

NSDS Guidelines for SIDS

2018

Small Island Developing States

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graph TD; A[Small Island Developing States] --- B[AIMS]; B --- C[Caribbean]; C --- D[Pacific];
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AIMS

Caribbean

Pacific

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ADAPT	Advanced Data Planning Tool
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIMS	Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEO	chief executive officer
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
DA	International Development Association
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure survey
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISCED	International Standard Classification for Education
LDC	least developed country
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSO	national statistical office
NSS	national statistical system
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Countries and Small Island Developing States
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21 st Century
RSDS	Regional Strategies for the Development of Statistics
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (Pathway)
SDD	Statistics for Development Division
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
STWG	sectoral technical working group
SWOT/TOWS	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (analysis)
TORs	terms of reference
TYPSS	Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDESA	United National Department of Economic and Social Affairs
USP	University of the South Pacific

PREFACE

The first National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) Guidelines were developed in 2004. Following a decade of experience in almost 100 countries, PARIS21 has revisited these guidelines in order to enhance and adapt this tool based on assessments made, and taking into account the experience and views of data users and producers. A second and revised Version 2.0 was launched in 2014. Around the same time, PARIS21 also convened a *NSDS Guidelines Reference Group* comprising experts from countries and organisations from all these regions. The group had as its task to periodically review and update these guidelines, drawing on experience and feedback from users on all continents, acknowledging changes in the international development agenda, and recognising new approaches and innovations developed by practitioners. The aim was to create a living document that is updated on a continuous basis, and published on the PARIS21 website in April each year.¹

At the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) period in 2015, the uptake of the NSDS in small island developing states (SIDS) was still lagging well behind other countries in the world, with NSDS implementation at a low 24%.² A review conducted by PARIS21 identified several common institutional challenges facing SIDS national statistical systems (NSSs), which can be seen as both a cause for, and a consequence of, a low NSDS uptake in many SIDS. These were subsequently addressed in the most recent NSDS Guidelines 2.3, in 2017.

Building on these developments, and drawing upon discussions at the 2016 Cross Regional Forum convened by PARIS21 on *Agenda 2030 and the SIDS: Strengthening statistical capacity and readiness*, it became clear that despite SIDS NSSs sharing many common features and similar institutional challenges, major contrasts prevail between countries' statistical planning and implementation capacities, as well as the political recognition and support they accord to statistics. Recognising this reality, as has become apparent from NSDS developments in the Pacific Island region between 2010 and 2016, may well account for the comparatively low adoption and implementation of NSDSs across the SIDSs thus far and warrants some modification to the standard NSDS approach and guidelines. As experience in recent years in Pacific Island SIDS has shown, a one-size-fits-all approach is not working effectively across NSSs, which have varying human resources and financial capacities, political mandates and recognition.

The revised NSDS guidelines for SIDS, and small NSSs address these issues, while still adhering to the core NSDS structure and functions. These guidelines include a more pronounced emphasis on six areas to help facilitate greater national commitment to the formulation and implementation of NSDS, including a much shorter formulation time frame, as outlined in Section 4.

PARIS21 is pleased to be able to draw upon the experience of Gerald Haberkorn, former Director of the Pacific Community's Statistics for Development Division, who has collaborated with PARIS21 on all Pacific-wide NSDS activities between 2010 and 2017.

¹ <http://nsdsguidelines.paris21.org>

² *Advancing Statistical Development in Small Island Developing States in the post-2015 Era -The NSDS Approach*, Annex Table-2; PARIS21, October 2014

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1. Introduction

The concept of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) was first introduced in 2003 by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) to assist countries in developing their statistical systems and mainstreaming statistics into national policy and planning processes. The main benefits and advantages of this approach were seen as:

- being instrumental in the *promotion of statistics* as a major tool in the development process;
- representing the *output of a participatory process*, with NSDSs intended to mobilise all stakeholders around the promotion of a performing national statistical system (NSS);
- an *inclusive approach*, involving all components of the official statistical system;
- as a *demand driven process*, where NSDSs intend to *respond to user needs*.³

Since the first NSDS guidelines were introduced in 2004, more than 100 NSDS have been developed, mostly in International Development Association (IDA) borrower countries, least developed countries (LDCs), low and lower-middle income countries, and some upper-middle income countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, with several of these countries currently implementing their second or third NSDS.⁴

After a decade of experience, PARIS21 revisited the original guidelines following consultations with users and producers of statistics and guided by an *NSDS Guidelines Reference Group*. In April 2014 it issued a revised *NSDS Guidelines 2.0*, and decided to update these guidelines on an annual basis, to acknowledge both changes in the international “development context”,⁵ as is the case with the emergence of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and its comprehensive challenge to NSSs worldwide to ensure lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) period are not forgotten, as well as to address specific challenges experienced by some countries in developing and/or implementing a NSDS.

The importance and benefits of regular updates are reflected in the most recent NSDS Guidelines 2.3, issued in April 2017, which contain two new chapters entitled “Key emerging issues for NSDSs” and “Data Dissemination”, with amendments to six existing chapters, including the chapter on “Small Island Development States”. This chapter is of great relevance and importance given the mixed success of NSDS development to date across the three Small Island Developing State (SIDS) regions, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) as illustrated in Table 1. This shows that majority of the 37 SIDS⁶ were notably absent during the early years of NSDS development, with a slow initial uptake until well into the second half of the MDG period, 2000-2015, with only three SIDS, Belize (2006 –2011), Cabo Verde (2006 –2011), and Mauritius (2007 – 2012) having developed an NSDS during the first half of this period. This is an unfortunate reality, considering that the major driving force behind conceptualising the NSDS approach was the widespread absence of quality and timely statistics and indicators for countries to be able to reliably benchmark their development status across 8 MDG goals, 21 development targets

³NSDS GUIDELINES 2.3, April 2017.

⁴ NSDS Status of Countries, February 2017 Progress report.

⁵ NSDS Guidelines update process and the Guidelines 2.3 (<http://nsdsguidelines.paris21.org>), p.1.

⁶UNDESA refers to 51 Small Island Development States, of which 37 are UN member countries, and 14 are non-UN members, but Associate Members of the UN Regional Commissions: 7 are from the Caribbean (Anguilla, Aruba, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands) and the Pacific (American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, New Caledonia, Niue). Although hardly a developing nation, this list also includes Singapore. The UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States refers to 52 SIDS, of which 38 are UN member countries, including Singapore and Bahrain.

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and 60 associated indicators, to allow them to plan evidence-based interventions, and to regularly monitor their development progress. This meant that SIDS, perhaps more than other developing countries, missed most of the MDG period: they were not only left behind in strengthening their national statistical systems, but by lacking quality and timely statistics, they were unable to accurately identify and document the magnitude of their specific development challenges, establish credible benchmarks and targets, and develop evidence-based policy, development priorities and funding proposals, in support of their national development efforts.

Table 1: Small Island Developing States: Status of NSDS development, 2017

Country	NSDS Status	Time period	Next NSDS	
			Status	Time period
AIMS Region (7)				
Cabo Verde	Implementation	2012-16	planned	2017-21
Comoros	Implementation	2015-19		
Guinea-Bissau	Implementation	2015-17	planned	2018-22
Mauritius	Strategy expired	2007-12	planned	2018-21
Sao Tome e Principe	Implementation	2009-18		
Seychelles	Implementation	2014-20		
Maldives	Implementation	2010-19	planned	2018-22
PACIFIC (14)				
Cook Islands	Implementation	2015-25		
Fiji	No strategy		being designed	2016-20
Kiribati	No strategy		planned	2018-23
Marshall Islands	No strategy		not yet planned	
Micronesia (FSM)	No strategy		being designed (*)	2018-23
Nauru	No strategy		planned (*)	2018-23
Palau	No strategy		not yet planned	
Papua New Guinea	Awaiting adoption	2015-24		
Samoa	Implementation	2011-21		
Solomon Islands	Implementation	2016-30		
Tonga	No strategy		being designed	2017-25
Tuvalu	No strategy		not yet planned	
Vanuatu	Implementation	2016-20		
Timor-Leste	Implementation	2010-19	not yet planned	
CARIBBEAN (16)				
Antigua and Barbuda	No strategy		not yet planned	
Bahamas	No strategy		planned	2017-21
Barbados	No information			
Belize	Strategy expired	2006-11	not yet planned	
Cuba	No information			
Dominica	No strategy		not yet planned	
Dominican Republic	No information			
Grenada	No strategy		being designed (*)	2018-22
Guyana	No strategy		being designed (*)	2018-22
Haiti	Awaiting adoption	2016-21		
Jamaica	No strategy		being designed (*)	2018-22
Saint Kitts and Nevis	No information			
Saint Lucia	No strategy		not yet planned	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	No strategy		not yet planned	
Suriname	No strategy		not yet planned	
Trinidad and Tobago	No strategy		planned	2018-22

Source: annual PARIS21 update (www.parisi21.org/nsds-status). Entries highlighted with (*) are based on more recent information available.

Nearly three years after the conclusion of the MDG period, and three years into the implementation of the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development (SDGs), this situation remains an acute challenge for at least half of all SIDS, where the status of NSDS development is slow and is most urgent: –

- AIMS region, where 5 of 7 SIDS currently implement an NSDS, and
- the Pacific Islands, with 5 countries currently implementing an NSDS,⁷ 2 awaiting adoption, and a further 3 at different stages of their NSDS design.
- Caribbean region with 1 NSDS currently being implemented and 3 being designed.

the complexity of the SDG agenda as reflected in 17 goals, 169 targets and currently 232 indicators, and the demand for a substantially larger number and different types of statistics and indicators (many thus far never collected before) dwarf the challenges experienced by most SIDS regarding data collection, indicator development and monitoring during the MDG period. However, the political commitment by SIDS governments to implementing the SDGs provides a unique opportunity for countries to fast-track developing an NSDS, or review an existing one to ensure it addresses SDG data requirements along with its national development priorities.

It also provides a unique opportunity to take stock and reflect on the suitability of a full-fledged NSDS approach for SIDS, whose NSSs are relatively small and comprised of national statistics office with only very limited statistical capacity in some line ministries. It could be argued that a NSDS might actually be of even greater value compared to larger countries, given their extremely limited human and financial resources and capacity, their lack of historical use of evidence-based decision-making and considering that implementing national, regional and global development initiatives applies to all – irrespective of population size, or the size of their NSSs. In other words, a NSDS is a must for these countries as it will set the course for evidence-based policy development, prioritisation and more realistic strategic action plans. But to be successful, recent experience in the development of NSDSs, specifically in Pacific, suggest that some modifications are needed to the standard NSDS approach to ensure better chance for traction and success. This entails giving greater recognition to institutional and the systemic challenges pertaining to the public sector and NSSs.

