



PSDP

**PHILIPPINE STATISTICAL
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**
2011-2017 Strategic Plan

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

The PSDP 2011-2017 represents the convergence of stakeholders in the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) towards the production and delivery of timely, relevant, and quality official statistics that is anchored on every Filipino's right to information.

Broadly, the PSDP 2011-2017 envisions the PSS to be responsive, effective, and efficient in providing quality statistics for evidence-based decisions towards the attainment of the nation's development goals. The PSDP serves as a roadmap with strategic guideposts and pegs of desired outcomes that characterize the changes and reforms needed to realize the vision. With strong political support and adequate resources, the PSDP shall facilitate and ensure the production of statistics in aid of good governance towards inclusive growth, reduced poverty, and sustainable progress in the country.

The recent past has been especially challenging for the PSS as demand for statistics continues to grow in quantity and quality while resources made available to the major statistical agencies (MSAs) and key data producers have been on steady decline. The severely depleted statistical workforce and limited budget in most of the major statistical agencies may have delayed by several years the improvement of critical statistics and the development of new ones which if were made available could have contributed to better public policies and services.

Nevertheless, as of 2011 the Philippines ranks first among 21 East Asia and Pacific countries and among eight ASEAN member states in the World Bank's Country Statistical Capacity Database with a high statistical capacity rating of 89 percent. The country has also tied for seventh to tenth places with Egypt, Mexico, and Ukraine among the 144 developing countries in the same database. The ranking, which is based on combined ratings in terms of statistical methodologies adopted, adequacy and comprehensiveness of source data, and periodicity and timeliness of statistical information, is a broad indication of the high level of statistical development of the country.

This assessment is not without basis as there were some significant developments during the period 2005-2011. Compilation of poverty statistics has improved anew and expanded to produce estimates at municipality level and for the basic sectors despite the extremely meager human resources. The Philippine System of National Accounts series has been rebased from 1985 to 2000 and revised to consider new developments, updated data, and methodological changes, including the 1993/2008 SNA recommendations. It has been a long time coming for the PSNA update but not before many of the more experienced national accounts statisticians have left.

Meanwhile, major statistical activities have pushed through even if a few have experienced cuts or delays in funding. The PSS has conducted censuses of population, housing, business, and industries and periodic surveys of family income and expenditure, poverty, labor force, health, education, energy, prices, business and industries, agriculture and fishery.

New surveys have been introduced such as those on family health, tourism, business and consumer expectations, and innovation. Technology has made its way in basic data collection through handheld computers and mobile phones and in dissemination through interactive websites, online databases, and geographic information systems. Coordinated and comprehensive data and microdata documentation and archiving have been initiated.



Most notable however is the improved accessibility of official statistics in recent years which may have been a direct result of the conscious decision and motivated action of the MSAs to proactively disseminate and communicate their statistical products and services to the public. Towards the end of the period 2005-2010 until 2011, the MSAs have significantly increased the quantity, variety, and expanse of statistics available and accessible on their websites inviting more data requests, pagehits, and downloads from users of all walks of life, the growing Filipino netizens included. With media appreciation of statistics on a long time high, data releases, statistical events, and government statisticians have earned more than a fair share in print and broadcast media and the internet thrusting official statistics greater and further into public attention and consciousness.

Challenges remain though and new ones are expected to emerge. There are the persistent gaps in data quality, the lack of data on old and new concerns alike, including the long and much sought-after local-level data, the need for more detailed and comprehensive data, and the clamor for quicker and easier access to statistics. Technology presents many opportunities for improving statistical operations but acquiring and applying it to business processes come with huge costs that currently available resources may simply not be able to cover. Moreover, statistical capacity gaps continue to exist within MSAs but the gap between MSAs and other data producers, especially LGUs, has significantly widened. Statistical policymaking and coordination need some retooling while statistical research and development requires critical rethinking.

The overall challenge for the PSS however is sustaining its capacity to respond to steadily growing information needs of the primary stakeholders the government, business sector, and civil society. At present, the PSS is confronted with the reality that it may be at risk of not being able to sustain current supply of statistics let alone make improvements if there are no drastic interventions to address the root cause of its problems, that is, inadequate resources. Data shows that this problem has persisted for so long, consciously or indifferently passed on from administration to administration.

In an increasingly globalizing world where information has become a prime mover, government may need to break with tradition, shift its direction, and make the bold decision to invest more in statistics. In particular, it has to arrest and reverse the declining number of government statisticians and human capital for statistics. It simply must provide more funding to produce more relevant and better quality statistics as well as to strengthen coordination, capacity building, and research and development. A medium-term expenditure framework for statistics, which is envisaged to facilitate the attainment of the vision and goals of the PSS, needs be considered and integrated into the government's expenditure planning and management.

The PSDP 2011-2017 proposes many important strategic measures to improve all aspects of data quality. It aims to produce more relevant statistics, e.g., governance, security, climate change, environment, weather and climate, disasters, and social protection, as well as the poor, basic sectors, and the vulnerable. It calls for in particular the adoption of core national development indicators as well as the development of appropriate frameworks for better relevance, coherence, and comparability of statistics.

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It invites greater attention to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of business processes, e.g., reducing cost of production and improving productivity, and to enhancing data quality assurance mechanisms. Administrative data, which has long been hailed as an important alternative to costly survey-based statistics, are given renewed focus in terms of both policy and strategy supported by such high profile programs as the establishment of an administrative records review and clearance system, generation of data from program registries, and development of the business register.

Through the PSDP, the PSS shall be able to bring statistics really closer to users. The development of an integrated PSS statistics web portal, establishment of new statistical information centers at the local levels, use of social networking, and more active media partnerships will help make access to statistics quicker and easier. Meanwhile, data and microdata documentation (metadata) will ensure long-term protection and preservation of the country's statistical legacy for future generations of data users.

In terms of organizational development, the PSS must strive to further enhance statistical management and coordination by institutionalizing results-based management, strengthening legal and policy instruments, revitalizing coordination and monitoring mechanisms, and improving stakeholder communication and partnerships. Moreover, the PSS will have to start building a more comprehensive and integrated statistical network that includes all national government agencies as well as local government units in accordance with the essence of Executive Order 121. The creation and posting of at least one government statistician in every municipality in particular will entail massive amount of direct and attendant costs but will surely enrich the country's statistical database that can bear benefits for good governance and development beyond measure.

Furthermore, the PSS should press greater statistical capacity development through institutional building measures and an integrated approach to technical, professional, and career development of statistical human resources not only in the MSAs but across NGAs and LGUs. It should encourage more focused and diligent statistical research and development that truly contributes to data quality improvement, methodological development, and innovation.

Finally, the PSS must take concrete steps to ensure and safeguard the independence of official statistics, to instill greater transparency and accountability in statistical institutions in line with the "Tuwid na Daan" principle through the adoption of a code of ethics and practice, and to strengthen data quality assurance towards increased public trust and hence wider and rational use of official statistics in the country.