

## Report to the federal Parliament: Health data management by Sciensano

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The Belgian Court of Audit has examined how the Federal Agency for public health research Sciensano has managed health data, notably during the COVID-19 crisis. The federal government and Sciensano have recently taken numerous initiatives on collecting, processing and sharing health data.

The Court's monitoring has shown that these initiatives have been taken in a context of significant fragmentation of health competences, which was detrimental to Sciensano's long-term investments, a well-coordinated health monitoring and an effective and sustainable production of high-quality health data. The legislation does not provide a sufficient framework for health data management, for example as regards the qualification of the data as public statistics or their processing within the platform centralising them.

The Court recommends that a consistent overall framework be put in place. This will require closer cooperation between the various players (federal authorities and federated entities) and to draw inspiration from the principles already applicable to public statistics in order to supervise health data management. Such framework will also have to take into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis to improve the data collection infrastructure, strengthen monitoring and evaluation, better contain health risks and organise a single, equal and secure access to data.