⁷ Timor-Leste, although not geographically located in the Pacific Ocean, is being treated by the UN as a member of this group.

2. Common features, challenges and contrasts

Spread over three geographical regions, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the ,AIMS, SIDS were first recognised as a distinct group of developing countries at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, for their sharing of unique challenges associated with specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities impacting on their development progress. The most common challenges faced by SIDS putting them at a distinct “development disadvantage”,⁸ are most often associated with:

- their relative isolation and remoteness, often involving long distances from export markets and import resources, a situation not helped by irregular and costly international air and shipping connections;
- a narrow resource base depriving them of the benefits of economies of scale, with limited opportunities for the private sector and a proportionately large reliance of their economies on their public sector;
- growing populations with limited domestic economic opportunities leading to substantial emigration in many island countries;
- the vulnerability of fragile natural environments to climate change and exposure to intense and frequent natural disasters such as cyclones, coastal flooding, land erosion and the lingering threat of tidal waves.

Throughout this paper, reference to SIDS statistical development applies to countries whose national statistical agencies

- comprise a very limited number of staff (less than 10);
- lack technical subject matter expertise to address statistical requirements pertaining to core economic, social, demographic and natural resources including environmental statistics, required to monitor national, regional and international development frameworks;
- have budgets which cover mainly staff and very few other operating costs, implying an ongoing dependence on international financial support for major statistical collections;
- represent the national statistical system with only very limited, if any, statistical capacity available in other government agencies such as those responsible for education, health, social affairs, natural resources and the environment.

Before reviewing further commonalities, particularly as they relate to SIDS national statistical systems, it is important to briefly reflect on the term “smallness”, and acknowledge that variations and differences are not simply a matter of size, but can point to substantive structural differences between countries, and within and between SIDS regions.

One aspect SIDS do not have in common is smallness, which suggests the need to perhaps adopt a different approach to the development of NSDS, and modifications to NSDS guidelines: apart from their population and land size, some SIDS do not really constitute islands at all, the large contrast in size of their national statistical offices (NSOs) and NSSs and major differences in their statistical capacity as measured by World Bank’s World Development Indicators, highlight both the importance of developing and implementing a NSDS to strengthen their national systems, as well as the consideration of a modified approach for smaller SIDS and NSSs in general, to formulate and implement a NSDS (Table 2).

⁸*Small Island Developing States / Small Islands Big(ger) Stakes*; Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), New York, 2011.

Table 2: Contrasting pictures of "smallness"

		AIMS		Caribbean		Pacific	
		Country	Value	Country	Value	Country	Value
Population size	High	Guinea-Bissau	1 932 871	Cuba	11 270 000	PNG	8 040 000
	Low	Seychelles	97 539	St. Kitts and Nevis	56 780	Nauru	10 500
Land Area (square km)	High	Guinea-Bissau	28 120	Guyana	214 970	PNG	462 840
	Low	Maldives	298	St. Kitts and Nevis	261	Nauru	21
NSO staff	High	no data		Jamaica, T&T	357	PNG	189
	Low	no data		St. Kitt and Nevis	15	Palau	4
Statistical Capacity index	High	Mauritius	91.1	Dominican Republic	83.3	Fiji	58.9
	Low	Guinea-Bissau	42.2	Haiti	38.9	Marshall Islands	28.9

Notwithstanding pronounced contrasts in the size of SIDS national statistical agencies, a recent comparative review of SIDS national statistical systems highlighted an important point, that “while many NSSs share the same constraints and challenges, a number of distinct characteristics are made much more acute in SIDS”, referring to eight such common challenges across SIDS statistical systems:⁹

- *Human resources constraints*

Key aspects: inadequate or lacking professional/technical competence across key thematic statistical areas, methodologies; over-burdened staff in small NSOs having to handle multiple statistical activities simultaneously; heavy reliance on external/externally-funded technical expertise; continuous training/re-training required when dealing with a small number of staff required to work across the broad spectrum of statistics, which is aggravated further with high staff turnover; and very limited statistical training opportunities due to the lack of statistical curricula in most universities.¹⁰

- *Challenges pertaining to geographic and demographic characteristics*

Key aspects: the requirement of larger samples in relation to small population size increases per capita survey costs; this is further compounded when a small population is dispersed over many islands across a large exclusive economic zone; if distribution is uneven, this increases the danger of substantial non-sampling errors; small sampling frames in the SIDS mean households are exposed to frequent surveys, which can lead to survey-fatigue and non-response.

- *Information technology*

Key aspects: with electronic data capture and information management systems making rapid progress in many SIDS, leading to improvements in data quality and more effective data access and dissemination (websites), a high staff turnover with limited skilled IT supply poses a

⁹ NSDS Guidelines update process and Guidelines 2.3 (<http://nsdsguidelines.paris21.org>), pages 2-4. Advancing Statistical Development in Small Island Developing States in the Post-2015 Era: The NSDS Approach. PARIS21. 2015.

¹⁰ To address this issue in the Pacific region, the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva, Fiji, introduced a three-year course in “Official Statistics” in 2015, leading to a BA qualification in its own right, with most students thus far taking it as a minor subject in a joint degree, with a major in other disciplines, such as economics or geography.

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permanent threat to the sustainability of such efficiency gains; incompatibility of IT systems between government agencies prevents data access and data sharing, which has been highlighted as a key constraint in most Pacific Islands NSS assessment completed to date.

- *Regional support to statistics*

Key aspects: strong regional statistical centres, such as the Regional Statistics Programme at the CARICOM Secretariat and the Pacific Community' *Statistics for Development Division*, have both the mandate and capacity to provide technical support to national statistical offices and systems in these geographic domains. In addition to this technical support, their work also contributes to a more effective co-ordination of the regional statistical system, including development of common tools and technology (e.g. regional census and survey questionnaire modules, data processing system, electronic data capture), and a greater adherence to international statistical standards.

- *Fragility*

Key aspects: pertain to data security and business continuity, and the absence of strategies and plans to have proper data storage/back-up and archiving systems in place.

- *Confidentiality*

Key aspects: strict confidentiality principles must be applied, including aggregation rules to safeguard identification of records; a particular challenge reported by many SIDS NSOs experiencing reluctance by other government agencies, statutory bodies and businesses, is to provide administrative data or business records (in the name of safeguarding "confidentiality").

- *Institutional constraints*

Key aspects: outdated statistical legislation; weak and/or lack of strong statistical leadership and lack of effective co-ordination across the NSS; non-existence of national statistical councils that would guide statistical development.

- *Statistical literacy*

Key aspects: absence of a "statistical culture" across government, as illustrated in a lack of historical use of evidence-based decision-making referred to earlier, is closely linked to low levels of statistical literacy, that is, the ability to understand the meaning of numbers, of statistical concepts, the ability to read, understand and interpret statistical tables and graphs and to make appropriate use of such information. This is an important component of a vicious circle, where low demand leads to limited, irregular and often out-dated data dissemination, which impacts its usefulness and use, and potential further demands.

A Cross-Regional Forum, *Agenda 2030 and the SIDS: Strengthening statistical capacity and readiness*, organised by PARIS21 in May 2016, brought together representatives from national statistical agencies and systems of the three regions, as well as the Caribbean and Pacific Regional statistical organisations housed in CARICOM and the Pacific Community respectively. The delegates complemented this assessment, highlighting the significant challenges faced by SIDS statistical systems in responding to data requirements arising from global development agendas such as Agenda 2030 and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. Reference was made to the fact that:

- small statistical systems and statistical offices restrict them from undertaking the broad range of statistical activities required to generate statistics on national, regional and global development agendas;

- divergence between a global view of what statistics to collect and how it should be used for policy, versus a national view of what relevant statistics to collect to inform existing national concerns;
- weak links between statistics use and policy;
- under-resourced statistical systems (financial, human and infrastructure) due to limited government resources and competing priorities;
- lack of predictability and sustainability of funding for statistical activities;
- statistical legislations in most SIDS countries are outdated, hindering statistical institutions from taking appropriate action and interventions;
- there is a shifting boundary towards generating sub-national statistics; SIDS statistical developments are often driven by external agendas.

With these common challenges emerging as more acute in SIDS compared to national statistical systems elsewhere as previously alluded to, great care should be taken not to treat all SIDS as a uniform entity when it comes to statistical capacity development and management, including the development and implementation of a NSDS. Papua New Guinea, Cuba, Haiti and Guyana are anything but small island states, and their statistical systems might have more in common with non-SIDS statistical systems with similar population size and economies, than with micro-states in their own geographic regions, like Nauru and Tuvalu in the Pacific region, or St. Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean. What may work well in larger NSSs when it comes to NSDS preparatory work, and later on, its design or formulation, will not proceed as well in smaller national statistical systems, largely due to two major common challenges: institutional/political impediments, and human resources/capacity constraints.

- Regarding the first, the absence of a “statistical culture”, particularly in small national statistical systems (as is the case in most SIDS) and illustrated by a lack of historical use of evidence-based decision-making, is not conducive to seeing the development of statistics as a worthy development objective in its own right.
- The absence of technical and statistical capacity across various sectors does not allow the use of local expertise to undertake a comprehensive cross-sectoral assessment of data availability, quality, use and prevailing un-met needs, which is essential to develop a NSDS roadmap and the subsequent NSDS design proper.

Acknowledging this reality requires some modifications to the standard NSDS approach to assist smaller national statistical systems to successfully engage in and benefit from the NSDS process to further develop and strengthen. This will be discussed more fully in Section 4.

3. SIDS national statistical systems: Common characteristics

The previous section touched upon some common features and challenges pertaining to SIDS statistical systems, the focus of this section is to elaborate on the major and common characteristics of these systems.

3.1 Inadequate political recognition and support

Representing one of the defining features of SIDS statistical systems, a lack of strong and consistent political recognition of and support to statistics had been identified as a major common challenge by both an independent SIDS NSS assessment report commissioned by PARIS21 in 2014 and which contributed to an amended SIDS chapter in the current NSDS Guidelines 2.3, and the PARIS21 Cross-Regional SIDS Forum in 2016. Both these documents supported and expanded on these findings. Two key illustrations of limited political recognition of and support to statistics are:

- the chronic under-resourcing of national statistical agencies due to limited government resources and competing priorities,
- a lack of regular demand for statistics, illustrating weak links between statistics use and policy.

