

Mainstreaming Sectoral Statistical Systems into a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics

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Abstract

In order to be effective, development policies require comprehensive data from a variety of sectors. It is necessary to make data collected by sectors and by national statistical offices (NSOs) more widely available to meet the results-based development agenda. Unfortunately, in Africa most National Statistical Systems (NSSs) are not well coordinated, with NSOs operating autonomously and sectoral statistical systems operating vertically. This paper summarizes a framework of objectives and strategies to mainstream sectoral statistical systems into an NSS. The framework has been developed and a guide was published in 2007. The objectives are: (i) to make more efficient use of resources in the statistical system; (ii) to improve the provision of indicators; (iii) to increase the productivity of data collection and its management; and (iv) to raise the public profile for statistics. Twelve crosscutting strategies are described to meet these objectives. The intended result is a coordinated NSS capable of efficiently and effectively monitoring development progress.

Key words: *Statistical systems, Strategy, Sectors, Results-based development agenda*

Résumé

Pour être efficaces, les politiques de développement requièrent des données complètes émanant de divers secteurs. Il est nécessaire de faire en sorte que les données collectées par les secteurs et les instituts nationaux de statistiques (INS) soient disponibles à plus large échelle afin de satisfaire aux exigences des programmes de développement axés sur les résultats. Malheureusement en Afrique, la plupart des systèmes statistiques nationaux (SSN) ne sont pas bien coordonnés, les INS fonctionnant plutôt de façon autonome alors que les systèmes statistiques sectoriels fonctionnent verticalement. Cet article reprend de façon condensée le cadre des objectifs et des stratégies pouvant être utilisés dans l'intégration des systèmes statistiques sectoriels dans un SSN. Ledit cadre a été

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élaboré et un guide a été publié en 2007. Les objectifs sont énumérés comme suit : (i) faire une utilisation plus efficace des ressources; (ii) améliorer la disponibilité d'indicateurs; (iii) accroître la productivité de la collecte et de la gestion des données; et (iv) rehausser le profil public des statistiques. Douze stratégies transversales sont décrites en vue d'atteindre ces objectifs. Le résultat prévu est un SSN mieux coordonné permettant un suivi plus efficace et plus efficient du progrès du développement.

Mots clés : *Systèmes statistiques, stratégie, secteurs, programme de développement axé sur les résultats*

1. INTRODUCTION

The emphasis on managing for results has created an increase in statistical demand to monitor and measure the progress of development strategies⁴ and frameworks. This dictates the need for inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact indicators.

Statistics are required to support policy agendas and research on established development goals that arise from various world summits and conferences, Country Support Programs (CSPs) plus UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) developed at country level in line with national development priorities. They are also required to inform policies on crosscutting issues, such as democracy, good governance and human rights, gender, HIV/AIDS surveillance and monitoring, environment, etc. The entire NSS must be capable of supplying all required statistics and indicators that support these programs and policies.

However, most data needs in Africa cannot be met due to under-resourced and capacity-weak NSSs. In order to redress this situation, capacity of the various components (sectors) of the NSS require enhancement. This implies having a paradigm shift in the development of NSSs in which all components are strengthened along with the improvements taking place at the NSO level. The focus of preparing medium-term strategies or corporate plans for NSOs, or even designing a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) but addressing the concerns of the NSOs

⁴ Development strategies and frameworks include sectoral policies and programs in agriculture, environment, education, health, labor and employment, commerce and industry, and infrastructural development etc.; national development plans; national vision frameworks; Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs); New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

only, must change. An overall development of statistics in a country should therefore cover the whole NSS, integrating the concerns of all the sectors into the NSDS.

This paper presents a framework of objectives and strategies to mainstream sectoral statistical systems into an NSDS. The second section emphasizes the necessity to strengthen the entire NSS through the design and implementation of an NSDS that mainstreams sectoral and subnational statistical systems. The third section presents the process for developing the framework and the tools for mainstreaming sectors' statistical systems. The fourth section describes the current situation in the Africa region before concluding the paper.

2. DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE WHOLE NSS

The NSS of a country is made up of multiple stakeholders: the producers, users and suppliers of information (including respondents, of all categories, to statistical requests – individuals, households, public institutions, enterprises and establishments, etc.), the authorities funding statistical development, training institutions and research centers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, development partners, and the media. All these constituents must be strengthened for an NSS to remain strong.

African NSSs have proved to be weak over the years. This is due to limited involvement on the part of all key stakeholders in statistical development – a situation that the Reference Regional Strategic Framework (RRSF)⁵ seeks to correct. To generate comprehensive quality statistics, the capacity of all key producers must be further developed, with coordination by the NSO. However, in order to undertake this coordination function, the NSO should be empowered legally, financially, technically, and administratively, including providing leadership to the NSS. As a public “good,” statistics

⁵ The RRSF for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa was prepared jointly by the AfDB, ECA, the World Bank and the Partnership for Statistics in the 21st Century (PARIS21). The Framework was adopted in February 2006 at the second Forum for Statistical Development in Africa (FASDEV-2). The Forum brought together all the key stakeholders involved in statistical development work in Africa: UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral institutions, subregional organizations, STCs and Directors of National Statistical Offices from 51 African countries. The stakeholders assigned AfDB and ECA responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the RRSF.

production should be funded mainly by governments, who are the major users of statistical products. There is a need to promote an evidence-based policy/decisionmaking culture across government and the private sector for effective investment and business planning.

In essence, users must be reoriented to understand their respective roles in enhancing the production of relevant and quality statistics. They must also be empowered to demand, analyze, interpret, and use statistics for their various tasks. The suppliers should be motivated to respond promptly and truthfully to statistical requests. Training institutions need to be strengthened to put in place relevant curricula in their statistical training programs, and to fully collaborate with statistical agencies in methodological research. The research centers, for their part, should partner with the statistical agencies on in-depth statistical analysis. The NGOs and CSOs, which play a major role in advocacy and in monitoring and evaluating programs, should be empowered to access data.

The media role is crucial in reporting to the broader public about events, supported by statistics for empirical evidence. The media can also play a significant function in advocating for greater awareness of the importance of reliable and timely statistics. Finally, development partners and the private sector must be reoriented to support governments and encourage the orderly development of statistics through their interventions.

National statistical development must be holistic and comprehensive to ensure that the NSS delivers relevant statistical products to meet all the diverse demands at subnational, sectoral, national, and international levels. Arguably, the best approach to strengthening statistical development is the design and implementation of an NSDS that seeks to support and strengthen all the elements of the NSS.

At the sectoral level, the need to support the various sectoral plans and policies with relevant and adequate statistics is critical. At the subnational level, where the decentralization policy and other development frameworks and policies are implemented, adequate and reliable statistics are required for the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the programs and formulation of policies. To expect the NSO to make available these wide and varied statistics has proved to be a mirage.

The development of statistics and the resolution of statistical problems in many African countries have taken the form of merely making interventions at the NSOs, in the mistaken belief that these offices would be

able to supply data on all the components of the NSS (i.e. at sectoral and subnational levels). However, this has always resulted in very poor statistical deliveries with correspondingly poor development outcomes. The improvement of national statistics has therefore met with failure, as their development has not been far-reaching enough.

There is an imperative to develop statistical strategic plans for each sector and subnational constituent, which will take account of their specific needs and strengthen their systems and capacity to produce their own kind of statistics. For instance, there need to be strategies for improving administrative statistical systems, computing small-area statistics, manpower development for coordination, dissemination, etc. This implies that a Sectoral Strategy for the Development of Statistics (SSDS) and Subnational Strategy for the Development of statistics (SnSDS) should be made available at sector and subnational levels respectively. These could then be integrated into the overall NSDS.

