

Sectoral strategies for the Development of Statistics (SSDS)

The NSDS covers the entire National Statistical System (**See UNDERSTANDING**), It is designed through a bottom-up approach whereby in addition to other non-sectoral specific components, Sectoral Strategies for the Development of Statistics (SSDS) form building blocks of the NSDS. The SSDS are developed through the same essentials as the NSDS (see example of Agriculture below). The term « sector » is used here to describe « a vertical division of governmental focus that relates to a given subject area or public need – usually corresponding to line ministries, government departments or agencies – with separate and well-defined areas of concern, mandate, and budget”. These sectors will be government ministries (e.g. ministry of Education, health or Agriculture), departments (e.g. Police, Immigration Department, etc.) or agencies (e.g. Central Bank, Revenue Authority, etc.). Identification of the sectors varies from country to country depending on national priorities.

Why sectoral statistics matter ?

Sectoral statistics are the main link between NSDS and national development plans. The national development plan defines objectives. The objectives will be implemented and assessed at the sector level. For instance, if the growth of GDP mostly relies on data reported by the agricultural and mineral sector, then precise development strategies will be defined for agriculture and mining. This will take place at the sector and national levels through an iterative process. SSDS will be set up so that each sector plays its role in the implementation of the national development plan. These SSDS will be the most important basis for the preparation of NSDSs.

How to develop a Sectoral Strategy for the Development of Statistics

The drafting, implementation and assessment of SSDS will require appropriate information. The sector needs will be identified by the main stakeholders of each sector. A SSDS will seek to respond to data needs of a Sectoral Development Plan or where such plan does not exist it will respond to data needs of the sector. A diagnosis of the information available will be made, and gaps will be identified. In most cases, administrative records form the basis for sector statistics. A SSDS should help to identify existing administrative records, compile them into statistics, identify data gaps, build capacity, build infrastructure, coordinate with the national statistical system and disseminate to relevant stakeholders. As a consequence, the preparation of NSDSs will be based on the information requirements identified at the sector level and resulting from the national development plan as well as other data needs by the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, development partners and the general public.

In this perspective, the NSDS is a synthesis of SSDS. Each SSDS will then be subjected to a preparation process corresponding to the NSDS approach. A synthesis of the needs identified at the sector level will reflect this process. Choices will be made to adapt the synthesis to the resources available.

Identification of the sectors

Practically, the NSDS preparation will enquire to set up technical committees in charge of defining the statistical needs for sectors. A grouping of sectors will take place, as the burden of managing and then synthesizing a number of committee increases with their number. The groupings will take into account the need to promote an appropriate articulation between complementary sectors (education-health e.g.) and between institutions aiming at the same development objective (eradicate poverty, governance, gender equity, etc.)

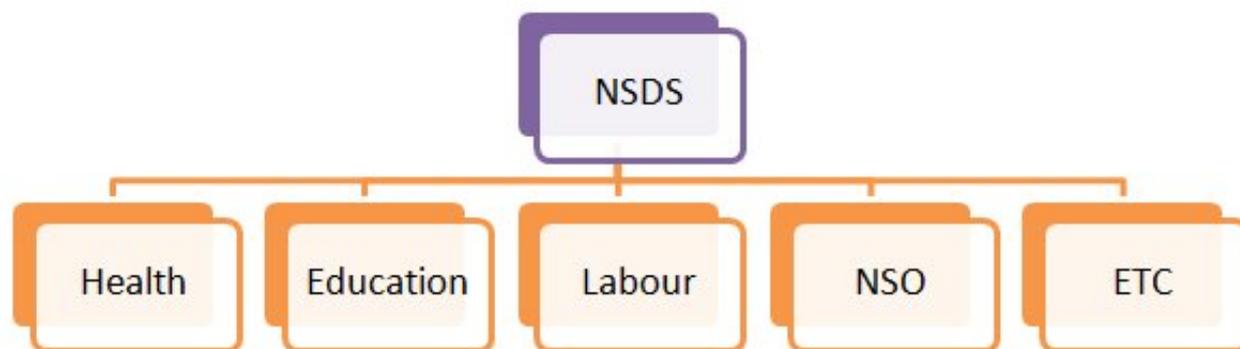
A sectoral approach of the preparation of NSDSs implies that sectoral strategies are available when the preparation process starts. The sectors may have defined their own development strategy, or the national development plan may include precise orientations for a few sectors. Most often, this will be the case for the “pillars” on which the strategy relies.

The monitoring and assessment of the SDGs adopted in 2015 will require a specific attention as new fields linked to the various dimensions of sustainability become relevant. This should be reflected in the definition of sectors and their grouping in the preparation of NSDSs.