While these represent two common features across SIDS, greater political attention is being paid to addressing these persistent challenges as a matter of urgency:

- At a regional level in the Pacific region, political attention was illustrated by the development of the *Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy, 2011–2020*. A similar process has recently been concluded in the Caribbean by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in its development of a *Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics, 2017-2030*. A similar development is currently underway for the Caribbean region in the form of a Caribbean-wide Regional Statistics Development Strategy (RSDS) 2018-2030.
- At national level, this commitment has had more mixed results thus far as illustrated in Table 1, with all 7 AIMS SIDS having developed a NSDS, with 9 of the 14 Pacific regional SIDS either currently implementing (6) or in the process of designing an NSDS (3), and in the Caribbean region, with 1 country implementing NSDS and 3 in the process of developing their NSDS to date.

Lack of regional/international political support to SIDS statistical development

The importance of political support at the highest level to achieve success in strengthening SIDS national statistical systems has equal relevance when it comes to regional and international development agendas and organisations with an explicit focus on SIDS. Regarding the first, there have been 3 international events convened since 1994, addressing SIDS development issues, the Barbados Programme of Action (1994), the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (2005), and SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action [SAMOA] Pathway (2014).

SAMOA Pathway dedicates four paragraphs to data and statistics (112-115), “reaffirming the role that data and statistics play in development planning of SIDS and the need for the United Nations system to collect statistics from SIDS (112), and calling on the UN and its specialized agencies and relevant intergovernmental organizations to support a SIDS Sustainable Development Statistics and Information Programme” (115-b). However, such a programme has not yet been set up or implemented by relevant agencies, such as the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) or the UNDESA-SIDS Unit.

3.2 Inadequate investment in statistics

A second major defining feature of SIDS statistical systems, and a reflection of the widespread lack of political support to statistics, is the chronic under-resourcing of national statistical agencies by their governments. This makes SIDS NSOs dependent on external financial assistance to run most major statistical collections, such as regular economic and socio-demographic household surveys. Some SIDS still require external financial support even to run their Population and Housing Census every 5 or 10 years, which they are legally mandated to do. Across the Pacific region for instance, such support has been forthcoming for many years through Australian and New Zealand financial assistance as part of their bilateral support at country level, as well as to the Pacific Community's (SPC) Statistics for Development Division (SDD), and from the Asian Development Bank, in the form of successive multi-year grants to SPC to support economic (HIES) and socio-demographic surveys (DHS) across the region, between 2009 and 2015. Without such external support, improvements to statistical methodologies and core social and economic statistics, such as strengthening civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), national accounts and collection of poverty statistics in the region, would not have been possible.

The lack of predictability and sustainability of appropriate domestic funding for statistical activities is not conducive to maintaining a programme of regular data collection and a calendar of release. Weak demands and links to policy do not augur well for evidence-based policy development and planning. The same can be said for continued appropriate long-term financial support for regional statistical programmes, such as the Pacific Community's SDD and CARICOM's Regional Statistics Programme, given their regional political mandate to strengthen both regional statistical co-operation and co-ordination and provide technical support to national statistical offices and systems.

3.3 NSOs are the NSS in most SIDS

In most SIDS, particularly the smaller ones, the concept of a NSS is merely an abstract concept, with the NSO, authority or bureau representing the entire statistical system. Other players either do not exist, or operate in parallel with NSOs without much co-ordination or collaboration, despite most current statistical legislations providing such a co-ordinating function to the NSO.

In most SIDS, the NSO is usually the only go-to agency for all data and statistical matters; while other agencies generate data, these data are mostly used for internal administrative and planning purposes, and there is only limited sharing and dissemination of data.

With growing emphasis placed on evidence-based planning and monitoring, most major line ministries, particularly education and health, have made major inroads in recent years in strengthening their data collection and management information systems. As this has evolved and is progressing mainly in parallel with NSO activities, more formal bilateral arrangements such as via memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or preferably an NSDS would provide a solid platform for value-adding, through closer co-ordination of statistical activities, the use of standards and common tools and improved data sharing. The importance of updated statistical legislation is critical to enable such processes, and provide the platform for a better functioning NSS.

3.4. Insufficient or lack of technical and analytical expertise

The lack of technical and analytical expertise has already been identified earlier as a major stumbling block to improving SIDS statistical development. It is worth highlighting that training, retraining or recruitment of specialist staff operating in SIDS NSOs or across the broader statistical system, may

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not be the desired panacea but merely an extension of the current situation. This is of particular relevance for small SIDS NSOs, comprising of between 5 and 10 staff, which may welcome having specialist in-house analytical expertise, such as a technical demographer, but might find it hard to retain this expertise if a demographic analysis or population projections are only undertaken or revised every 5 or 2 years at best. SIDS NSOs require solid all-round statisticians, who can handle a variety of core economic, social, demographic and natural resources statistics, with specific and more specialised subject matter expertise periodically sourced from another SIDS that have larger NSO or NSS size that has such in-house capacity (via south-south-type arrangements), or through regional statistical programmes or centres. This is the case and has been well established practice for several decades in CARICOM and the Pacific Community.

It is also worth noting that this lack of technical/analytical expertise has an important impact, but is just one link in a functioning national statistical system, alongside data use (both practice and users), demand, availability, accessibility, data quality, relevance and timeliness. Regarding the latter, attention ought to be paid to generating data that are “fit-for-purpose” – data which would help address some of these challenges and which could be produced under less stringent quality standards but which would still address pressing requirements for regular policy-making and tracking of policy performance and development progress.

While this may seem obvious to those involved in statistical production, the connectivity between the various components is not always visible to those at the user end: if there is

- no regular demand/need for data and statistical information, there is no need for (i) regular data collection, nor (ii) for analysts/technical expertise,
- no regular collection, there is (i) no need for analytical and technical expertise, and (ii) no opportunity for data use, such as for informed decision-making;
- no technical/analytical capacity available, there is no (i) drive/need for regular data collection, (ii) no capacity to add value to data for the end-user, and (iii) no use for data.

In other words, non-functioning national statistical systems reflect the workings of a vicious circle, with each component both the cause of and contributing to the deficiencies of other components.

3.5 Regional support to strengthen NSSs

Regional statistical centres or programmes in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions have for many years provided much-valued technical support to strengthen national statistical agencies, and also, directly *or inter alia*, NSSs, through similar processes of statistical governance and co-ordination (Table 3). Having in place medium to long-term regional statistical strategies, with shorter statistical action plans and targeting specific priorities, as is the case with the Pacific region’s Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) and the CARICOM Action Plan on Statistics, developed in consultation with and ultimately endorsed by member countries, contributes to a powerful buy-in of common statistical processes. These include common collection methods, data processing platforms and dissemination systems, as well as greater adherence to and use of common regional statistical standards, which were developed in line with international recommendations. Similar regular regional governance mechanisms allow for half-yearly monitoring, consultation and early attention to problems with implementation, and provide the opportunity to address new and unforeseen but urgent strategic priorities.

Table 3: CARICOM and SPC regional statistical activities in support of their membership

Processes/outputs	Caribbean (CARICOM) Program for Statistics	Pacific (SPC) Statistics for Development Division
Statistical governance and co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly meeting of Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians Twice-yearly meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three-yearly regional Conference of Pacific Heads of Planning and Statistics Half-yearly Pacific Statistics Steering Committee Meeting (PSSC)
Regional statistics strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan on Statistics Common Regional Statistical Work Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS), 2011 – 2020 Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan, 2015-2017 Pacific Education Development Framework (known also as Regional Education Framework)
Regional (common) statistical standards and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CARICOM Model Bill Common Census Framework Trade Information System Caricominfo Census e-portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pacific core Population and Housing census modules Pacific HIES Questionnaire Pacific core statistical indicators (<i>National Minimum development indicators, NSMI</i> (www.spc.int/nmdi)) Pacific Regional Information System Management (www.prism.spc.int) <u>Pacific statistical classifications/standards</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pacific Standard Industrial Classifications Pacific Standard Occupational Classifications Pacific Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose Pacific Business Register Development Guide Best Practice Guidelines for CRVS Legislation for the Pacific Islands (2016) (Draft) Standards for CRVS IT for the Pacific Islands (2015) Pacific ISCED (International Standard Classification for Education)

Having a cadre of experienced statisticians, demographers, economists and data processing and IT specialists also contributes to both national capacity building and, where needed, short-term technical capacity supplementation, as well as to strengthening and making use of regional statistical expertise. This is the case in the Pacific Community’s focus on supporting and managing a programme of south-south type technical collaboration between member countries either lacking or unable to provide technical statistical skills in certain areas.

These important regional technical support and co-ordination roles by CARICOM and the Pacific Community could be further strengthened through increased regional political support, in the form

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of perhaps providing both organisations with a mandate to periodically review national data and comment on their quality, which would help strengthen trust in the quality of country statistics.¹¹

3.6 The impact of political recognition and support on building and sustaining effective national statistical agencies and NSSs: Experience from the Pacific region

Drawing upon eight years of ongoing collaboration between PARIS21 and the SPC in assisting Pacific SIDS in designing and implementing their NSDSs (since 2010), illustrates the powerful link between political recognition and support, and the ability to run and maintain an effective national statistical agency and NSS. It is also the main reason behind the successful NSDS design and current implementation in some countries, and lengthy delays experienced in others.

In 2010, the SSPC and PARIS21 embarked on a region-wide effort to collaborate with countries interested in developing national strategies to strengthen their statistical systems to ensure the production, dissemination and use of statistics for national policy and development purposes. Addressing several strategic objectives of the SPC Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy, 2011 – 2020, over the years many countries expressed interest in developing such NSDSs in partnership with SPC and PARIS21. The Federated States of Micronesia is the most recent country developing an NSDS, inspired by the success of recent NSDSs in Samoa, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands in transforming the production, dissemination and use of statistics in these countries. These countries improved statistical collaboration between government agencies and regularised consultation between data users and producers, and this led to a greater recognition of the importance of statistics amongst senior government officials. This was particularly evident in the annual budget allocation with statistics and development indicators featuring more prominently in policy development and planning.