3. FRAMEWORK FOR MAINSTREAMING SECTORAL STATISTICS

3.1 Development of the Guide

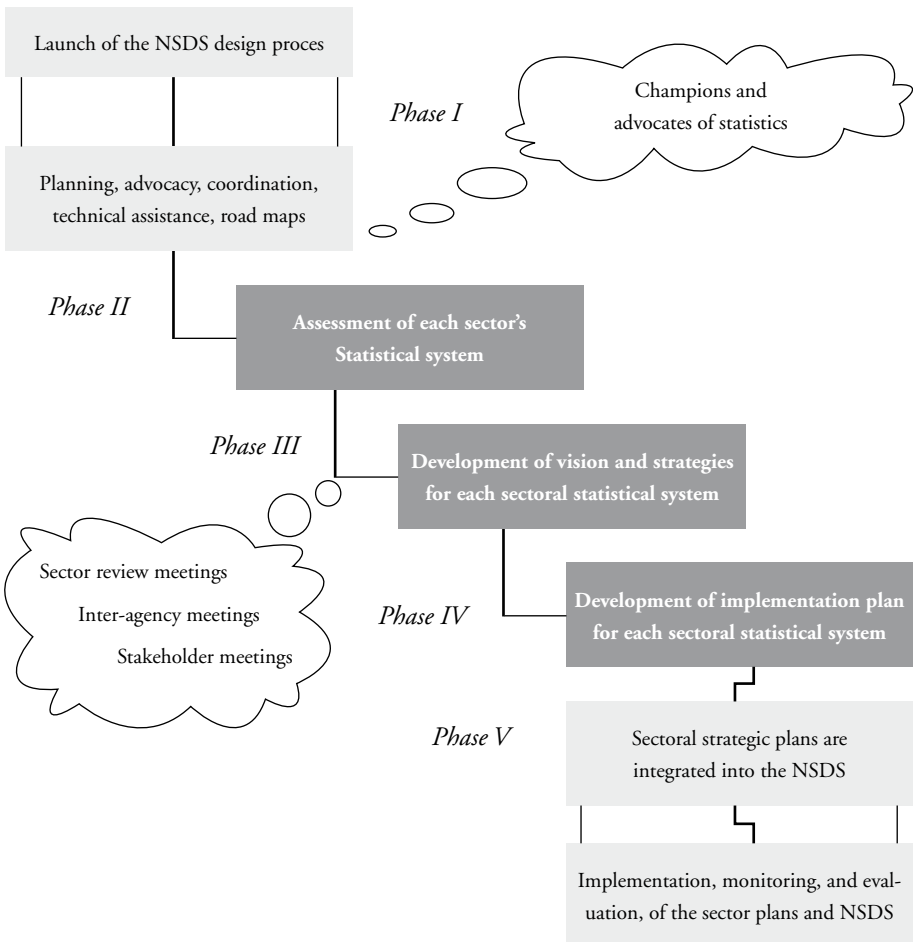
The concept of mainstreaming sectoral issues into the various stages of NSDS design was shared and commenced during AfDB workshops in 2006. These training workshops formally launched the AfDB's assistance to the NSDS design process with respect to AFRISTAT, COMESA, ECOWAS, and SADC member countries.⁶ At the workshops, case studies and reference documents were presented and discussed.

The guide *Mainstreaming Sectoral Statistical Systems in Africa: A Guide to Planning a Coordinated National Statistical System* (2007) is a collaborative effort by the African Development Bank, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) and Intersect, with input from statisticians in a number of African countries and international organizations. It also incorporates work of the Food and Agriculture Organization

⁶ The subregional workshops were conducted in Nairobi (Kenya) for COMESA member countries; in Accra (Ghana) for ECOWAS member countries; in Durban (South Africa) for SADC member countries; and in Bamako (Mali) for AFRISTAT member countries. The workshops aimed to empower key NSS actors with knowledge about the NSDS processes, to facilitate a sharing of experience among them, and to ensure that standard approaches would be used in all countries preparing their NSDS.

