

The NSDS Approach in a Nutshell

**National Strategy
for the Development
of Statistics**



The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics

The importance of reliable statistics for development purposes is well established. Policy makers, citizens of developing countries, and the international community are well aware of the role of statistics in supporting result-based management, better governance, and greater aid effectiveness.

The National Statistical System (NSS) must be able to respond in a precise, effective, and sustainable manner to the changes under way in the societies and economies of developing countries and to the new information requirements they generate. This response entails a co-ordinated national effort aimed at improving the mechanisms and processes needed to produce relevant statistics. This effort is embodied in a strategic planning process known as the “**National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)**”.

An NSDS enables developing countries to build a reliable statistical system that produces the data necessary to design, implement, and monitor national development policies and programmes. They also help countries meet their regional and international commitments with respect to statistics (Millennium Development Goals, regional integration processes, etc.).

*In 2004, at the Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results, the international community adopted the **Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics – MAPS** which emphasised the need to design NSDSs in developing countries.*



An NSDS provides a country with a vision of the development of statistics and a detailed, costed action plan over a period of 5 to 10 years that covers the production of all official statistics.

In other words, an NSDS is a platform that allows statistical activities, capacity development, and infrastructure improvements to be planned. This platform also enables stakeholders in the NSS (sectoral ministries, central bank, national statistical office, etc.) as well as technical and financial partners (TFPs) to co-ordinate their efforts through appropriate mechanisms.

It is crucial to involve not only producers but also users in the NSDS process. Users are consumers of statistics, and a statistical system will be viable only if the outputs and services it provides meet users' needs. There are a host of data users in every country. They include policy makers but also researchers, analysts, the private sector, regional and international organisations, donors, the media, citizens, and civil society organisations.

In order to ensure long-term results, it is necessary to involve these actors in the development and implementation of a high-quality strategy and in making a number of strategic choices to properly rationalise resources.

Design and Implementation Process

The NSDS is designed through a participatory process led by national authorities, in close collaboration with key actors in the national statistical system. Whether the NSDS approach is successful or not depends to a great extent on: i) a significant political commitment at the highest level; ii) the degree to which the country is committed to this approach and the intensity of the dialogue between producers and users; iii) the mobilisation of necessary resources; and iv) the quality of the dialogue with technical and financial partners (TFPs).

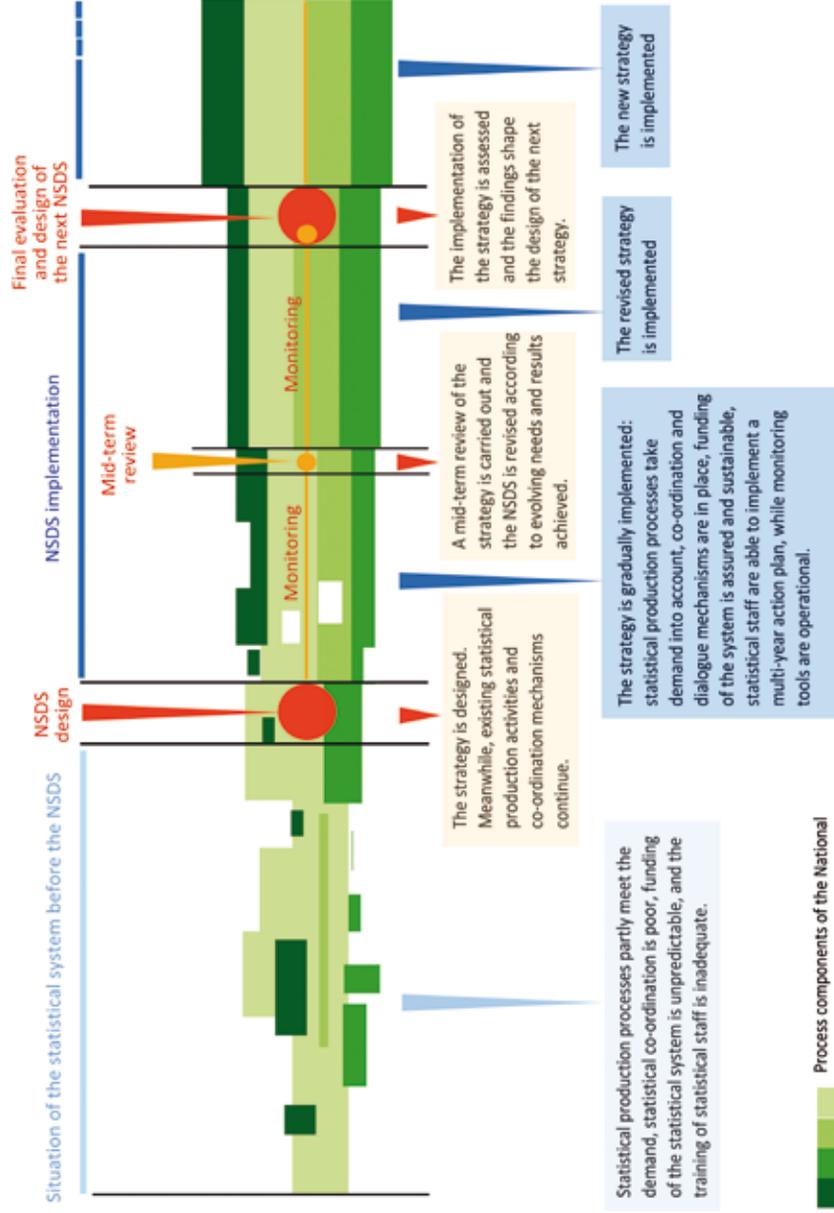
The implementation of an NSDS depends on the financing of its action plans. In many developing countries, national budgets are often insufficient. Support from the international community is therefore crucial. In this case, the government and technical and financial partners ought to set up a long-term dialogue and co-ordination body in charge of drawing up a consistent funding strategy and monitoring its implementation.

Designing the NSDS — a process that takes 12 to 18 months — provides an opportunity to identify the reforms that have to be undertaken. Accordingly, this shows what changes need to be made in some key components of the NSS such as the Statistics Act, the status of the national statistical office, co-ordination mechanisms, human and financial resources, etc.

Once the strategy, action plans, and funding schemes have been determined, an institutional mechanism is set up to oversee their implementation. This body will be in charge of co-ordinating, monitoring, and reporting activities.



Overview of the NSDS process





PARIS21 and the NSDS process

PARIS21, or the **Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century**, brings together decision makers, data analysts, and national, regional, and international statisticians. Its objective consists in developing the capacities of national statistical systems in developing countries, by assisting them to design and implement their NSDS.

PARIS21 is supported by a Secretariat based in Paris, hosted within the Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) of the OECD.

With regard to NSDSs, the Secretariat plays a role of **facilitator** in:

- Supporting countries in **NSDS design, implementation, and monitoring processes: roadmaps**, action plans, validation workshops, resource mobilisation, mid-term reviews, drafting of advocacy documents, etc.
- Encouraging the establishment of **dialogue mechanisms** at country level: co-ordination of all national statistical system actors (e.g., National Statistical Councils) but also between the government and the community of donors.
- Providing on-demand **advisory services** in certain fields: statistical legislation, National Statistical Councils, training.
- Providing specific support to **fragile/crisis states** as well as **small island** developing states.
- **Sharing information on experiences** from other regions in designing and implementing NSDSs.



For further information:
www.paris21.org