Take into account the constraints

Ideally, the preparation of NSDSs should be built on the basis of sectoral strategies, following all the steps of the NSDS approach. However, as already mentioned, the number of committees should be restricted so that it is manageable. The NSDS preparation being participatory, each committee will have the responsibility of a number of sectors. The members of the committees should represent the most important stakeholders related to each sector. Among the stakeholders, the users are important players. A truly participatory process requires the identification and mobilization of a good number of participants. Experience shows that severe limitations are observed in such a perspective. This means that in the preparation of NSDSs the number of sectors benefitting from a full participative approach should be restricted to the few most important dimensions involved in the development strategy.

The preparation process should be not too long, not too costly, and not too demanding in terms of coordination, synthesis and decision making. The indispensable role of the sectors should be reasonably confronted to these constraints. The burden of coordinating a process with numerous technical committees is out of reach for many countries.



Sector Statistics Committee

Constitution

A **Sector Statistics Committee (SSC)** should be formed in each sector participating in the NSDS design process. Although the NSDS is supposed to cover all sectors, not all the sectors can be covered in one go due to resource constraints. Accordingly, some sectors e.g. 10 should be selected to participate in the NSDS process at a time. It helps if the process could start with sectors where results can be more easily obtained so that other sectors can learn from the results achieved. The SSC should be constituted by the leadership of the sector at the request of the NSO. The NSO should invite sectors to participate in the NSDS process. Each committee should be led by a **Sector Statistics Coordinator** who also should be so designated by the leadership of the sectors.

The SSC should have not more than 5 members. Like the NSDS drafting team, the SSC should choose a team leader and ensure that it includes representatives from the planning unit of the Ministry to ensure their data requirements are included in the Sector Plan.

Responsibilities

The specific responsibilities of the SSC should be to:

1. Propose for approval by their respective Sector the vision for their Sector Statistics;
2. Formulate reasonable goals and objectives for attaining the proposed vision and submitting to the Sector for approval;
3. Prioritize statistical activities over the lifespan of the Sectoral Strategy for the Development of Statistics;
4. Advocate for statistics in the sector (with support from the NSDS design team);
5. Identify major offices in the sector currently collecting or compiling statistics;
6. Prepare a formal inventory of the different data systems being operated by the different stakeholders in the sector;
7. Identify data collected, methodology and procedures used, coverage, availability, levels of aggregation, quality, frequency of updating and utility;
8. Identify major data needs related to the sector – for informing sectoral policies, national development agenda and achievement of regional and international goals;
9. Identify data gaps and priorities for addressing them in line with the sectoral

- policies, national and international goals;
10. Attend consultative and review meetings for integrating data/information from sectors/institutions;
 11. Closely work with the consultants and/or NSDS design team on NSDS activities as per the work plan to:
 - conduct a stakeholder analysis;
 - identify the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of institutional statistical units/sections in line with those of the NSS;
 - develop vision, mission statements, and core values for statistical provision in sector; and
 - develop Sector Strategy for the Development of Statistics;
 12. Develop strategic actions: organizational development, human resource development, IT infrastructure development, data improvement and management, dissemination and archiving, monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and budget development in the sector and any other issues as requested by the Inter-Agency Committee; and
 13. Present the plan at sectoral level to build consensus and prepare the final report to be submitted to the IASC.

Outputs

- Awareness about SSDS concept and its relevance
- Compilation of user needs and gaps
- Work plan for expediting the tasks
- Sector Strategy for the Development of Statistics aligned with the sector Development Plan and programmes.
- Progress reports of the SSDS design process, including challenges and lessons.

Reporting

The SSC should report to the NSDS design team and also to the Head of the Sector.

In practice

Who and When

If there is no NSDS yet, the design of a sectoral strategy will be integrated with that of the NSDS. If an NSDS already exists, and there is the will to make it more integrated - the mid-term evaluation or the beginning of the design process of the next NSDS could be the right opportunities to incorporate a sectoral strategy. This will depend if the existing NSDS is under preparation or being implemented.

The various actors involved will depend on the organizational arrangements the country has decided to set in order to design its NSDS (See PREPARATION). Careful identification of stakeholders on the basis of a clearly defined "sector" by the country is crucial.

How

It is highly recommended that the same methodology as the one used in designing an NSDS be used in designing the sectoral strategies (**See DESIGN STEPS**).

The case of Agriculture, associated with the Global Strategy for the improvement of agriculture and rural improvement, can illustrate this.