(FAO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Various case study materials were compiled and drawn upon, with Uganda’s experience of integrating sectors into its Plan for National Statistical Development and Senegal’s experience in developing its NSDS being particularly informative. The Guide also draws on the Framework for Health Information Systems (HIS), developed by the Health Metrics Network (HMN). Its objective is to contribute to the development of statistics and the attainment of development outcomes in African and other low- and middle-income countries. Its strategy is to guide staff and leadership of NSOs in the development of their NSDS and a coordinated NSS (with shared goals and crosscutting strategies), so that they will be capable of efficiently and effectively monitoring development indicators.

Figure 1: The Five Phases of the NSDS Process



3.2 The process of developing SSDS/NSDS

There are 5 phases in the NSDS process (see Figure 1):

1. Launch of the NSDS design process;
2. Planning including administrative setup, advocacy, coordination, technical assistance and drawing up the road maps;
3. Assessment of each sector's statistical system followed by the development of a vision and strategies for each;
4. Development of an implementation plan for each sectoral statistical system;
5. Sectoral strategic plans are integrated into an integrated NSDS followed by implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the sector plans and the NSDS.

The SSDS/NSDS design process begins with some preliminary tasks which include: setting up the administrative procedures (i.e., establishment of committees, working groups/task forces across the sectors); assignment of responsibilities to key actors and establishing reporting channels. There follows an advocacy campaign, which aims to identify, reach and brief stakeholders and to acquire technical assistance, as consultants might be needed to facilitate the process. A roadmap is then developed, detailing the required tasks and activities and to ensure realistic time-lines, articulation of responsibility centers, expected outputs, and the budget estimate for the tasks.

After the preliminaries have been completed, an in-depth assessment of each system is needed. This covers a review of earlier assessments, analysis of the current status (sector statistics, coordination and management; legal framework; financial outlay; stakeholder analysis; SWOT analysis; physical, statistical and IT infrastructure; data production and management; data quality; user assessment; and gap analysis), the human resources situation, and dissemination policies and strategies. A written report of the assessment must be published, identifying all the challenges.

A crucial phase is reached when the vision, mission, and strategies are developed. It is important to differentiate between these three terms. (i) A vision is about "where we wish to be," (ii) the mission is "what our business is" and (iii) strategies are "how we achieve our strategic objectives," which are derived from the challenges. Strategies are detailed out by sectors, outlining sector-specific and crosscutting strategies that are mainstreamed into the NSDS.

Once the strategies have been determined, they are translated into budget/financial plans (list of activities by strategies). Each activity or group of activities must be associated with a set of inputs or resources, a time-line, output indicators, the responsible actors, and statements of the assumptions that must be valid for the inputs to lead to the specified outputs. In this way, a logical framework or action plan is constructed, which will be useful to monitor implementation and also measure performance. An example of a model action plan is illustrated below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Model Action Plan

Strategic issue	Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Targets	Responsibility center	Assumptions

Then an implementation/action plan needs to be articulated in each SSDS and in the national strategy (NSDS). It must include the mechanisms for managing the implementation process, monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements. Also, a mobilization of funds process has to be launched for the implementation of the SSDS/NSDS. Funding is expected to come from both government and donors, with the government leading the way. With some imagination, other sources of funding for the SSDS/NSDS implementation may be found and tapped into.