Table 4: Pacific Island SIDS: Status of NSDS development, 2017 (extract from Table 1)

Country	NSDS status	Time period	Next NSDS	
			Status	Time period
PACIFIC (14)				
Cook Islands	Implementation	2015-25		
Fiji	No strategy		Being designed	2016-20
Kiribati	No strategy		Planned	2018-23
Marshall Islands	No strategy		<i>not yet planned</i>	
Micronesia (FSM)	No strategy		Being designed	2018-23
Nauru	No strategy		Planned	2018-23
Palau	No strategy		<i>not yet planned</i>	
Papua New Guinea	Awaiting adoption	2015-24		
Samoa	Implementation	2011-21		
Solomon Islands	Implementation	2016-30		
Tonga	No strategy		Being designed	2017-25
Tuvalu	No strategy		<i>not yet planned</i>	
Vanuatu	Implementation	2016-20		
Timor-Leste	Implementation	2010-19	Planned	

¹¹ In the European Union, EUROSTAT has such a role. Rule 223/2009 of the EU allows Eurostat to periodically review the national statistics of its Member States and comment on data quality. Apart from an obvious peer-review benefit, the fact that Eurostat reports are made public contributes to strengthening the trust in statistics for the countries. Applied to SIDS regional statistical organisations, such a process might provide a most useful means to addressing many of the institutional challenges encountered thus far.

This link between formulating and implementing an NSDS and achieving such tangible outcomes is illustrated in strong and growing recognition of the importance of good statistics for good governance at the highest political levels in the Pacific region. This is reflected in the words of the Prime Ministers of Samoa and Cook Islands, and the Minister of Finance from Vanuatu:

As Prime Minister and the Minister for Samoa Bureau of Statistics, I consider the SSDS as an important process and document for good governance. I expect that through the SSDS, the allocation of resources for statistics activities will be rationalized. I also expect that the statistical indicators needed to monitor the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) and the MDGs will be available regularly and on a timely basis. More importantly, our stakeholders should benefit from the outputs of the SSDS in the development of the special and economic conditions of our communities.

(Hon. Tuilaepa Lufesoliali Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister)

The Cook Islands Government is fully committed to developing our national statistical system with the objective of promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that 'serve the public good'. Official statistics is a public good that informs the people of the environmental and socio-economic state of the Cook Islands.

More than ever, statistics is going to play a vital role in the development of the Cook Islands. This strategy is designed to make that happen.

(Hon. Henry Puna, Prime Minister)

The availability and accessibility of good quality statistical information is an integral part of the policy design and evaluation process, the development of research agendas, and the decision-making processes of Government, organisations and communities.

The Vanuatu National Strategy for the Development of Statistics has been developed by the stakeholders in the Vanuatu National Statistical System. It is based on a shared understanding of key policy issue imperatives and agreement on the areas of priority for statistical data development.

(Hon. Willy Jimmy Tapangararua, Minister of Finance)

The fact that the NSDS formulation process in other Pacific SIDS has taken many years, and is still awaiting lengthy final government endorsement, or still remains at the design stage, is largely a reflection of the lack of strong political support and commitment to statistics development, and particularly in NSDS, at the highest level, unlike the case of Samoa, Cook Islands and Vanuatu.

4. Guide to NSDS Development for smaller SIDS and small NSSs, among others

As highlighted in previous sections, what may work well in larger national statistical systems, NSDS preparation, and later on, in its design and ultimately in its implementation, may not proceed as well in smaller national statistical systems. This is largely due to two major common challenges: institutional/political impediments and human resources/capacity constraints.

- Institutional/political impediments. The absence of a “statistical culture”, particularly in small national statistical systems (as is the case in most SIDS) and the lack of historical use of evidence-based decision-making, is not conducive to the development of statistics as a worthy development objective in its own right.
- Human resources/capacity constraints. The absence of technical and statistical capacity across various sectors does not allow the use of local expertise for comprehensive cross-sectoral assessment of data availability, quality, use and prevailing un-met needs. This is essential for developing a NSDS roadmap and the subsequent NSDS design proper.

Acknowledging this reality requires some modification to the standard NSDS approach in assisting smaller national statistical systems to successfully engage in and benefit from the NSDS process to further develop and strengthen their national statistical systems. This is in line with emphasis in the current Guidelines 2.3 (i) to be responsive to specific situations, such common challenges affecting the performance of statistical systems in fragile states and SIDS, and (ii) show flexibility in NSDS design and implementation and the management of national statistical systems, among others, rather than pursuing a one size-fits-all approach.¹²

The following recommendations of relevance to small national statistical systems, be they SIDS or fragile states, reflect findings from an independent comparative review of SIDS national statistical systems commissioned by PARIS21 in 2014.¹³ This review formed the basis of a special and amended SIDS chapter in the NSDS Guidelines 2.3, and key outcomes of the 2016 PARIS21 Cross-Regional Forum on SIDS. These recommendations also draw heavily on the experience of an eight-year collaboration between PARIS21 and the SPC in NSDS advocacy and design support in eight Pacific Island countries, as illustrated in Table 1.

4.1 A push for greater political advocacy

Political support and commitment at the highest level have been identified as key to successful NSDS development and its current implementation in three Pacific island countries, where this approach has had the full support of the heads of government in Samoa and the Cook Islands, and the Minister responsible for Statistics in Vanuatu. No such high-level government support was forthcoming elsewhere.

Indeed, changes in government or in senior administrative positions¹⁴ in countries which took place between initial high-level endorsement and the first and subsequent NSDS planning workshop, have translated into declining interest in and political support for a process initiated by earlier administrations. This has led to delays in some countries, while they await political endorsement of an NSDS which was already completed. Design processes are also at risk in countries where there is

¹² NSDS Guidelines Update process and the Guidelines 2.3, page 2.

¹³ This assessment was subsequently published by PARIS21: *Advancing Statistical Development in Small Island developing States in the post-2015 Era – The NSDS Approach*; October 2014, Paris.

¹⁴Such as Departmental Secretaries or CEOs.

no continuity of consulting capacities. The importance of Government Statisticians with a strong commitment to statistical development and the NSDS process should not be underestimated.

Of the remaining three countries, one received only very recent endorsement in early June 2017, after a lengthy NSDS formulation process that spanned some five years, one is still at the design stage in its second year, and another has just completed its NSDS preparatory work and was about to embark on its NSDS in 2018.

Apart from seeking high-level political commitment to commence the NSDS process, a key role and responsibility to push for and sustain greater political advocacy rests with the Government Statistician, who needs to be convinced about the value of an NSDS and committed to the NSDS process. This requires adjustments to his or her normal work routine, and entail a willingness to assume greater responsibilities, accept increased public exposure for the national statistics office, its statistical outputs and services, and be accountable to government and its development partners for development funds allocated to NSDS development and implementation. A simple memorandum of understanding outlining roles and responsibilities of all key players in this process, such as the minister responsible for statistics, the Government Statistician and a NSDS development partner, such as PARIS21 and where relevant, a regional technical organisation, will provide a good foundation to proceed.

Lesson learned: There is a need for greater political advocacy and more formal government commitment to the NSDS process.

While the NSDS process and guidelines are strong on advocacy, experience over the past eight years clearly shows that more is required to win over senior officials and get political traction and support. In the place of a short NSDS launching workshop with senior officials and resident diplomats, focusing largely on process generalities, it would be more effective to make a strong, strategic sales pitch, outlining the positives and what the country will miss out on in not having an NSDS.

Drawing upon the very positive experience in Samoa, Vanuatu and Cook Islands where brief face-to-face consultations were held by PARIS21, SPC and the Government Statistician with a Prime Minister (Samoa), a Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister (Vanuatu) and a Secretary of Finance (Cook Islands) respectively, allowed PARIS21 and SPC to debrief the highest government officials responsible for statistics on the NSDS process. It is recommended to substantially step up advocacy for “statistics with statistics”. Rather than focusing solely on other countries’ successful experience in developing their national statistical systems via the NSDS, it would be more effective to highlight concrete benefits relative to the opportunity costs of not pursuing a comprehensive strategic approach. It would be far more relevant, and thus more powerful, to be able to provide senior government officials with an objective snapshot of the current working of their NSS.

Recommendation: To do this, requires a slight, but significant modification to the standard NSDS process, starting with an assessment of the NSS, which represents the first and essential preparatory step of any NSDS development. This assessment should provide facts on what works well or not at all; it should guide subsequent political advocacy that is country-specific, relevant and based on evidence. This will allow for a more informed decision and greater commitment to proceed with the formulation and implementation of a NSDS.

4.2 Modified NSDS development process for SIDS and small NSSs, among others

While still comprising all the main elements of a NSDS, the key difference and potential benefit for the development of a successful NSDS in SIDS and smaller NSSs is recognising the critical role played

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by the NSS assessment. This should be used to inform and guide both advocacy and generate political and professional commitment.

Drawing upon recent experience in the Pacific region, it is strongly recommended for future NSDS developments, particularly in smaller SIDS, to reduce the NSDS preparation time from between 12 and 18 months, to between 6 and 9 months. This will maintain momentum and keep alive interest by all those involved in the process. In this context, it is further recommended, to have only a short time period (perhaps 2 to 3 months) between the initial in-country NSDS introductory and planning meeting and NSS assessment, and its validation as part of the subsequent NSDS strategic planning workshop.

Stage 1: Start the NSDS process with an assessment of the country's NSS (facilitated by an external consultant/expert)

This stage comprises three separate in-country activities: a 2-day NSDS introduction/planning meeting to launch the NSDS process, followed by NSS institutional and sectoral assessment through one-on-one consultations with key stakeholders, a final debrief on preliminary NSS assessment findings and an outline of next NSDS steps.

The following is the recommended sequence of activities:

- **Activity 1: NSDS Introduction/planning meeting launching the NSDS process (2 days)**

Purpose: to introduce key stakeholders of the country's national statistical system, including both data producers and data users, to the purpose and benefits of multi-year strategic statistical planning, as embodied in the concept of developing and implementing an NSDS.

Participants: senior government officials from all government agencies, with responsibility for sectoral policy and planning and data/information management, and statistical subject matter specialists from the NSO. The former usually includes finance, planning, education, health, social affairs, natural resources, transport, communication and industry. Where relevant, participation should also include the Central or Reserve Bank, the private sector represented by the chamber of commerce, local media and resident development partners. Each government agency is to be represented at least at the deputy-director (CEO) level, and its designated data producers (statisticians/data specialists) and data users (planners/policy analysts).

Topics covered:¹⁵

- *Introduction to NSDS* (the purpose of multi-year planning), and the role of the SIDS-NSDS Guidelines (by external NSDS consultant)
- *Overview of the country's national statistical system and of its current national development plan and priorities* – perspectives of data producers and data users (presentation by Government Statistician and head of planning)
- The NSO should provide a description of its role and responsibilities; the role of other data-producing agencies; co-ordination and governance arrangements; collaboration between government agencies.
- The planning office should provide a brief overview of the current national development policy plan and priorities. This is critical to establish government data priorities, outlining what specific statistics are required and with what regularity (which provides a solid basis for the value-added of developing an NSDS).

¹⁵ A more detailed workshop outline/agenda can be found in Appendix 1.

