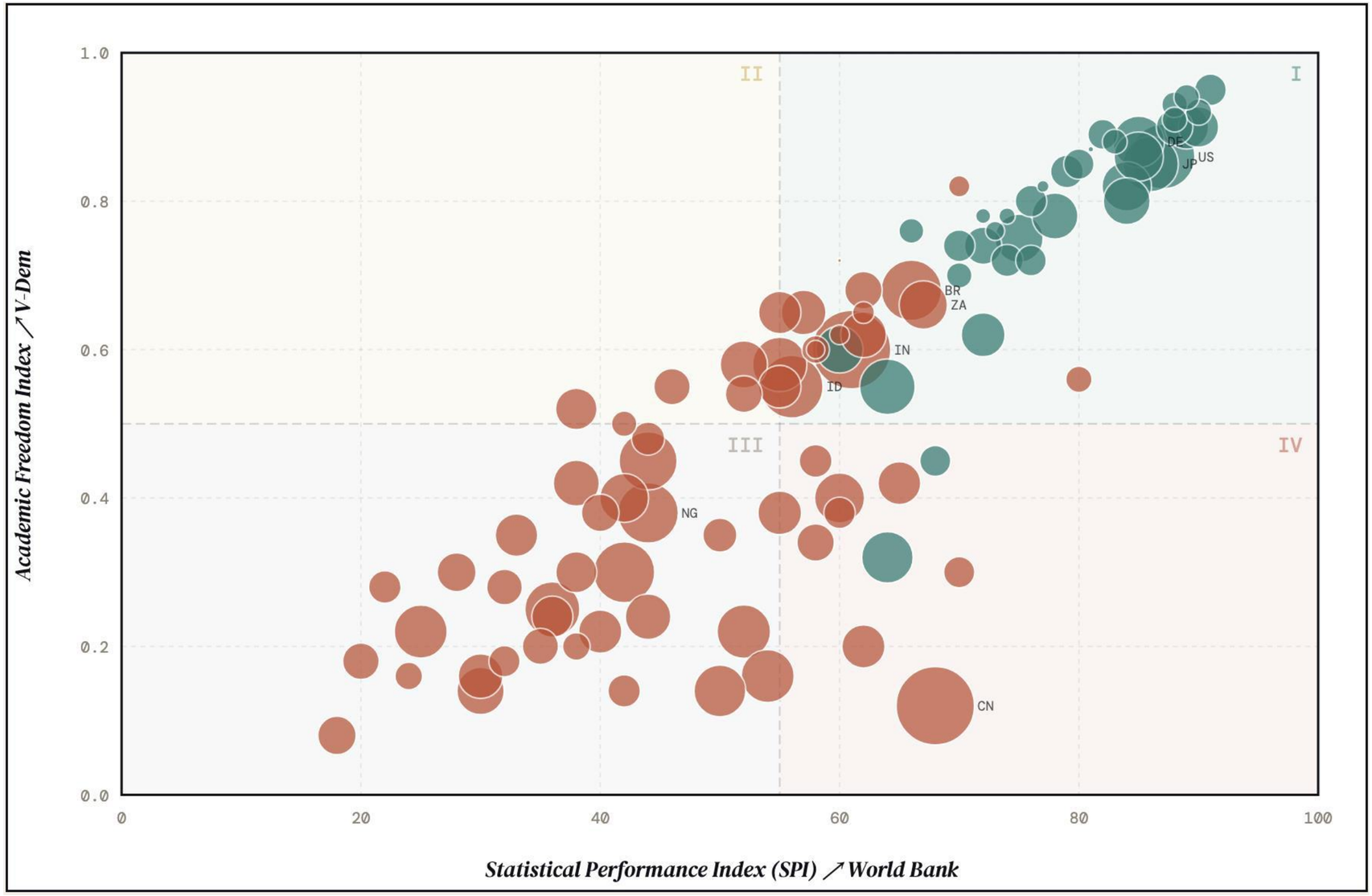

LEGEND — OECD STATUS

- OECD Member (38)
- Non-OECD (61)

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Statistical Capacity
× Academic Freedom