AGRICULTURE

The agriculture sector has faced a decline in the quantity and quality of statistical data since the early 1980's. One contributing factor has been the lack of integration of agriculture into the national statistical systems. This has primarily been a problem in decentralized statistical systems where agriculture data are produced by line ministries outside the national statistical office. In addition, in the agricultural sector, statistical data may be split among several ministries, such as fisheries, livestock, forestry, land and water. Apart from increasing the difficulties of coordination this has often resulted in duplication of statistics and a lack of harmonized data for decision makers. In addition, agricultural statistics have faced additional challenges such as lack of staff capacity, insufficient funding and, duplication of resources among many sources.

The Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics has recognized that improving agricultural statistics starts with incorporating agriculture into the national statistical system beginning with its integration into the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). To date there has been limited inclusion of agricultural statistics in the NSDS, and in those cases where agriculture was included, the coverage has been limited. The agricultural domains represented have primarily been production and prices with other domains (trade, marketing, resources, consumption) or sub-sectors (forestry, fisheries) not well covered.

Integration of agriculture into the NSDS occurs at all stages of both the design and implementation phase. However, this example focuses on those issues which present the greatest challenges.

Acknowledging

Recognizing the need for improvement of agricultural statistics can often be initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture, spurred on by demand for better quality agricultural statistics by users. As for instance in Mozambique, arising out of a strong pressure and demand on the sector for providing reliable and timely data for policies (for instance the presidential initiative of Green Revolution). However, the national statistical office should be informed of the process as soon as possible. In some countries the NSO leads jointly on plan preparation with the relevant agricultural ministries; while in others this is more autonomous. In Mozambique, inclusion of the agricultural sector was facilitated as under the statistical act. The NSO (Instituto Nacional de Estatística - INE) has the mandate for data collection and dissemination of the country's official statistics, with delegation to sector ministries, under the oversight of the INE. In addition, there is already a functioning coordinating body: Conselho Superior de Estatística (Statistical Council).

Although the national statistical office should be closely involved, it is important that the agricultural sector gains autonomy in terms of strategic planning in statistics. This can facilitate integration into the overall NSDS process provided that the sector statistical

strategy is developed according to the standard NSDS methodology; the process is owned by the national authorities; and the strategic goals respond to both national demand and international requirements (including the broad framework set by the Global Strategy).

Understanding

For the agriculture sector in particular identifying and involving all stakeholders is crucial. Agricultural statistics are often produced not only by ministries of agriculture but by other sector ministries, including livestock, fisheries etc. In addition, important sources of agricultural statistics (and amongst them a lot of administrative data) include quasi-public or private sector organisations such as marketing boards and the agro-industry sector. Particularly in smaller countries, agriculture statistics may also be included as a module in the household budget surveys. Covering all key stakeholders will ensure consideration of the broader conception of agriculture (a key concept of the Global Strategy) which includes the social and environmental dimensions, as well as the economic.

The sector plan should provide understanding of the statistical improvements necessary to meet the needs of users at national level: for policy design, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural and rural plans, poverty reduction strategies, and national investment plans (such as CAADP in Africa), also for meeting international demand, particularly for meeting the needs for monitoring of international policy indicators. Under the Global Strategy, countries will prepare country assessments outlining what is needed to develop or update Sector Strategic Plans for Agriculture and Rural Statistics (SSPARS) and the technical assistance and training they will need to do so. The country assessments will provide the necessary information to prioritize capacity development activities in countries and for countries to select critical areas for intervention.

Preparing

Equally important is ensuring that preparation of the sector statistics plan is carried out within existing coordination structures where in place. Although the agricultural sector should lead the process, the NSO involvement is important for coordination and to ensure that the potential of non-agricultural surveys for collection of agricultural data are captured. For instance, existing coordination groups such as the National Statistical Council should be involved with the sectoral sub-committee on agriculture leading on development of the plan.

Where an existing NSDS structure is in place one option is to develop the sector plan under an agricultural statistics working group or sub group. In this case approval for the plan would be through the process established for the NSDS. In all cases, the organisational structure, particularly at the design team level, should include all ministries/entities responsible for agricultural statistics, not only the Ministry of Agriculture. Where the design team consists of staff from several different ministries it may be necessary to ensure commitment and assurance of staff time through a more formal process, such as a memorandum of understanding between the lead agency and participating ministries.

In Malawi, for example, the structure is broad and inclusive, with the technical review committee, called Agricultural Statistics Forum (ASF), jointly chaired by Directors of both the NSO and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. The ASF brings together all relevant technical experts from the various agricultural sector ministries, experts from the NSO with particular interest in agricultural statistics (such as national accounts), as well as experts

from national non-governmental organizations which produce agricultural statistics such as FEWSNET, and interested users such as the MET Service, national academic institutions, such as the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and international organisations. Resource partners are also represented through the national donor coordination committee.

