IDENTIFYING AND ENGAGING THE STAKEHOLDERS

The importance of inclusive consultation, communication and the need for leadership and monitoring of the overall NSDS process is to be highlighted. At this stage it will be important to identify stakeholders of the national statistical system and put in place processes to get them involved (eg. statistics producers-users workshops). If necessary this might be initiated through a stakeholder analysis, identifying the relationship of stakeholders within the NSS (see ACKNOWLEDGING), analysing their involvement, role and relative influence. Non-governmental organisations will need to be involved broadly, including the business sector, civil society organisations and academia as well as umbrella organisations such as civil society federations, chambers of commerce and trade union organisations.

Different stakeholders will have different interests and need varying types and degrees of involvement in the committees or the design team. It is well known that participation and inclusion of stakeholders generally lead to:

- **a critical mass of stakeholder commitment** to own both the process and the product (the NSDS) and to become full participants in its implementation, thereby making the NSDS more relevant and effective;
- **empowerment of national staff** (learning best practices in user consultations, work programming and budgeting as well as being exposed to various international statistical work and experiences);
- **improved communication** (the NSDS process facilitates improved internal and external communication and understanding about national statistical processes among stakeholders).
Engaging stakeholders in practice

Who and When
Once the official commitment from national authorities is secured, immediate action for engaging the stakeholders in the process may be undertaken. In general this task is under the responsibility of the highest position of the national statistical system — depending on the existing model of the NSS.

How
Identification of stakeholders of the national statistical system may be carried out. This is of particular relevance for countries where the NSS is not organised or if the country is emerging from conflict. This preliminary work may be carried out by the National Statistical Office through a short questionnaire and results may be used as inputs for preparing the following steps and guide the building of sectoral committees for the NSDS design phase. In parallel with this activity a first list of technical and financial partners working in the country would also serve as a good starting point for preparing further work.
Countries may want to consider the organisation of a **launching event and specific bilateral meetings** for engaging key stakeholders. However, most of the sensitization phase should take place before the launching (members of the committees should be identified before). This could be a good opportunity for national authorities to express their interest and commitment to the NSDS process and for stakeholders not having participated in preparation seminars (see **UNDERSTANDING**) to learn about the various steps and procedures to come. The launching event would be a good opportunity for participants to learn the main issues linked with statistical development in their domain and to start the process of engaging the technical and financial partners present in the country.

**ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The overall organisation of the work should depend on the administrative setup of the country and arrangements for management of the NSS. Some countries already have National Statistical Committees or Councils with members drawn from a broad range of stakeholder groups. These Committees or Councils should be used if they are already in place. In addition to existing structures, ad hoc structures could be established as need for them arises. In many cases the NSO takes responsibility for identifying, mobilising, and raising awareness among stakeholders as well as establishing task teams, committees and working groups which need to be set-up at policy level, inter-agency level, sectoral level, and NSO level.

It is common and recommended to build a three-level structured system for the NSDS process with:

- **a Steering Committee (SC)** representing the process owner (in principle the government or in some cases the National Statistical Council) and including relevant representatives of significant stakeholders. The SC gives political or high level government backing to the development of the NSDS process. It reports ideally to the Council of Ministers or the Minister in charge of statistics, or to the Council of Statistics according to the situation of the country.

- **a Technical Working Committee (TWC) / Inter-agency Committee acting as the Permanent Secretariat of the Steering Committee** where strategic stakeholders may be represented with membership drawn from all participating sectors. The TWC may be chaired by the Head of the NSO or co-chaired with a high-level representative of an important stakeholder. The TWC provides the platform to forge collaboration and co-operation among the sectors and to articulate the work carried out at sectoral level. Work of the Technical Working Committee is facilitated when an **NSDS coordinator** leading the **NSDS design team** with sufficient seniority is appointed. His/her role is to assist in developing procedures, organising meetings, accessing and allocating funds, recruiting consultants, meeting with sectoral and other contact persons, and providing documentation on the whole process. Use of other consultants (national or international) may be envisaged for assisting with the tasks of the TWC.

- **Sectoral Working Committees (SWC) or Task-Forces** may be created for developing sectoral strategies (these SWCs can be the existing sub-committees already working in the framework of the National Statistical Council) in close co-ordination with the TWC and the NSDS coordinator. It will be important to prepare carefully the work of these committees and to ensure a representative participation of interested and concerned stakeholders (including technical and financial partners). It is recommended that national consultants assist each of the task forces
and assess the state of each sector vis-à-vis the long-term and medium-term national development plans, prepare sector action plans, and prepare the committee’s working papers.

- Meetings of the Steering Committee could be carried out on a quarterly basis and meetings of the TWC and SWC on a monthly basis.

Organisational arrangements in practice

Who and When
In general the initial steps for putting in place the institutional arrangements are taken under the responsibility of the the highest position in the national statistical system (or delegated nominees).

When a co-ordination structure already exists (National Council of Statistics) the process is facilitated since main stakeholders are already represented. It is recommended to put the structure in place as soon as possible (ideally immediately when official commitment is secured through successful advocacy activities)

If the structure is put in place rapidly, design of the strategy may commence immediately after the endorsement of the roadmap.

How
The organisational structure should be created through a specific decision at Council of ministers level or at the level of the Minister in charge of statistics in the country. In some cases the organisational arrangements were already part of the official decision endorsing the NSDS process.

It is important to set precisely the roles and responsibilities of the various committees, their functioning modalities, and the planned reporting mechanisms. Attention has also to be paid to the terms of reference for the NSDS coordinator (if any) and for the national and international consultants (see Design team).