A global observatory · OECD Trust overlay · SDG 17.18.2 FPOS-compliance

80
Economies

0.65
SPI-AFI corr.

9
Non-compliant

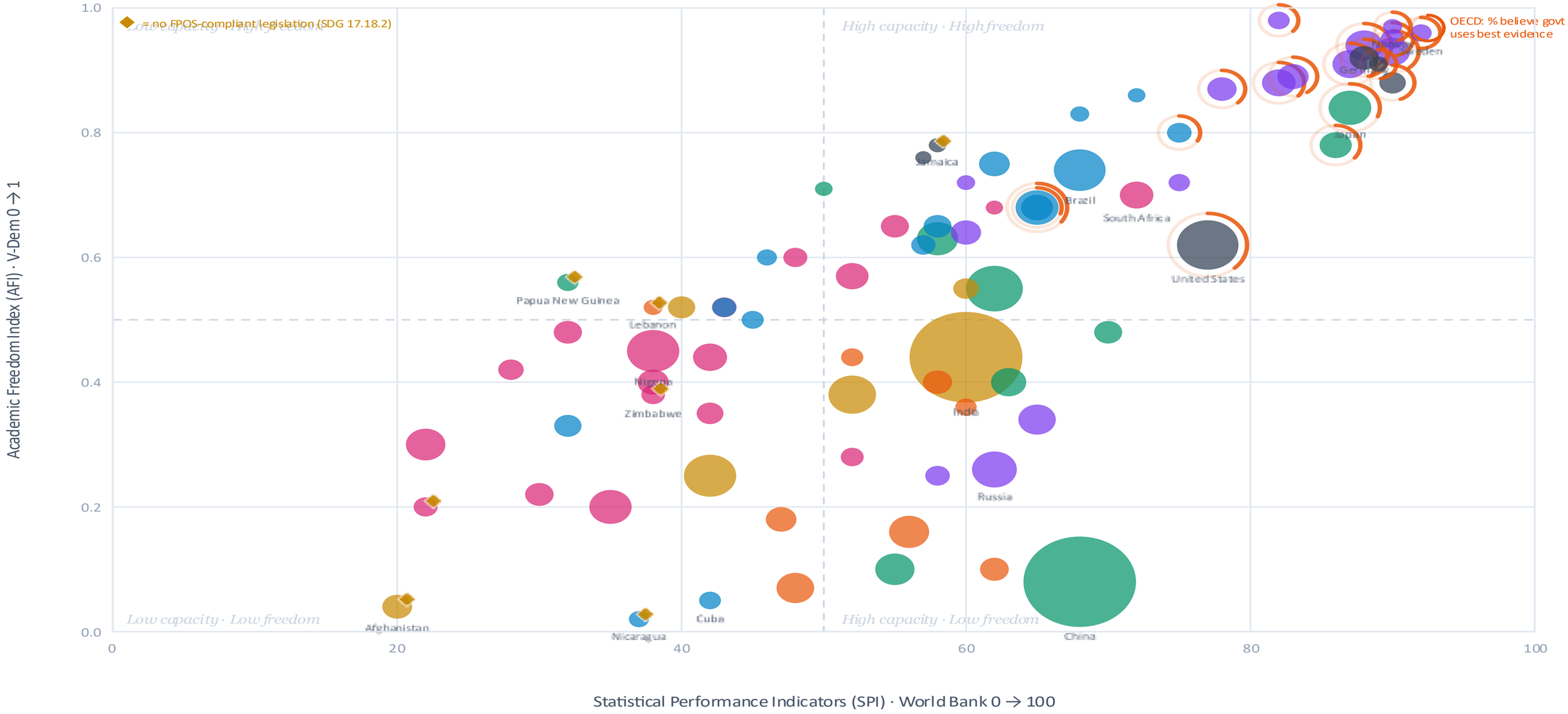
WB SPI | V-Dem AFI | ISI Ethics | UN FPOS | OECD Trust | SDG 17.18.2

◆ *amber diamond = no FPOS-compliant legislation enacted · Bubble size ∝ population · Data: ~2023*

WB SPI · V-Dem · ISI Declaration 2023 · UN FPOS 2013 · SDG 17.18.2 · OECD Trust Survey 2023

