

2 Understanding

Experience has shown that the success of the NSDS process was highly correlated with appropriate awareness and ownership of the stakeholders. It is therefore a strong prerequisite that stakeholders are appropriately informed and aware that designing and further implementing a good NSDS will need to match a series of basic principles. These principles have been grouped around 10 “essentials”:

10 ESSENTIALS FOR A GOOD NSDS

1. backed by political support, nationally led and owned
2. designed through a sound methodological approach
3. policy and results-based with a quality fit for purpose
4. taking into account what is in place and international commitments
5. drawing on international statistical standards
6. covering the whole National Statistical System (NSS)
7. setting out an integrated Statistical Capacity Building programme
8. funded as a priority by governments
9. serving as a coherence framework for external assistance
10. incorporating Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

1. Backed by political support, nationally led and owned

- The NSDS should have political support and commitment and be championed by high-level national officials; [See ACKNOWLEDGING, MANAGING, COMMITTING, ADVOCATING.](#)
- It should work within the national context, both cultural and institutional and should be the output of genuinely nationally led, owned and inclusive participatory processes including stakeholders and users; [See COMMITTING and PREPARING.](#)
- It should be also the output of a consensus-building process that takes into account the identified needs and problems of the NSS and helps building commitment and partnerships with clear processes for consultation throughout; [See MANAGING, PREPARING.](#)
- It should be recognized and understood by the NSS staff as a process to improve their statistical capacity and knowledge.

2. Designed through a sound methodological approach

- The NSDS should provide an assessment of the current status of the NSS (where we are), incorporating a comprehensive appraisal of statistical outputs and users satisfaction measured against agreed criteria; [See ASSESSING.](#)
- It should assess the existing system of financing/funding of the NSS and the existing mechanisms of support from technical and financial partners (Paris

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Declaration); [See ASSESSING](#).

- It should provide a vision for national statistics (where we want to go), strategies to deliver the vision (how do we want to get there), which address institutional and organisational constraints and integrate all statistical planning frameworks, and performance indicators (how do we know we have arrived): not just a work plan; [See ENVISIONING, IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC GOALS, ELABORATING ACTION PLANS](#).
- It should incorporate sub-strategies for leadership and management, financial management, advocacy, human resources, communications, infrastructure, production processes, archiving-access to data and dissemination. [See IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC GOALS](#).

3. Policy and results based with a quality fit for purpose

- The NSDS should be demand-focused and user-friendly, responding to needs and priorities for information to enable governments and decision-makers to manage for results and allow analysis by all users; [See ASSESSING](#).
- It should be aligned with national development policy, including for the design, monitoring and evaluation of National Development Plans, sector policies, as well as assessing progress toward agreed international and regional goals; [See ASSESSING, ENVISIONING](#).
- Its design should incorporate results-based management principles and be implemented with performance indicators (e.g. for the supply of statistical information, value for money, user satisfaction, governance, support to national policies, confidentiality) and a performance reporting, monitoring and evaluation plan; [See MANAGING, M&E REPORTING, IMPLEMENTING](#).
- It should provide a platform for the long-term, sustainable development of statistics whilst also addressing immediate data needs for development progress; [See ENVISIONING, IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC GOALS](#).
- It should aim at providing statistics as a resource for evidence-based decision-making, with quality (i.e., “fit for purpose”) (relevance, accuracy, timeliness, independence).

4. Taking into account what is in place and international commitments

- The NSDS should respect all relevant legislation or regulation, recommending changes where appropriate; [See ASSESSING](#).
- It should maintain statistical production and procedures, building on existing activities and on-going processes (during the design and implementation); [See MANAGING](#).
- It should take into account regional environment, international commitments and the existing development agendas. [See ASSESSING](#).
- It should draw on lessons learned by other countries.

5. Drawing on international statistical standards

- The NSDS should follow the values and principles portrayed by the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics to produce useful high-quality data that will have the confidence of users of statistics.
- It should draw on international standards, recommendations and experience to

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capitalise on worldwide knowledge and for consistency between countries.

- It should not be normative but should lead to meaningful change according to the situation of the NSS as the starting point of the process.

6. Covering the whole NSS

- The NSDS should cover the whole national statistical system including all data collection, analysis, dissemination and use from censuses, surveys and administrative systems, as well as the mechanisms for coordination and consultation (recognising that implementation might need to be sequenced).
- The NSDS should facilitate an appropriate integration of sectors statistics production.

7. Setting out an integrated and realistic SCB programme

- The NSDS should set out an integrated statistical capacity building programme, which: builds capacity to implement and adapt the strategy; which turns statistics into information through analysis, dissemination, publicity and user education; [See IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC GOALS, ELABORATING ACTION PLANS.](#)
- The NSDS should provide prioritised rationalised and timetabled tasks (not everything can be done at once); should provide the framework for (annual) implementation work plans; should be realistic, pragmatic about resources (implies prioritisation, sequencing, cost effectiveness: e.g. considers alternative ways of compiling data such as administrative sources and sample surveys) and flexible enough to cope with changes in priorities, new information needs and lessons learnt. [See ELABORATING ACTION PLANS.](#)

8. Funded as a priority by governments

- The NSDS should aim at developing statistics as a public good funded from government budgets and complemented (where appropriate) by international support. [See MANAGING, BUDGETING-FINANCING.](#)

9. Serving as a coherence framework for assistance

- The NSDS should serve as a coherence framework for international and bilateral assistance for statistics and to avoid parallel systems for monitoring and evaluation originated from donor programmes. [See MANAGING, BUDGETING-FINANCING.](#)

10. Incorporating Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting mechanisms

- The NSDS should incorporate effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms for its implementation. [See M&E REPORTING.](#)

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Understanding in practice

Who and When

Once the official commitment from national authorities is secured, immediate action for making the stakeholders understand the NSDS approach and engaging them into the process (see PREPARING) may be undertaken.

How

Countries may consider the organisation of a preparation workshop/seminar (one day workshop) with a large participation from stakeholders of the NSS. This allows stakeholders to have a good understanding of the change that the NSDS process will bring in the organisation of the NSS over the next years and what could be their expectations and role in the overall process.

Countries may consider the possibility to invite technical and financial partners to this workshop.

Specific bilateral meetings with key stakeholders and technical and financial partners may also be undertaken.

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