3.3 Strategies for mainstreaming sectoral statistics into the NSDS

When designing an integrated NSDS, for the effective mainstreaming of the sectors and the subnational statistical systems, various crosscutting strategies can be employed. These help to enhance coordination at the different levels; namely for integrated programs, shared capacity-building programs, common legal frameworks, and coordinated funding. Such strategies ensure a more efficient use of resources and greater benefits, as elaborated below:

- *Coordination* is enhanced when common institutional and technical procedures are developed for coordination, collaboration, and cooperation. These ultimately lead to vibrant and durable partnerships and networking within and across sectors and between the various subnational entities and users. The NSO should lead this process through

various means, including: establishing coordinating committees, NSS meetings and seminars, an NSS newsletter, a common NSS website and email discussion groups, plus use of standardized definitions, concepts, methodology, and classifications.

- *Integrated programs* can be achieved by formulating a harmonized data production schedule with corresponding data release calendars for censuses and surveys for each sector/subnational entity integrated into the NSS statistical program.
- *Shared capacity-building programs* will be achieved through the development of a comprehensive human resources (HR) strategy that ensures uniform training, recruitment, and promotion procedures for all staff working in the NSS. Assessment procedures will help to identify gaps in HR capacity and skills in each sector/subnational entity and for the system as a whole (NSS). Assessments also establish priorities for career development to sustain statistical production. Based on these, an NSS-wide HR strategy could be developed to provide specialized training, and to develop a common recruitment procedure and career structures for all personnel working across the NSS.
- *A common legal and policy framework* should be drafted to take account of the requirements of all stakeholders in the system, detailing functions, rights and obligations of the subsystems and the NSO. This framework will seek to align the mandates of all components of the NSS, ensuring that there is consistency between all existing laws and mandates. Moreover, the development and specification of data exchange policies between subsystems, the NSO, and the general public should be carried out.
- *Coordinated funding* requires that an NSS-wide financing strategy be developed once the other strategies have been drawn up and the plan is complete. Some activities will be financed solely from sectoral or subnational sources, whereas central funding could be directed at common activities, such as the establishment of a national database/data warehouse, and the development of training courses for common cadres of staff across the system.

Table 1: Framework for Building a Coordinated National Statistical System

Objective	Strategies to mainstream sectoral statistical systems into a national statistical system	
Make more efficient use of resources	1	Common institutional procedures for coordination, collaboration and cooperation across the NSS
	2	Legal and institutional framework that takes into account the requirements of all stakeholders in the NSS
	3	NSS-wide financing strategy
	4	Comprehensive human resource strategy with uniform training, recruitment and promotion procedures for all staff working in the NSS
	5	Rationalized use of physical infrastructure and ICT across the NSS
Improve the productivity of data management	6	Coherent management information system across the NSS
	7	Common data warehouse for the NSS
Increase the availability of quality data	8	Common metadata dictionary across the NSS
	9	Common standards for data quality across the NSS
	10	Harmonized data production schedule across the NSS
	11	Comprehensive dissemination policy for the NSS
Raise the public profile for statistics	12	Coherent advocacy strategies across the NSS

3.4 Challenges in mainstreaming sectoral statistics

Mainstreaming sectoral statistics presents challenges at various levels. At the NSO level (implementing agency), getting sectors to buy-in can prove an uphill task; so too might finding appropriate champions to steer the process. Another challenge is dealing with the high expectations of stakeholders (producers and users) of statistics, in terms of outputs, as well as resources to drive the process. It is often difficult also to motivate the focal staff to deliver on time and manage their activities; this demands a full-time commitment, whereby participation in other activities may not be possible, otherwise it could affect progress of the SSDS design.

At the sectoral level, bureaucratic procedures and challenges of change management may adversely affect the process. In this regard, Technical Managers need to ensure participation and timely accomplishment of tasks. Finally, identifying champions and cultivating the political will can be difficult and call for familiarity with the institutional and organization

arrangements within the sectors. To ease that, the NSO executive needs to discuss and encourage Sector Accounting Officers to actively support the process.

Overall, mainstreaming sectoral statistics from more than five sectors at a time can affect progression and timely completion of the NSDS. It also places pressing demands on the coordinating agency, due to uneven performance levels in participating sectors. The best option is to phase the process and engage at least three sectors, using a set format including regular reviews over the period.