Statistical Capacity × Academic Freedom — 80 Economies

X: WB SPI · Y: V-Dem AFI · Ring: OECD evidence-use % · ◆ amber = no FPOS-compliant legislation (SDG 17.18.2)



Sources: World Bank SPI · V-Dem · ISI Declaration 2023 · UN FPOS 2013 · SDG 17.18.2 (PARIS21/UN) · OECD Trust Survey 2023

Three Analytical Frameworks

How SPI, AFI and ISI/FPOS ethics interconnect

World Bank SPI

Statistical Performance Indicators

- 5 pillars · 22 dimensions · 51 indicators
- Pillar 1: Data Use
- Pillar 2: Data Services
- Pillar 3: Data Products
- Pillar 4: Data Sources
- Pillar 5: Data Infrastructure

V-Dem Academic Freedom

Index of academic freedom conditions

- Expert-coded Bayesian IRT · 179 countries
- Freedom to research & teach
- Academic exchange & dissemination
- Institutional autonomy
- Campus integrity
- Cultural expression freedom

ISI Ethics & UN FPOS

Professional standards for statisticians

- ISI §3 Assessing Alternatives Impartially
- ISI §5 Avoiding Preempted Outcomes
- ISI §7 Exhibiting Professional Competence
- FPOS P1 Impartiality & independence
- FPOS P6 Confidentiality of individuals
- FPOS P7 Legislation supports authority

SDG 17.18.2 — FPOS-Compliant Legislation

Does national statistical law comply with the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics?

What SDG 17.18.2 measures

Binary: 1 = FPOS-compliant legislation enacted · 0 = not yet

- Coverage: 189 countries (PARIS21 survey 2022–23)
- Directly references FPOS P1–P10
- ISI §3 (objectivity) and §7 (competence) require legislative independence as a precondition
- Complements SPI Pillar 5 (data infrastructure)
- Self-reported via national statistical authorities — some over-reporting risk
- Reclassified Tier I in Nov 2024: now globally comparable

Non-compliant countries (◆ on chart)

Among 80 charted economies — per PARIS21 / UN SDG database

Low cap · Low freedom

- ◆ Afghanistan
- ◆ Nicaragua
- ◆ Zimbabwe
- ◆ Chad
- ◆ Jamaica
- ◆ Lebanon
- ◆ Papua New Guinea

Key insight: some low-capacity, low-freedom states have enacted FPOS-compliant legislation (a latent asset for reform), while those marked ◆ lack even this foundation.

Four Quadrants — Implications

Where do countries fall — and what does each position mean for statistical governance?

◆ Low Capacity · High Freedom

Opportunity — FPOS P7 legislation investment

Open academic environment but under-resourced NSO. ◆ markers flag Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, Lebanon — legislation as first lever.

e.g. Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, Senegal, Nepal, Lebanon

✦ High Capacity · High Freedom

FPOS P1 · ISI §3 · ISI §7 aligned

Statistical systems and academic institutions mutually reinforce. All ◆ absent here; strong FPOS legislation near-universal. OECD rings reveal trust gaps (France 34%, Japan 31%).

e.g. Sweden, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Czechia

● Low Capacity · Low Freedom

Critical gap — ◆ most concentrated here

Both production and scrutiny weak. ◆ markers (Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Chad, Zimbabwe) mark cases lacking even legislative foundations — most urgent for development support.

e.g. Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Chad, DRC, Cuba

▲ High Capacity · Low Freedom

ISI §3 objectivity structurally at risk

Statistical output is technically solid but academic scrutiny suppressed. Despite SDG 17.18.2 compliance (legislation enacted), peer challenge undermines ISI §3.