- *SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the country's national statistical system, its work in sectors, focusing on broad themes (current statistical collections, unmet data needs, data availability/access, and analytical/dissemination capacity and practices), as well as acknowledging institutional, governance and co-ordination issues (by an external NSDS consultant).*
- *Stages of NSDS Formulation (by an external NSDS consultant)*
- *Preliminary discussion on possible NSDS governance arrangements in the country*

- **Activity 2: NSS sectoral assessments (approximately 7 days of in-country work)**

Purpose: Following on from this meeting, the NSDS consultant will undertake a more detailed assessment of the country's national statistical system to identify common systemic challenges, strengths and opportunities that will ultimately help identify strategic priority areas to be addresses in the country's NSDS.

Process: the NSDS consultant will engage in one-on-one meetings with representatives from each participating agency. These consultations usually take between 45 and 90 minutes. Guided by the SIDS-NSS Assessment Template (see Appendix 2) to ensure consistency in approach across all sectors, they address the same issues across four core topics:

- **Data collection** by specific agency (specific ministry/government department)
This addresses all data collections/compilations by each agency, their purpose and ultimate use, including capacity (human and financial resources) and the legal mandate to do so.
- **Un-met data needs** by specific agency
This refers to data/statistics needed for agency work, but which are currently not collected/ compiled by this agency.
- **Data availability and access** (this covers two features):
The agency's need to access data elsewhere (from other agencies) and accessibility to agency data by external users.
- **Data analysis and dissemination**
This addresses each agency's statistical capacity to undertake data analysis/ dissemination, and the beneficiary of this information.

Broader systemic issues related to NSS capacity, such as governance, co-ordination, resources, statistical leadership and management cutting across all four topics are specifically addressed at the end of each conversation, if they have not already been identified.

- **Activity 3: Debrief on preliminary NSS assessment findings: *advocacy for "statistics with statistics"* (1 day)**

Purpose: Following the NSS assessment, the NSDS consultant will provide a substantive debrief to senior government officials on the preliminary findings and outline the next NSDS steps.

Process: The first task is to provide a concise summary of key preliminary NSS assessment findings, and outline both:

- The benefits of formulating and implementing a NSDS
- The opportunity costs of not proceeding with a NSDS

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This step will address current weaknesses and threats of the national statistical system, which compromise informed policy development and planning, with governments not having access to key data, statistics or indicators to identify policy and programme priorities based on relative need/importance, accurately benchmark these policies and subsequently monitor policy performance on a regular basis.

The second task is to inform these senior officials about key elements of the NSDS process outlining:

- the roles and responsibilities of all actors: government representatives, the private sector represented by chambers of commerce, local media; key resident development partners; PARIS21 and regional statistical development partners (e.g. the SPC in the Pacific region);
- draft timelines for NSDS formulation, including the required time commitment from all;
- proposed governance arrangements for NSDS formulation, such as NSDS oversight/steering committee and sectoral working groups;
- a budget estimate for NSDS formulation (including recruitment of a short-term national NSDS consultant to draft sectoral action plans in collaboration with sectoral working groups).

Expected outcome of Activity 3: having provided senior officials with hard facts, the outcome should be statistics about statistics, to assist their decision to proceed with the next steps – the formulation and subsequent implementation of the NSDS.

- Should government decide to proceed with the NSDS, based on the information provided, government and the donor (or entity that will provide support on NSDS preparation) should formalise this commitment through an MOU, spelling out agreed-upon roles and responsibilities, timelines, governance arrangements and budgets.
- Should government decide not to proceed with an NSDS, it will still have access to hard facts and figures about the current statistical situation in the country along with the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats to its statistical system, specifically regarding its statistical institutions, data collection, statistical production and informed policy development and planning in the country. This will provide an opportunity to address specific, if not all, issues in other ways.

Stage 2: Formulation of NSDS

Should government decide to proceed with the development of its NSDS, Stage 2 will comprise two distinct activities:

- **Activity 1: Development of the NSDS roadmap** by the NSDS consultant to ensure compliance with international best practices and NSDS guidelines recommendations.

The roadmap spells out arrangements for the NSDS formulation and identifies

- key stakeholders to be involved in the process and their responsibilities;
- a governance set-up to provide direction and guidance to the NSDS process;
- the setting up of working groups that will prepare sector-specific action plans and their costings, and thus contribute to identifying the overall resource requirements for NSDS implementation.

- **Activity 2: NSDS strategic planning workshop**

To maintain momentum and interest generated during the first workshop introducing the NSDS concept, and followed by NSS assessment through one-on-one consultation across key sectors, it is recommended that the NSDS strategic planning workshop be convened within two to three months after the NSDS introduction/planning meeting to launch the NSDS process and NSS assessment, involving the same national staff who attended the first workshop. This workshop is envisaged to run over three to five days, depending on the size of the NSS and the number of sectors to be covered. It will be a modified version of the standard NSDS strategic planning workshop,¹⁶ with the main focus still on formulating the NSDS strategic framework (vision, mission, core values and agreed strategic objectives). However, there will be some changes:

- less time spent on the NSS validation proper, considering earlier Stage 1 in-principle endorsement by government to proceed,
- more time and attention dedicated to validating and expanding on strategic objectives and key associated activities derived from the TOWS matrices generated under Activity 1 during the initial planning meeting (Stage 1). An agreement will also be reached on NSDS governance arrangements, including the eventual approval process, and the development of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for the NSDS.

4.3 Establish stronger links between NSDS and national development strategies, including country commitments to international development agendas (e.g. SDGs, the SAMOA Pathway)

An additional suggested modification for SIDS NSDS development would be to make more explicit references to the importance of establishing stronger linkages between the NSDS and (i) countries' own current national development strategies or plans, and (ii) their political commitment and obligations to regional or international development agendas, and associated regular monitoring requirements.

Recommendations: This would entail an amendment to the current NSS assessment process as part of the NSDS preparatory activities, and require countries to undertake a stocktake of currently available indicators related to M&E frameworks associated with these plans. This would be part of their NSDS preparatory work responsibilities and contribution to be reflected in the MOU, , as attention to the collection of associated data and statistics ought to feature as one of the NSDS' core strategic priorities. If resources permit, a deployment of the PARIS21 Advanced Data Planning Tool (ADAPT) may be considered to undertake mapping of available indicators vis-à-vis national, regional and global development plans/goals.

4.4 Focus on the importance of greater regional statistical integration

Given the small size of their national statistical systems, there also ought to be greater strategic focus in SIDS' NSDS development on regional statistical integration, ensuring that countries' NSDS are linked to Regional Strategies for the Development of Statistics (RSDS), such as the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS), 2011–2020, CARICOM's Statistics Action Plan (and forthcoming CARICOM RSDS, 2018-2030), and the OECS RSDS 2017-2030. Illustrations of good practice on regional statistical

¹⁶ A more detailed workshop outline/agenda can be found in Appendix 3.

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governance processes and co-ordination and of the development and committed adherence to regional (common) statistical standards and processes have already been illustrated in Table 3.

Recommendation: Without denying countries' sovereign rights to develop their own NSDS that address first and foremost national statistical development priorities, this process ought to proceed in recognising regional statistical priorities that have been agreed upon by member countries of regional organisations such as CARICOM and the Pacific Community. The commitment to the development of those regional strategies and associated priority action plans should also be recognised.

4.5 Make use of common NSDS templates

Recognising limited staff capacity in smaller SIDS national statistical systems, both in terms of absolute numbers and their technical capacity and work-loads, it is imperative to minimize the burden associated with preparatory NSDS work and subsequent NSDS formulation.

Recommendation: Streamline the NSDS process by using common templates, based on best-practice examples from successful SIDS NSDS, but adapted to each country's context and needs, and ensuring that the process remains highly consultative and participatory. The common templates used in Pacific NSDS preparation are included as Appendix 2 (NSS Assessment Template) and Appendix 4 (NSDS roadmap).

4.6 Risk analysis: NSDS design and implementation

An important component of any plan, be it a long-term national development policy, or a medium-term strategic action plan such as the NSDS, is a risk assessment that identifies both known and possible risks and challenges that, if left unattended, might derail all good intentions and planned endeavours.

While such an analysis needs to focus on all core elements of the NSDS itself, such as its overall vision, mission, core organisational values and strategic objectives which are as yet unknown, the importance of a risk assessment is equally relevant at the design stage of the NSDS. Some of these risks would have already been identified during plan preparation in the initial SWOT analysis undertaken at the time of the first of two in-country NSDS workshops, and reflected more fully in the subsequent NSS assessment report. They refer mainly to institutional and human resources constraints.

Drawing upon previous NSS assessments and experiences with NSDS development across various Pacific Island SIDS (Table 4), key risks to the successful design and implementation identified in all countries currently implementing or at various stages of NSDS design and political endorsement, relate to political and agency support and the participation and commitment of key staff throughout the process as outlined below.

Risks	Risk mitigation strategy
<p>Risk-1: Lack of institutional support for statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">in the majority of SIDS statistical legislation is outdated and does not provide for data user/producer consultation mechanisms that would	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish and implement regular communication between political leadership, senior staff in government departments and national agencies with their national statistical agency, to jointly explore ways to resolve such challenges.All parties should commit to actively contributing to

<p>ensure that government data needs are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acute staff shortages across national statistical agencies that cannot adequately respond to known data needs as reflected in national and international development policy commitments. • government departments and national agencies where the capacity to compile and use statistics is severely limited, and in many cases non-existent. <p>As a result, staff involved in collecting, compiling and analysing statistics are overwhelmed with ongoing pressures to meet known demands and feel helpless to assist with new demands for data, which impacts on morale/motivation, and statistical activities and outputs begin to suffer.</p>	<p>the formulation of a NSDS, which will propose new communication structures/regular sectoral working groups to address such challenges, which will be addressed during the design of the NSDS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attract greater political and financial support, national statistical agencies should achieve a greater balance in data collection and dissemination, and dedicate more time to producing regular statistical outputs that address national and international development objectives. They should do so through more user-relevant and user-friendly formats employing a range of statistical outputs such as statistical tables, infographics, short fact-sheets highlighting policy and planning implications and concise analytical reports. • More frequent and timely data releases addressing known user needs are the best communication strategy to highlight the importance of statistics for development. • To enable their national statistical agencies to implement such commitments, governments may wish to review current staffing levels and budgetary support. A NSDS provides a solid base to adopt a whole government/NSS-wide approach.
<p>Risk-2: Lack of buy-in by government officials to NSDS process</p> <p>Notwithstanding strong political support for this process by ministers or departmental secretaries responsible for statistics expressed to PARIS21 during initial planning dialogues, ongoing commitment by senior government officials is critical for NSDS formulation and its ultimate implementation to succeed.</p> <p>This includes prioritising regular attendance at, and active contributions to, NSDS planning meetings and activities as an integral part of their regular work programme and professional commitment, starting with the initial NSDS launch and planning workshop, subsequent NSS assessment consultations, right throughout the NSDS strategic planning workshop and subsequent NSDS sectoral taskforce/ working group meetings that are responsible for developing the structure and content of the NSDS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretaries of government departments and heads of national agencies are invited to ensure that key senior staff responsible for department and agency policy development, planning and data/information management are available and committed to attending all known NSDS planning meetings, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The NSDS Launch and planning workshop; ○ subsequent NSS assessment consultations, ○ the NSDS strategic planning workshop; ○ regular NSDS sectoral taskforce meetings. • Recognising that staff may have other obligations, including opportunities to travel abroad on government business, early knowledge of dates concerning key NSDS activities may assist in prioritisation of staff commitments.