Developing the Plan

The sector strategic plan should at all times fit within NSDSs in preparation or existing NSDSs. Thus it may not be necessary to develop a separate vision and mission as this could lead to a conflicting orientation for the agricultural sector in relation to the national statistical system.

For the agricultural sector the minimum set of core data set out in the Global Strategy should be examined. The core data items are those which are most important to global agricultural production and therefore for reporting to the international statistical system. These items should be examined when establishing the framework and strategic goals for the sector statistics plan. The core data items and agricultural products for collection, decided upon by countries, will in turn inform the strategies for statistical data collections and analysis; and development of human and material resources. Sector plans should therefore consider the aspects of a statistical system which need to be in place to enable integration, including mechanisms for coordination, common systems for dissemination etc.

Implementing the Plan

Commitment should occur at all stages of the plan: from design to implementation, in particular for validating the assessment and deciding on the priorities during the design phase when conflicts between competing priorities can be debated and support mobilized.

Implementation of the sector strategic plan starts with its endorsement as part of the NSDS, at the highest political level such as a Council of Ministers/Cabinet. If this is not possible endorsement by the Minister of Agriculture with agreement for its incorporation into the NSDS by the Director of the National Statistics Office is a second option. Commitment at the highest possible level is also a guarantee that not only the NSDS but also the sector plans will be owned by the country. In either case the commitment and engagement of the head of the Statistical Office in the NSO or the Ministry is crucial as this will be the person to advocate for endorsement and support from the Council/Cabinet or Minister of Agriculture.

Advocacy is often left till the end of the process, after the plan is finalized, but like commitment, is necessary at all stages of design and implementation. Although agricultural statistics are often the sector statistics most in need of development, it is important that statistics is envisaged as a whole national entity supporting national development policies, rather than sector by sector. Indeed, it is the fact that agricultural statistics often lie outside the national statistical system which can be a weakness in terms of the lack of resources for agricultural statistics and limited capacity and human resources for statistical data collection, analysis and dissemination.

A lack of vision for support to the overall statistical system could impact on long term decisions for the financing of the overall statistical system from the national budget. Any

existing mechanisms for coordination between government and resource partners should be reviewed in this light. A dispersion of resource partner coordination by sector could be detrimental to the overall support to the statistical development of countries.

The importance and need for continued advocacy and commitment should not be underestimated. Not only is this crucial for resources but there is inevitably political turnover which leads to a need for continuous advocacy and re-endorsement of the sector plan.

Scope of Agriculture and Rural Statistics under the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

Traditionally the scope of Agriculture and Rural Statistics has been limited to the economic dimension to cover holdings engaged in production activities and the resulting outputs. However, under the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics a broader framework for agriculture is put forward. This places the economic activities of agriculture in a broader context, making the link to interrelated environmental and social dimensions of agriculture which affect and are affected by agricultural production activities. Under these dimensions (World Bank et al., 2011), the economic dimension covers agricultural production, markets and farm and non-farm income. The social dimension covers the need to reduce risk and vulnerability, including food security and issues related to gender; and the environmental dimension applies to the sector's sustainability and to its provision of environmental services.

Nomenclatures exist which can assist in setting the scope of agriculture. However, it should be noted that the broader concept of agriculture under the Global Strategy expands the purview of agriculture beyond the traditional nomenclatures as it also includes certain, but not all, aspects of forestry, fisheries and land and water use. These limited aspects include the geospatial aspects of land, aspects of forestry and agroforestry related to both production of forest products and the interface between forestry and agriculture as an area of environmental impact; aquaculture and capture fisheries, such as production, employment and food security information; and use of water for agricultural purposes. Responsibility for collection of such data could be the responsibility of either the NSO or another governmental body but with oversight and coordination under the national statistical system.

The existing nomenclatures include the International Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (ISIC) which is used to determine the recommended scope of the agricultural census and allows for reporting on agricultural production against the System of National Accounts (SNA):

- Group 011 cultivation of crops, market gardening and horticulture.
- Group 012 which relates to farming of animals.
- Group 013 which relates to mixed crops and livestock production.
- Group 0502 Aquaculture.

It should be noted that some countries also collect data on fisheries activities in the

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household sector in the agricultural census, although this is not under the scope of the census, where this is important for the economy:

The Central Product Classification (CPC) provides an additional international standard, and CPC2.0 amends the areas of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food. For reporting on environmental statistics the System of Integrated Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) should be the starting point.

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