e.g. China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Iran

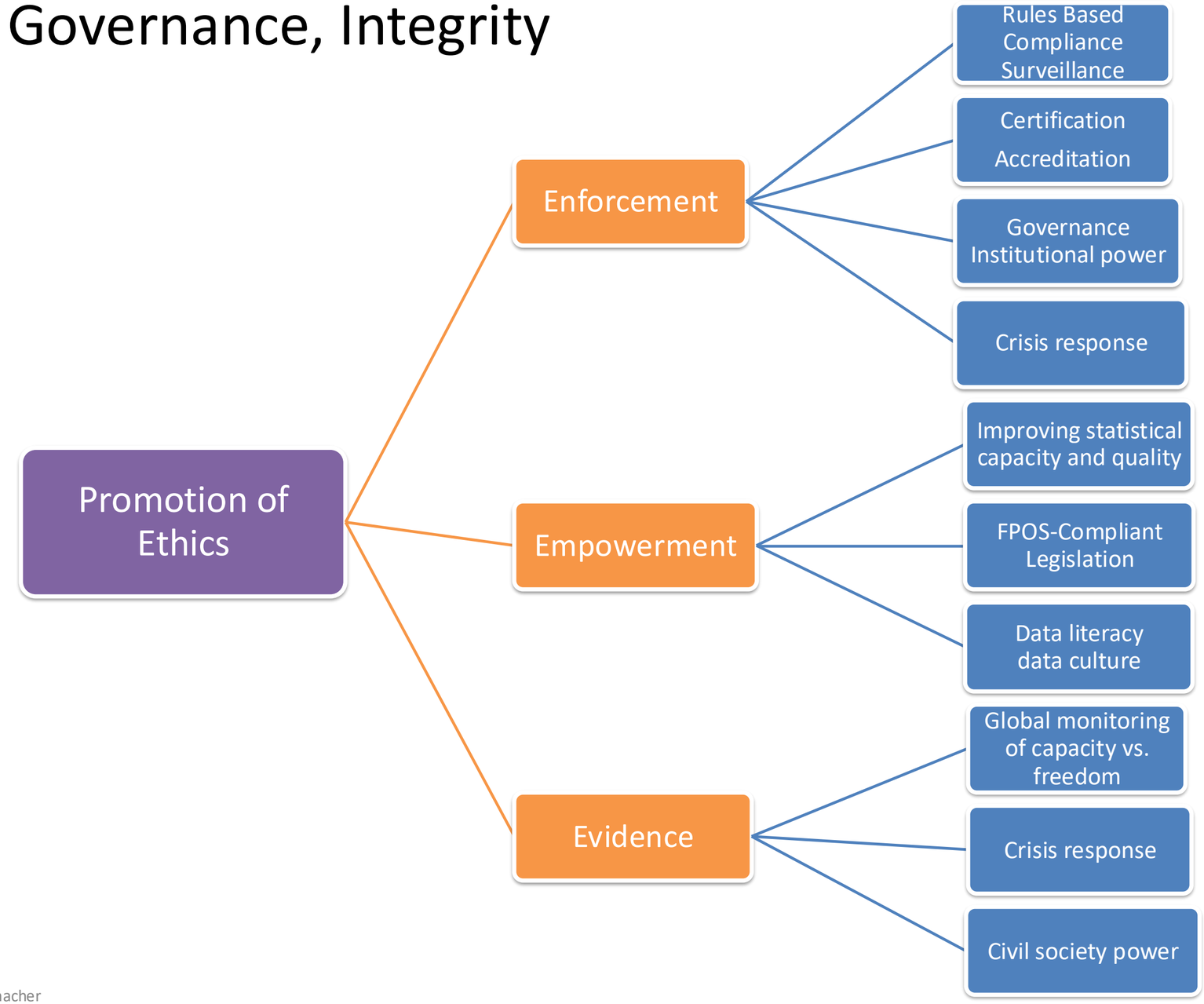
Key Findings

r ≈ +0.65	Strong positive correlation between SPI and AFI — statistical capacity and academic freedom are structurally co-produced across 80 economies.
SDG 17.18.2	9 of 80 charted economies lack FPOS-compliant legislation. These ◆ markers concentrate in Low Cap · Low Freedom — the legislative gap compounds both deficits.
Trust gap	OECD paradox: France 34%, Japan 31% believe govt uses evidence — below the 41% OECD avg, despite top-quadrant SPI/AFI scores. Capacity ≠ perceived legitimacy.
ISI §3 risk	High Capacity · Low Freedom quad (China, Russia, Saudi Arabia): SDG 17.18.2 compliance is technically recorded, but without academic freedom, ISI §3 objectivity is hollow.
FPOS P7 leverage	Low Capacity · High Freedom states with existing FPOS legislation (e.g. Mongolia, Senegal) have the strongest foundation for targeted SPI investment.