5. The five phases of NSDS formulation: Activities, responsibility, outputs and timelines

Formulating or designing a NSDS comprises five distinct stages or phases, made up of specific tasks with outputs, responsibilities and indicative timelines, as outlined below.

Stage 1: Preliminary tasks

Activities	Responsibility	Outputs	Indicative timeline
Finalise TORs (of external NSDS consultant)	PARIS21 (or other funding agency to support the NSDS process) with head of country's NSO	Finalised TORs	Prior to official NSDS launching workshop
Appoint full-time Country NSDS co-ordinator to assist the government statistician with administrative/organisational tasks associated with the NSDS development process	Government Statistician	NSDS co-ordinator appointed	Prior to official NSDS launching workshop
Country NSDS official Launching workshop 1. Familiarise stakeholder of the NSS with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose/benefits of multi-year statistical planning and its link to governance and national development agenda, via development of a NSDS; • different phases of NSDS formulation/design process; • importance of NSDS governance structure. 2. Review the current situation of the NSS through a formal SWOT analysis.	Country NSDS co-ordinator/ Government Statistician, with external assistance of consultant and/or PARIS21 in developing agenda and in facilitating workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful delivery of workshop (reflected in stakeholder understanding of NSDS process/benefits via workshop evaluation) • Successful conduct of SWOT analysis, resulting in shared understanding by stakeholders of the current situation of the country's NSS • SWOT analysis summary report prepared 	Month 1: Week 1, 2 days

Stage 2: Assessment of the National Statistical System

Activities	Responsibility	Outputs	Indicative timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately after NSDS official launching workshop, conduct NSS assessment focusing on institutional aspects and sectoral data/statistics Assessment methodology involves initial desk review, one-on-one consultations with key stakeholders and sector agencies, using an NSS Assessment Template Following this exercise, present preliminary findings to high-level official in charge of statistics and participants (half-day, face-to-face meeting) 	External NSDS consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial findings from desk review Face-to-face consultations undertaken with all key stakeholders Share preliminary assessment findings with workshop participants 	Month 1: Week 1, 3 days Week 2, 4 days Week 2, half-day
Complete first draft of NSS assessment report and send to NSO for dissemination in the NSS for review and validation	External NSDS consultant	Draft NSS assessment report sent to NSO and NSS (and PARIS21) for review	Month 2
Final draft NSS assessment report following review/endorsement by country and PARIS21	External NSDS consultant	Final NSS assessment report endorsed by country and PARIS21	Month 2/ Month 3
Prepare first draft NSDS roadmap and send to country and PARIS21 for review (only for first NSDS preparation; further NSDS formulation need not have a roadmap)	External NSDS consultant	Final NSS assessment report endorsed by country and PARIS21	Month 3

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Stage 3: Visioning and strategy development

Activities	Responsibility	Outputs	Indicative timeline
2nd NSDS workshop on strategic planning Prior to workshop, recruit national NSDS consultant to co-ordinate inputs and prepare the draft NSDS	Government Statistician, NSDS co-ordinator, External NSDS consultant, PARIS21	Successful workshop, having achieved desired outcomes	Month 4
1. Review/validate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop 1 SWOT analysis NSS assessment report country NSDS roadmap to extract statistical policy priorities for inclusion in NSDS/action plans 	Workshop participants: Government Statistician, NSDS co-ordinator, National NSDS consultant, External NSDS consultant, PARIS21, regional body	Agreed policy priorities to guide development of NSDS Final assessment report and NSDS roadmap	
2. Discuss/workshop and agree on NSDS strategic framework (vision, mission, core values, strategic objectives and priorities)	Workshop participants: Government Statistician, NSDS co-ordinator, National NSDS, External NSDS consultant, PARIS21, regional body	Agreement on NSDS vision, mission, core values, strategic objectives and priorities	
3. Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> draft NSDS governance structure discussed at NSDS Launching workshop establish composition of steering committee and sectoral technical working groups (STWGs) to guide the NSDS formulation/design process 	Workshop participants: Government Statistician, NSDS co-ordinator, National NSDS consultant, External NSDS consultant, PARIS21, regional body	Agreement on final NSDS governance structure, and composition of STWGs	
4. Preparation of draft NSDS strategic framework document arising from the workshop, containing agreed-upon NSDS vision, mission, values, strategic objectives Submit to NSO and NSS for review and comments	External NSDS consultant; for review by Government Statistician, NSDS co-ordinator, National NSDS consultant, PARIS21	Draft NSDS strategic framework document reviewed and endorsed by government	
5. Post-workshop national activity 1: NSDS steering committee meets to review/finalise workshop agreements on NSDS vision, mission, core values, strategic objectives/ priorities	NSDS co-ordinator convenes 1st meeting of NSDS steering committee (also attended by national NSDS consultant)	the national NSDS consultant to prepare final vision, mission, value, strategic objective statement	Month 5
6. Post-workshop national activity 2: Co-chairs of NSDS steering committee to debrief their respective secretaries/heads on final NSDS vision, mission, core values, strategic priorities – to seek government’s final endorsement/ commitment to proceed with NSDS development	NSDS steering committee co-chairs (supported by NSDS co-ordinator/national NSDS consultant)	Government go-ahead to proceed with NSDS development	Month 5/ Month 6
7. Post-workshop national activity 3: STWGs meet to review/discuss NSDS committee deliberations, and explore priority areas and focus of work, to lay foundation for work on sector strategic action plans.	NSDS co-ordinator + STWG co-chairs to convene 1st meeting of their respective groups; national NSDS consultant	Agreed-upon action plan guiding their work	Month 5/ Month 6

Stage 4: Develop implementation plan (with costing)

Activities	Responsibility	Outputs	Indicative timeline
Develop institutional and sector implementation plans based on NSS assessment report	NSO and STWGs, with assistance from national consultant, and facilitation by NSDS co-ordinator	Completed draft sector action plans	Month 6/ Month 8
Review/synthesize validated sector action plans, with costed priority inputs/ activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSO • National consultant • Review by NSDS steering committee • Peer review by PARIS21 on request 	Completion of synthesis and review	
Finalise statistical policy issues and agenda from sector action plans for submission and final clearance by NSDS steering committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSO • National consultant • NSDS steering committee 	Final draft reviewed/cleared by NSDS steering committee	
Preparation of final NSDS document and policy paper for review by NSDS steering committee, prior to submission to concerned ministries, before submission to cabinet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSO • National consultant • NSDS steering committee 	Final NSDS design document	

Stage 5: Start NSDS implementation phase

Activities	Responsibility	Outputs	Indicative timeline
Publish and circulate NSDS document, including executive summary	NSDS steering committee (assisted by NSO, NSDS co-ordinator, national consultant)	Hard copy of NSDS document	Month 9
Establish M&E arrangements for NSDS implementation in line with NSDS M&E framework, facilitating ongoing consultations between key stakeholders in the spirit of <i>Paris Declaration</i>	NSDS steering committee (with backstop support from NSO)	Monitoring arrangements in place, with specified timelines for activities and reporting	
Mobilise resources needed for NSDS implementation: domestic resources and contributions from development partners	NSDS steering committee, CEOs finance, planning, statistics, foreign affairs (with backstop support of the NSO)	Successful submissions for financial assistance made to development partners	

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Outline of NSDS Launching Workshop

[name of country] NSDS Workshop-1: Launching of [name of country] National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), including preview of [name of country] NSS assessment

Purpose: to introduce key stakeholders of [name of country] national statistical system (NSS), including both data producers and data users, to the purpose and benefits of multi-year strategic statistical planning, as embodied in the concept of developing and implementing a *National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)*.

Participants: targeted senior government officials from all government agencies, with **responsibility for sectoral policy and planning and/or data/information management**, and statistical subject matter specialists from the National Statistics Office (NSO). The former usually includes finance, planning, education, health, social affairs, natural resources (including environment and climate change), transport, information and communications technologies (ICT) and Industry.

Where relevant, participation should also include the country's Central or Reserve Bank, the private sector represented by the chamber of commerce, local media and resident development partners.

Each government agency is requested to be represented at least at deputy-director (CEO) level, plus their designated data producers (statisticians/data specialists) and data users (planners/policy analysts).

Topics covered:

- *Introduction to NSDS* (the purpose of multi-year planning), and the role of the SIDS-NSDS Guidelines (NSDS resource person)
- *Overview of country's NSS* – perspectives of data producers and data users (presentation by the Government Statistician and head of planning)
- *SWOT analysis of country's NSS* (NSDS resource person); work in sectoral working groups, focusing on four broad themes (current statistical collections, unmet data needs, data availability/access, and analytical/dissemination capacity and practices), and related institutional, governance and co-ordination practices and challenges.
- *Stages of NSDS formulation* (NSDS resource person)
- *Preliminary discussion on Nauru-NSDS governance arrangements* (NSDS resource person)
- *Follow-up activities required by workshop participants prior to the Nauru-NSDS strategic planning workshop* (to be convened, ideally within 4 to 6 weeks after this introductory workshop)

A draft agenda template is provided below.