4. MAINSTREAMING SECTORAL STATISTICAL STRATEGIES IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

4.1. Stages in developing an integrated NSDS

Statistical development in African countries has evolved through the development of statistical master plans (SMPs), corporate plans, 3-year rolling statistical plans, or 2-year statistical action plans. Mostly, the plans have been limited to the NSO and have focused on the products rather than the development of the statistical production systems. Formerly, there was no strategic direction to statistical planning. Now, there is a gradual shift in approach to designing NSDS in Africa, which incorporates the concerns of the sectors.

Since the endorsement of the RRSF, with the NSDS as its overarching strategy, nearly all African countries have started to prepare a strategy for the development of statistics. Countries fall into different stages of strategy development, namely:

1. A strategy in place, but without sector mainstreaming;
2. A Statistical Master Plan in place, with partial sector mainstreaming;
3. NSDS preparation in progress;
4. NSDS with some sectors mainstreamed;
5. NSDS with all sectors mainstreamed.

No country has yet mainstreamed a subnational statistical system into its NSDS. Table 2 shows the stages and alternative options to guide countries on what steps to follow, given the different scenarios.

Table 2: Stages in Developing an Integrated NSDS

Row	Degree of main-streaming	Type of system	Approach to NSDS design	Outcome of NSDS design	Next steps
1	Sectors not mainstreamed	Centralized or decentralized	NSO does not consult or involve sectors	NSDS document that does not take account of sectoral strategies	Conduct an integrated NSDS using the guide on mainstreaming sectors
2	Sectors partially mainstreamed	Decentralized	NSO consults but does not involve sectors	NSDS document that caters for sectors but does not include sector-owned strategies	Review the NSDS document and mainstream sectoral strategies using the guide on mainstreaming sectors
3		Centralized		NSDS document that includes sectoral strategies that are not owned by the sectors	Review and update the NSDS document with the sectors using the guide on mainstreaming sectors
4	Some sectors fully mainstreamed	Centralized or decentralized	NSO consults and involves some sectors	NSDS document that includes some sector-owned strategies	Sequence in more sectors in repeated stages of NSDS design using the guide on mainstreaming sectors
5	All sectors fully mainstreamed	Centralized or decentralized	NSO consults and involves all sectors	NSDS document that includes sector-owned strategies	Monitor and evaluate NSDS implementation

1. *Sectors not mainstreamed*: Some countries have already designed an NSDS or an SMP but have not mainstreamed sectoral statistical aspects into it. What is recommended as next steps would be for the NSO to work with the sectors to design an integrated NSDS using the mainstreaming guide.
2. *Sectors partially mainstreamed – decentralized system*: Another group of countries may have already designed an NSDS or SMP but only

partially mainstreamed sectoral statistics strategies into that plan. This may be because their system is decentralized, and the NSO designed the sectoral strategies without involving sectoral staff. The next step recommended for this group of countries is for the NSO to involve sectors in the review of the existing NSDS/SMP document and mainstream sectoral strategies, following the guide.

3. *Sectors partially mainstreamed – centralized system:* Some countries fall under a centralized statistical system, where the NSO has outposted its staff to run sectoral statistics units and design the NSDS without involving other sectoral personnel. Here, the recommendation is that the NSO begins working with the sector personnel to review and update the existing NSDS/SMP document using the guide.
4. *Some sectors fully mainstreamed:* What could be considered adequate are countries where some sectors have been fully integrated in the NSS and their sector strategies fully mainstreamed in the NSDS. In these scenarios, the NSO consults and involves some or all of the sectors. The recommendation for this category of “some sector coverage” is that sectors are covered in phases. Where all the sectors have been covered, monitoring and evaluation of the NSDS implementation simply takes place.
5. *All sectors fully mainstreamed:* An adequate NSDS is one where each sector develops its own strategic plan or sectoral strategy (SSDS) and this is mainstreamed in the NSDS.