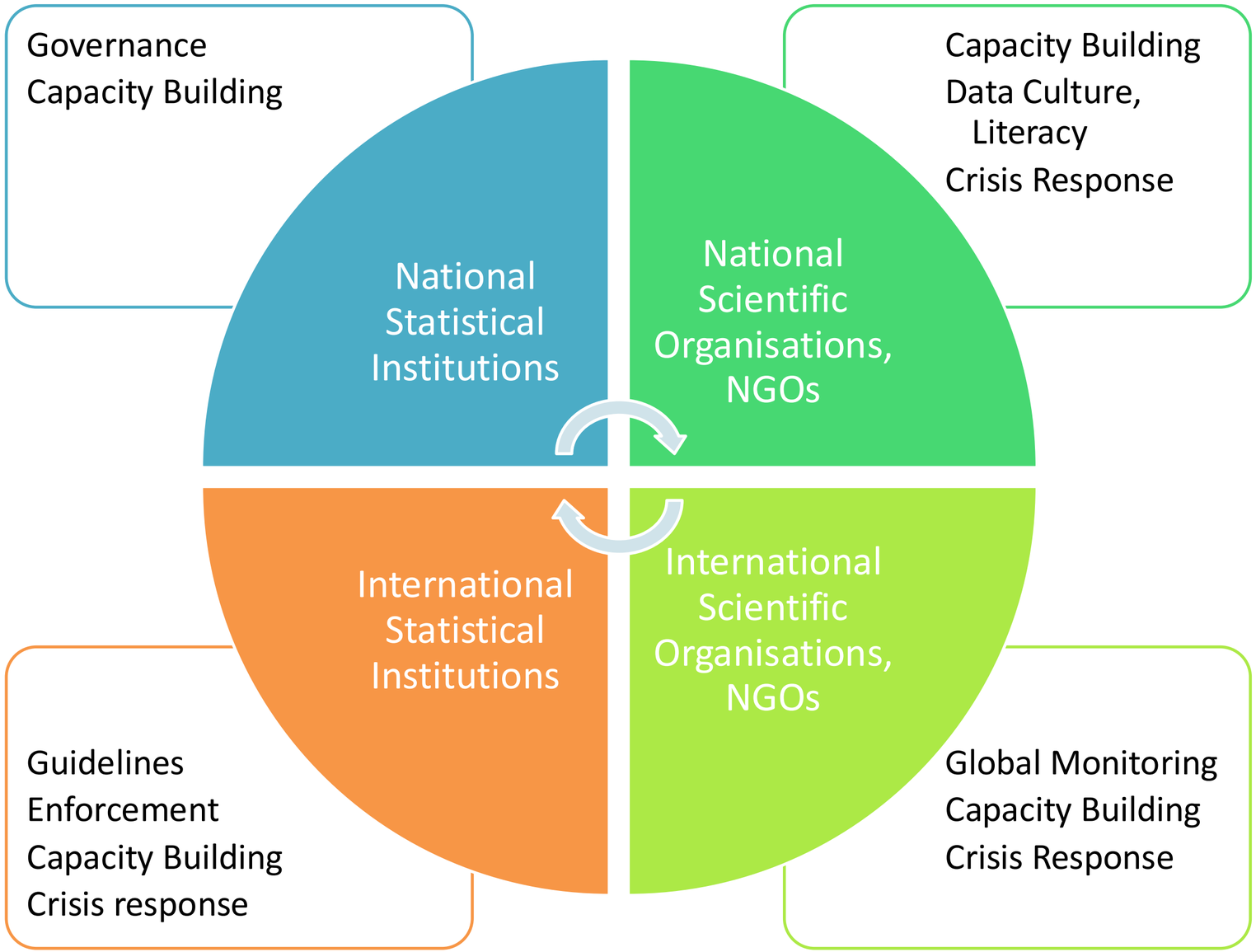
The Global Landscape of Public Statistics

TOOLS AND ACTORS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Ethics, Governance, Integrity



National and International Cooperation



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THANK YOU