Draft agenda

Date/time	Activity	Presenter
Day 1:		
8.30 – 9.15	<p>Official Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Address by [name of country] Government • Development partner message • Introduction of participants <p>Overview of workshop Workshop agenda, objectives, expected outcomes</p>	<p>NSDS resource person (<i>responsible for workshop facilitation and presentations</i>)</p>
9.15 – 10.00	<p>1. Presentation 1: Introduction to the NSDS process (purpose of multi-year planning) and the role of the revised NSDS 2.0 guidelines for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (revised PowerPoints 1-3)</p>	
10.00–10.30	Coffee/Tea Break	
10.30 – 12.00	<p>2. Presentation 2: Overview of NSS – Perspectives of data producers and data users</p> <p>National Statistical Office: to provide description of its role and responsibilities; role of other data producing agencies; co-ordination and governance arrangements; collaboration between government agencies</p> <p>National planning agency: to provide a brief overview of current national development policy plan and priorities. This is critical to establish government data priorities, outlining what specific statistics are required and with what regularity (which provides a solid basis for the value-added of developing an NSDS) <i>Group discussion</i></p>	<p>Head of statistics</p> <p>Head of planning</p>
12.00–13.00	LUNCH	
13.00 – 15.00	<p>3. Workshop: SWOT analysis Presentation 3: Assessing the NSS (PowerPoint 4)</p> <p>Small working groups: focus on current collections, data needs, availability/access, analysis/dissemination; as well as institutional, governance, co-ordination issues</p> <p>Resource material: SIDS NSS assessment template distributed to participants</p>	
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee/tea break	
15.30 – 17.00	3. Workshop: SWOT analysis continuation ...	

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Date/time	Activity	Presenter
Day 2:		
8.00 – 10.00	3. Workshop: SWOT analysis continuation ... Groups fine-tune their work, before presenting to the plenary session	
10.00 – 10.30	Coffee/tea break	
10.30 – 12.00	3. Workshop: SWOT analysis continuation ... Consolidation of working groups' individual assessments into one common one that all can agree to (common ownership!)	
12.00 – 13.00	LUNCH	
13.00 – 14.00	Presentation 4: Preparing the [name of country] NSDS (PowerPoint 5) <i>Group discussion</i>	
14.00 – 15.00	Presentation 5: Stages of [name of country] NSDS formulation (PowerPoint 6) <i>Group discussion</i>	
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee/tea break	
15.30 – 16.15	Presentation-6: Governance of [name of country] NSDS (PowerPoint 7)	
16.15 – 17.00	Presentation 7: Introduce participants to <i>statistical gap analysis</i> they need to undertake in their sectors, to be able to address current and growing demands for regular monitoring and reporting of development progress (PowerPoint 8) Reference materials to be provided: a. Latest [name of country] development framework (plan, policy) b. Regional policy framework (where relevant) c. Final list of SDG indicators	
17.00 – 18.00	Workshop evaluation and closing	

Appendix 2: SIDS NSS assessment template

Assessment of [name of country] National Statistical System (NSS)

Purpose: As previously outlined in Section 4, an assessment of a country's NSS represents the first and essential preparatory step of the NSDS process. Its main purpose is to identify common systemic challenges, strengths and opportunities that will ultimately help identify strategic priority areas to be addressed by the NSDS.

Process: The assessment process comprises one-on-one consultations by the NSDS resource person with both data producers and users from all major government agencies. These consultations usually take between 45 and 90 minutes with each sectoral agency, and depending on the size of the country's NSS, this will entail between 5 and 7 days of in-country work.

To ensure a consistent approach across all sectors, these consultations are guided by a structured assessment template to facilitate coverage of the same issues across four core topics:

1. **Data collection** by specific agency (specific ministry/government department)
This addresses all data collections/compilations by each agency, the purpose for doing so and its ultimate use, including capacity (human and financial resources) and the legal mandate to do so.
2. **Un-met data needs** by specific agency
This refers to data/statistics needed for agency work, but which are currently not collected/compiled by this agency.
3. **Data availability and access** (this covers two features):
 - agency needs to access data elsewhere (from other agencies)
 - accessibility to agency data by external users
4. **Data analysis and dissemination:**
This addresses each agency's statistical capacity to undertake data analysis/dissemination and the beneficiary of this information.

Broader systemic issues related to NSS capacity, such as governance, co-ordination, resources, statistical leadership and management cutting across all four topics are specifically addressed at the end of each conversation, if they have not already been identified.

A copy of the SIDS-NSS assessment template is provided below.

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SIDS NSS Assessment template

MODULE 1: Data collection by your office/agency ***(and capacity to do so)***

1. What statistics does your office (agency) currently collect?
⇒ **IF NO COLLECTION DONE IN-HOUSE – please skip to Module 2**
2. What is the purpose of/reason for collecting this information? Is there a specific legal mandate for this data collection?
3. What is it used for? Who uses it?
4. How often do you collect this information? Do you have a regular calendar of collections, so your clients/customers/stakeholders know when new information becomes available?
5. Do you have designated staff to do this job (Y/N), or is this something done by "whoever has the time, whose turn it might be this time"?
6. How are these data collected, processed, and stored (paper form, e-form, database)?
7. Are these data collected through a survey (probability?/non-probability?) or as a by-product of an administrative reporting system?
8. Do you have in-house capacity to design forms, questionnaires, electronic data capture, or do you rely on other agencies to help you with this?
IF YES: what capacity do you have?
IF NO: where can you access such capacity?
9. Has any of your staff undertaking these tasks received any training in the past, to help him/her to perform these duties? If yes, by whom?
10. Do you have a regular and designated budget (annual, every two years) to allow you to collect these statistics?
IF YES: what is the source?
IF NO: what do you do, how do you go about getting financial support?
11. How do you rate the quality of data you collect? Do you get any feedback on this from those who use the information?
12. Do you make these data/statistics available to other agencies/stakeholders?
IF YES: who are they?
IF NO: why not?

MODULE 2: Your currently unmet data needs***(data you would like to collect or need to collect, but currently are unable to do so)***

1. What specific statistics/data do you need, and which are essential for you to do your job, but which you currently do not collect or compile yourself? (Please provide examples of the types of statistics, indicators you need – *what story do you need to tell?*)
2. What is/what should this kind of statistics/data be used for?
3. **Do you get this from another agency/agencies?**

IF YES:

4. Who provides you with this information?
5. What are the arrangements to get it from them?
6. Is this arrangement working out well for you?
7. Do you have regular access to this information?
8. Is this data sufficient/adequate to do your work?

IF NO:

9. What kind of statistics/data do you require for your work, but cannot obtain?
10. What is this information needed for?
11. How do you do your work without this information?
12. Is anyone in your office (your managers, directors) aware of these constraints to your work?
13. What processes/systems do you think should/could be put in place to satisfy these data/statistics demands?
14. Why do you think this is currently not happening?

THOSE HAVING SPECIFIC UNMET DATA NEEDS:

15. What are the main statistics needs (type of data, regularity of collection, or access to this information etc.) you currently experience?
16. What solutions could you think of so that these needs could be met?

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MODULE-3: Data availability and data access

1. Have you come across a situation in your present work, where you knew specific statistics, data, indicators were available/collected by some other agency, but you could not access them?

IF YES: please proceed with Questions 2 to 4

IF NO: *you are a lucky person – **please proceed with Module 4** (but before you do so: please answer how you were able to access these data – in reports, in spreadsheets, raw form?)*

2. Could you please provide some examples of data you needed (and you knew these existed) but had difficulty obtaining?
3. What were the main reasons you could not access them?
4. Were you eventually able to obtain these data?

MODULE-4: Data analysis and dissemination

(statistical capacity of your office/agency to undertake data analysis/dissemination)

1. Do you/does your office have the capacity to analyse (interpret) the data/statistics you routinely collect – or statistics that you can access/are provided to you by other agencies (such as, for example, by your NSO)?

IF YES: what training have you/other colleagues in your office received in data analysis or interpretation of statistical tables?

IF NO: who can you ask/rely on to do this analysis for you/for your office?

2. **Once analysed**, what do you do with the results?
3. Who are the main **beneficiaries** of your work and your reports?
4. Is this work requested/required from you – or do you do this as a matter of professional commitment?
5. What happens with these analyses/reports?
6. How often do you produce/send out these reports?

Appendix 3: Outline of NSDS strategic planning workshop

[name of country] NSDS strategic planning workshop

Purpose: To maintain the momentum and interest generated during the first workshop introducing the NSDS concept, followed by NSS assessment by one-on-one consultation across key sectors contributing to the draft NSS assessment report and produced by the NSDS resource person. It is recommended that this NSDS strategic planning workshop be convened within 2 to 3 months after the NSDS introduction/planning meeting launching the NSDS process and NSS assessment.

Participants: the same senior government officials from government agencies who have attended the first workshop.

Topics Covered: envisaged to run over 3 days, the workshop has four main objectives with the aim to achieve four tangible outcomes:

- *Review of draft NSS assessment report findings,*
Ensure agreement on what constitutes key institutional and other common challenges experienced across the countries' NSS that ought to be addressed in the country's upcoming NSDS.
- *Validation of sectoral SWOT analyses undertaken during the first workshop*
Ensure the results are understood and acknowledged by everyone, are aligned with key NSS assessment report findings, and thus provide the basis to identify/agree on key common strategic objectives and associated activities and action plans for the country's NSDS.
- *Formulation of the country's NSDS vision, mission, core values and solidifying strategic objectives and key activities*
Ensure agreement on the basic strategic framework for the NSDS, to provide the national NSDS design team, including technical working and the national governance structure, with clear guidelines on how to develop the NSDS document, including sector-specific action plans after this workshop.
- *Validation of national NSDS governance structure and next step in the NSDS formulation process*
Ensure agreement of this proposal representing an effective means to guide both the NSDS formulation process and its subsequent implementation to be submitted to the government for appropriate action.

A draft agenda template is provided below.

Draft agenda

Day 1

8-30–09.15 Opening programme

- Welcome by government
- Partners message
- Introduction of workshop agenda: workshop objectives and expected outcomes by the NSDS resource person

09.15–10.15 Session 1: Discussion of draft NSS assessment findings

This process will entail a review of the NSS assessment report prepared by the NSDS resource person, and will be introduced by the national statistics office. It will comprise a plenary session and sectoral group discussions.

- *Purpose*: to ensure all group members have a final (or perhaps first) opportunity to comment on the draft assessment report
- *Expected outcome*: understanding that sectoral analysis/assessment reflects the views, observations, and concerns of most group members
- *Procedure*:
 - **Plenary** discussion: will be facilitated by the NSDS Resource Person, with national the NSDS co-ordinator taking summary notes
 - **Group** discussions: sectoral group discussions will be facilitated by NSDS resource person with each group choosing a moderator, a rapporteur to present findings to the plenary session and someone to take notes to assist the rapporteur

09.15–10.15 Session 1-1, Plenary session

Review of institutional challenges and other common challenges experienced across the national statistical system (NSS):

- 1.1 *Institutional challenges*
- 1.2 *Other common challenges*

Resource materials for this session:

- Copy of national NSS assessment report
- Summary PowerPoint slides prepared/introduced by Division of Statistics
PowerPoints 1-4

⇒ **Time**: 1 hours for review/discussion, to arrive at common validation of key challenges all (majority of group) can agree to.

