NSDS 2.0 in a Nutshell

National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
Ten years after the adoption of the Action Plan for Statistics in Marrakech in 2004, the catalyst for the development of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) by PARIS21, national statistical systems (NSS) are still far from fully meeting the needs of users. NSDS have been implemented in nearly 100 countries, and have helped to raise awareness about the key role of official statistics in development, to ensure early involvement of users in the operation of NSS, to better mobilize national funding and the involvement of technical and financial partners, and to improve dissemination. In many countries, however, progress remains insufficient, funding remains dependent on sources outside of the country, the process of programming and annual monitoring and evaluation remains incomplete and does not include all producers, confidence in the NSS is low and governance remains weak, including transparency and independence.

The NSDS is concerned with official statistics, corresponding to a set of information that meets the collective needs of public administration, the private sector and the public in general, to produce quality economic, demographic, social, cultural and environmental data. However in order to continue to promote the NSDS after ten years of experience, it had to be revisited in order to enhance and adapt the tool based on assessments made and the views of users and producers within the changing context of development. The new guidelines focus on a number of sensitive issues, leading to a restating of the basic principles along with new concerns (“specific issues”).

**Policy Priority:** Building an NSS to meet the challenges of development is an ambitious process of changing an existing system in its institutional, organizational and human dimensions. This requires managing all the necessary changes. Experiences show that an NSDS can only succeed if it is backed by strong political commitment, recognition of its priority status in the development process and its inclusion in country development documents (development plans, poverty reduction plans, etc.). This kind of integration reflects political commitment and affirms that the NSDS prioritises the production of the data required for the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the development plan.
Funding: As a priority component of the development process, the NSDS should receive the funding required for its implementation. Insufficient funding is a major constraint in the implementation of NSDSs. Statistics in general should receive increased funding from the budget, reflecting the focus it deserves and the public nature of official statistics. A funding plan must be established and followed for the duration of the NSDS, incorporating the complementary role of technical and financial partners (TFP). Coordinating TFPs in statistics can facilitate dialogue on such financing and the implementation of the strategy.

Advocacy and Communication: Data collection and analysis should be disseminated to all potential users by the most suitable means. This distribution must be a priority for the NSS. The NSS must be the main advocate, seeking to show the importance of how data produced can have the ability to support the decision process of the government and the private sector, provide checks on policymakers, and strengthen transparency and good governance in service of the people. This process will in turn enhance the legitimacy of the NSS and its image among users. The NSDS should more effectively involve users in preparation and implementation strategies; the progress made thus far is just the beginning.
The new guidelines highlight ten fundamental principles for structuring the preparation and implementation of NSDS. The NSDS should:

1. Have the support of policy makers at a high level;
2. Rely on a rigorous methodology: analysis of the situation, vision, strategic objectives and action plans taking account of financial constraints.
3. Align with development objectives; provide data for a results-based management approach to development; meet the needs of users
4. Build on existing, and ensure compliance with, international commitments.
5. Rely on international standards for statistics.
6. Cover the whole of the NSS.
7. Integrate the various dimensions of capacity building.
8. Ensure priority funding from the state budget.
10. Integrate monitoring and evaluation.
**Diagnosis** is a key step in the preparation of an NSDS: it provides information on available products (data, analysis, dissemination, availability), the degree of user satisfaction, the existing capacity of the NSS, governance systems, human resources, infrastructure, equipment, IT, and means of operation.

A **vision of the NSS** in the medium term will be based on the tasks to be completed by the NSS according to the development strategy and the current state of affairs determined from the diagnosis.

**Strategic objectives** illustrate this vision practically, faced with constraints of predictable funding. Objectives are formulated in terms of: the governance system of the NSS; human resources; infrastructure and equipment; mobilizing funding; statistics policy: quality, standards, dissemination, confidentiality, and partnerships. These objectives reflect the data needs of the development plan associated with the NSDS.

**Annual action plans** include financing plans and cover all public data producers. The modalities of monitoring and evaluation are defined.

The new guidelines address topics that have to date gained little attention (**specific issues**), but which are becoming growing concerns:

- Adaptation of NSDS by fragile states and small island developing states;
- Preparation of sectoral strategies for statistical development;
- Preparation of intra-national and regional development strategies of statistics;
- The consequences for NSS development of public open data.
PARIS21, or the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, brings together decision makers, data analysts, and national, regional, and international statisticians. Its objective consists of developing the capacities of national statistical systems in developing countries, by assisting them to design and implement their NSDS.

PARIS21 is supported by a Secretariat based in Paris, hosted within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

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

- Supporting countries in **NSDS design, implementation, and monitoring processes**: roadmaps, action plans, validation workshops, resource mobilisation, mid-term reviews, drafting of advocacy documents, etc.

- Encouraging the establishment of **dialogue mechanisms** at the country level: co-ordination of all national statistical system actors (e.g., National Statistical Councils) but also between the government and the community of donors, possibly with specific mechanisms for the co-ordination of donors to prepare and implement NSDSs.

- Providing on-demand **advisory services** in certain fields: statistical legislation, National Statistical Councils, training.

- Providing specific support to **fragile/crisis states** as well as **small island developing states**.

- **Sharing information** on experiences from other regions in designing and implementing NSDSs.
For further information:
www.paris21.org