For completeness and adequacy of strategies for statistical development, subnational statistical systems will also have to be integrated and mainstreamed into the overall NSDS. This component is important and should be addressed in order to have an NSDS that caters for all constituents of the NSS.

4.2 The Uganda Case Study

The approach used by Uganda to design its Plan for National Statistical Development (PNSD) was acknowledged as best practice, and recommended for other countries to emulate. The PNSD is founded on the PARIS21 principles geared toward strengthening the NSS. It is based on the understanding that NSOs are mandated by law to coordinate the production and dissemination of official statistics, and that line ministries are

responsible for supplying sector-specific statistics for monitoring policy implementation and for measuring and reporting progress.

Although at the inception of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), its operation and development were based on a corporate plan that was implemented over a 5-year period, the performance of the agency was not extended to the other components of the NSS. This was because these sectors and their concerns had not been taken into account in the corporate plan. Once this was realized, Uganda quickly embarked on the preparation of a PNSD which, along with the UBOS, incorporated development in some sectors through the design of separate Sector Strategic Plans for Statistics (SSPSs). Nine sectors were taken on during the first phase, while 11 sectors came on during the second phase. The sector strategies were building blocks for the PNSD.

Administrative structures for the process was set up (appointment of a coordinator and the design team, sector committees, inter-agency committee and steering committee, advocacy at all levels with the Head of the Public Service as champion, etc.); assessment at the sectors, development of a vision, mission and strategies based on the assessment, implementation plans, monitoring and evaluation.

The PNSD and all the SSPSs are being implemented under a coordinated arrangement (see Box 1), employing all the strategies for mainstreaming the sectors.

Box 1: Crosscutting Strategies for Coordinated NSS in Uganda

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics has adopted strategies for strengthening coordination. These include:

- Establishment of structures (sector statistics committees, the interagency committee, and the proposed Steering Committee) to strengthen coordination efforts within sectors and with the UBOS;
- A comprehensive training program to strengthen staff skills across the NSS;
- Memoranda of Understanding between UBOS and each participating sector under the NSDS as a commitment to implement the Sector Strategy Plans for Statistics (SSPS);
- Common funding mechanism managed by the NSO to facilitate implementation of SSPS by the respective sectors;
- Consensus on standard IT equipment, software, and data management procedures between UBOS and the sectors;
- The development of a National Statistical Databank for the NSS (in progress);
- The compendium of statistical concepts and definitions for the NSS; and
- A harmonized activity schedule.

The PNSD is an amalgamation of sector strategies which are designed by each participating sector and gradually integrated in the overall plan as building blocks. Its design is highly consultative, participatory, and synergistic. It also assumes a bottom-up and holistic approach in integrating key agencies of government. Although government agencies producing statistics in Uganda are numerous, to effectively manage the process, they are “phased” to reduce administrative pressure and allow the NSO to concentrate on statistical issues. Other sectors will be continually phased and

mainstreamed in the NSS over time, along with subnational constituencies.

5. CONCLUSION

Sectoral mainstreaming in the NSDS performs a number of functions and can help African countries to achieve a number of objectives:

- It galvanizes linkages between the NSO and creates equilibrium with respective sectors in the NSS;
- It strengthens the coordination function of the NSO, which underpins the level of participation and the performance of a sector;
- It provides an entry point to the realms of sectoral statistics and skills gaps;
- It justifies the need to harmonize data production and teamwork and breeds a culture of networking and coordination within and across sectors, and between the sectors and the NSO;
- It facilitates identification of relevant indicators that must be generated to inform the national monitoring framework as well as prioritization of the same;
- The collective effort raises the profile of statistics generally.

Hence, mainstreaming sectoral statistics is feasible and worthwhile in terms of providing opportunities and justifies replication elsewhere with probable adjustments.

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