10.15–10.45 Coffee/tea break

10.45–12.00 Session 1-2, sectoral groups

Review of key challenges pertaining to data collection, access/data-sharing, un-met needs, dissemination in **their respective sectors**.

4 groups: Division of statistics, economics, social aspects, natural resources

Resource materials for this session:

- Copy of NSS assessment report
- Summary **PowerPoints 5-8** prepared by NSDS resource person/ introduced by Division of Statistics

⇒ **Time**: 1 hours for review/discussion, to arrive at common validation of key challenges all (majority of group) can agree to.

12.00–13.00 Lunch

13.00–15.00 Session 1-3, Plenary session: each group presents their findings

⇒ **Time:** 1.5 hours for review/discussion, to arrive at common validation/ understanding of key sector-specific challenges most can agree to include NSDS design, section of statistical action plans/priorities.

15.00–15.30 Coffee/tea break

15.30–17.00 Session 2: Validation of sectoral SWOT analyses

Session 2-1: Updating of sectoral SWOT analyses prepared during 1st NSDS workshop, based on Day 1 (yesterday) review of NSS assessment report findings by NSDS resource person.

- *Purpose:* to ensure that the key strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities identified in these initial sectoral SWOT analyses are (i) understood and acknowledged by all group members, and (ii) are aligned with outcomes of yesterday’s discussion of the NSS assessment report.
- *Expected outcome:* sign-off by **each group member**, to ensure there are no remaining “surprises”.
- *Procedure:* sectoral group discussions will be facilitated by the NSDS resource person, each group choosing a moderator, a rapporteur to present findings to the plenary session and someone to take notes to assist the rapporteur.

Resource materials for this session:

- Copies of final sectoral SWOT analysis slides from 1st workshop provided by the NSDS resource person.
- **PowerPoints 9-10**

Day 2

8.30–10.00 Session 2-2: Converting validated SWOT analyses to TOWS matrices

Short introduction to TOWS by the NSDS resource person, to be followed by group work. Group work will comprise two parts:

- **Part 1:** Review/validate *country*-NSDS roadmap recommendations in relation to sectoral SWOT analysis outcomes
- **Part 2:** convert validated SWOT analyses to **TOWS matrices**, to identify main strategic objectives for the NSDS

- *Purpose:* to ensure key strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities identified in these initial sectoral SWOT analyses are (i) understood and acknowledged by all group members, and (ii) are aligned with outcomes of yesterday’s discussion of NSS assessment report, **and general recommendations contained in the country NSDS roadmap.**
- *Expected outcome:* sign-off by **each group member** to ensure there are no remaining “surprises”.
- *Procedure:* sectoral group discussions will be facilitated by NSDS resource person, each group choosing a moderator, a rapporteur to present findings to the plenary session and someone to take notes to assist the rapporteur.

Resource materials for this session:

- Information sheet on TOWS concept and process (to be prepared by the NSDS resource person).
- **PowerPoint 11**
- TOWS analysis worksheets 3.1 to 3.4 are to be distributed to the groups.

10.00–10.30 Coffee/tea break

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10.30–12.00 Session 2-3: Plenary discussion of TOWS matrices presented by all groups

- *Purpose*: to ensure common understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities emerging across all areas of the country's NSS, which lend themselves to be effectively addressed in a sector-wide strategic approach. This is the **very purpose** of developing the [country name] *Strategy for the Development of Statistics (country NSDS)*
- *Expected outcome*: sign-off **by all 4 Groups** that we have identified/agreed on key common **strategic objectives**, and **key activities/action plans**, and hence a common platform (rationale) to develop the *country NSDS*.

12.00–13.00 Lunch

13.00 –15.00 Session 3: Formulation of *country NSDS vision, mission, and core values and solidifying strategic objectives and key activities*

Session 3-1: Introduction to strategic planning (plenary session)

- *Purpose*: to familiarise all participants with the basic concepts of strategic planning and obtain sign-off by all groups on an agreed-upon *country NSDS vision, mission, core values*; the *country NSDS core strategic objectives* should reflect the outcome of Session 2-3, with "*sign-off by all 4 Groups that they identified/agreed on key common strategic objectives, and key activities/action plans, and hence a common platform (rationale) to develop the country NSDS*".
- *Expected outcome*: to ensure that all **groups** are "*on the same page*" for developing
 - the basic framework for the *country NSDS* (vision, mission, core values, strategic objectives),
 - providing the national NSDS consultant, NSDS technical working groups and the country's NSDS governance structure, with clear guidelines on how to develop the actual NSDS document (plan), including the various sectoral action plans **following this workshop**.

Resource Materials for this session:

- PowerPoint presentation on strategic planning, reviewing all core components such as vision, mission, core values, strategic objectives and action plans
- Examples of vision and mission statements, as well as core values, from other Pacific island countries (samples will be provided to participants).

PowerPoints 12-14

15.00–15.30 Coffee/tea break

15.30–17.00 Session 3-1: continues in group work

Day 3

8.30–10.00 Session 3-1: continues in group work

Finalising their proposed *country NSDS vision, mission and core values*
(PowerPoints 13b-14)

10.00–10.30 Coffee/tea break

10.30–12.00 Session 3-1: continues in group work

Finalising their proposed *country NSDS vision, mission and core values*

12.00–13.00 Lunch

13.00–14.30 Session 3-1: Final plenary session

Each group presents their respective proposal for a common *country* NSDS vision, mission and core values, with agreement on a final, common wording all/most can accept in the plenary session.

14.30–15.00 Coffee/tea break**15.00–17.00 Session 4: Validation of *country* NSDS governance structure and next steps in the *country* NSDS formulation process**

- *Purpose*: to ensure common understanding of the importance of a draft governance structure and associated activities discussed at the 1st NSDS workshop and subsequently reflected in the *country* NSDS roadmap. Key to its success is (i) using already existing structures wherever possible so as to not over-burden senior staff with additional committees, and (ii) commitment by its members.
PowerPoints 15-16
- *Expected outcome*: to sign-off **by all** as an effective means to guide the final *country* NSDS formulation process and subsequent implementation, to be submitted to the minister/secretary responsible for statistics for appropriate action.

17.00–18.00 Workshop evaluation and closing

Appendix 4: Outline of an NSDS roadmap

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Background information on the country (*this section would briefly describe the geography, politics and governance structure, economic, socio-demographic and environmental situation in the country*)
- 1.2. Introduction of NSDS concept (*a brief explanation of what NSDS is*)
- 1.3. Country's experience on strategic statistics planning (*provide information on the country's previous experience in statistical planning. If this is the first time doing statistical planning, provide information on what was being done before to plan*)
- 1.4. Rationale for the NSDS roadmap (*cite here why the country would like to formulate an NSDS*)

2. National statistical system (NSS)

- 2.1 Overview of the country's NSS (*this section will cover the following information*):
 - *structure/organisation and co-ordination of the statistical system (governance, set-up/relationship within the system, role and function of the NSO and other government agency data producers, co-ordination mechanisms in place)*
 - *statistical legislation/statistics act*
 - *statistical outputs/products and services (major statistical activities)*
 - *data dissemination and communication policies and practices*
 - *relationship with data users (within government, academic community, civil society, business and private sector, media, international community & donors)*
- 2.2 Current state of NSS¹⁷ (*this section will give an overview of the observations/assessment/evaluations of the statistical system in terms of*):
 - *available resources (number and profile of statistical staff; level and sources of financing for statistics; statistical infrastructure such as databases, internet, information systems, etc.)*
 - *availability/accessibility of statistics and indicators to monitor national development plans and international reporting commitments (e.g., national development indicators, MDG, SDG, Samoa Pathway, etc.)*
 - *data quality (timeliness, disaggregation, reliability)*
 - *data needs and gaps*
 - *other issues and challenges: statistical capacity, etc.*
- 2.3 Linkages with development partners (*this section will elaborate on the role/contribution of development partners in the statistical system*)

3. NSDS roadmap

- 3.1 Objectives and expected results in formulating NSDS (*describe here the objective for preparing an NSDS roadmap, what will be the expected outcome/results of the exercise, and what specific outputs will be delivered*)
- 3.2 National development policies and strategy and monitoring and reporting commitments (*this section will describe the current national development strategy of the government, in particular*)

¹⁷ Suggested documents that may be used to establish the current state of the national statistical system: comprehensive assessment report on the NSS, capacity assessment (e.g., World Bank Statistical Capacity Building Indicators), evaluation of specific sector statistics conducted by development partners (e.g., ADB on national accounts, IMF on economic and financial statistics, FAO on agriculture statistics, etc.), and evaluation of monitoring systems such as MDGs, among others.

the vision, goals, objectives and targets that the NSDS would need to consider/align to in designing the NSDS. Other development plans and priorities that would need statistics should also be included in this section. Likewise, it is necessary to include here information on other reporting and monitoring commitments of the country, e.g., reporting of MDG, SDG, Samoa Pathway, International convention agreements, etc.)

3.3 Organisation and governance set-up for NSDS *(this section will describe the organisational and governance arrangements and co-ordination set-up that should be in place relative to the formulation of the NSDS. The roles and responsibilities of key actors and stakeholders in the NSDS formulation should also be clearly stated here)*

3.4 Phases of NSDS formulation *(this section will explain the different phases/stages of designing and/or formulating the NSDS based on the PARIS21 Guidelines. Each phase will include the specific activities to be undertaken, the responsibility centre, the expected output/s and the indicative timelines)*

3.5 Resources for NSDS formulation *(this section will provide information on the resources needed for NSDS formulation and where these resources will be potentially sourced)*

3.6 Monitoring and revision of NSDS *(this section will describe how the monitoring of the NSDS will be carried out, the frequency of reporting, who will be responsible for the NSDS monitoring and reporting and when an update or revision of the NSDS will be conducted)*

4. Recommendations on the scope of activities in the NSDS

(This will cover the consultant's recommendations on what the NSDS would need to cover, in particular to address data gaps in the statistical system and respond to user needs. It will include recommendations on what statistical areas to focus on based on national development priorities, and other areas to strengthen the national statistical system)

5. References *(provide the list of documents used as references in the roadmap preparation)*

6. Annexes

- Annex 1: Estimated cost of formulating the NSDS (In USD/local currency)
- Annex 2: Indicative schedule/timeline of NSDS formulation

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