

The RSDS Approach in a Nutshell

Regional Strategy for the
Development of Statistics





RSDS:

Working together

towards a common goal



The Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics

Reliable and timely statistics are necessary to inform all aspects of public and private life in this ever-evolving world. Policy makers and citizens in developed and developing countries alike, along with the international community, require quality statistics to support better governance, result-based management, and greater development effectiveness.

To respond to these increasing and new needs for data, many countries adopt a strategic planning process for their statistical system known as the “National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)”. This process involves a co-ordinated national effort, an improved dialogue between data users and producers, aimed at improving the mechanisms needed to generate relevant statistics. By strengthening the National Statistical System (NSS), the NSDS enables countries to produce the data necessary to design, implement, and monitor national development policies and programmes. It also helps countries meet their regional and international commitments with respect to statistics (Millennium Development Goals, etc.).

Regional integration processes are gaining in prominence. These processes can pursue different objectives: achieving economic and monetary integration, building a free trade area, stepping up co-operation to promote development, etc. Regardless of the objective, such processes require as well comparable statistical indicators based on methodologies harmonised between countries. Hence the need to set up an efficient Regional Statistical System (RSS) which may be facilitated through a **Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS)**.

The objective of an RSDS consists in preparing an action plan that will meet the requirements of regional integration policies and ensure that the statistical information produced by NSSs is comparable, by complying as strictly as possible with the profession's recommendations and international standards.

The RSDS will respond to the statistical needs of the regional agenda without infringing on any country's national sovereignty: its action plan will derive from a consensus between regional authorities and all countries involved.

What tasks does an RSDS fulfill

- production of data (deemed regional) for regional policy-making needs; production of national statistics and **production of data with a strictly regional dimension (ex: climate change)**; involving NSSs and statistical services;
- **co-ordination of national and regional programmes** aimed at producing "regional" data, including programmes of surveys and censuses; synchronisation with national planning processes;
- **harmonisation of conceptual frameworks and methods** to obtain the comparable data required by the institution, including the adoption of binding statistical regulations, in compliance with recommendations and international standards and in association with national councils;
- **representation with respect to external partner organisations**; relations with donors, including the adoption of joint positions in major meetings of the global statistical system.
- **exchange of best practices** in terms of coordination and statistical capacity building between more advanced and less advanced countries in the region.





RSDS Design and Implementation Process

The RSDS process must, by transcending national constraints, take into consideration a regional vision and new players: the authorities and agencies of the integration system. Consultation, accordingly, is not simply carried out within a country's borders; it also takes place across borders, between the member countries of the integration area and regional authorities.

The methodology employed to design and implement an NSDS applies equally to the RSDS process. The RSDS will involve:

- **Strong political will and validation by the authorities** of the integration body and national authorities at every stage of the process.
- **Establishment of an overall process**, covering the entire regional statistical system with the following key players: the integration body and its authorities, the NSSs including the national statistical offices (NSOs) and the authorities of member countries, and the national, regional, and international users of regional statistical information.
- **A participatory methodology** involving all these players, driven by the unit of the integration body that will be given a mandate to carry out this work and in co-operation with the NSOs of member countries.
- **A stage-based organisation:** i.e., the road map, the assessment, the selection of strategies, the choice of regional strategy, the action plan, and its implementation.

The RSDS approach is likely to be all the more successful with: i) a significant political commitment at the highest regional level and from the countries, (ii) a constructive dialogue between data producers and users at national and regional levels; iii) the mobilisation of necessary resources; and iv) continuous co-ordination with technical and financial partners.

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NSDS / RSDS: Complementary Processes

The NSDS and RSDS are complementary processes and, as such, each must take into account the requirements and activities of the other. The NSDS must include activities to produce the data needed at the regional level, and the RSDS must recognise the constraints and limitations placed on countries at the national level and their needs in statistical capacity development.

The initiatives aimed at meeting the information requirements of the integration body will be reflected in existing or upcoming NSDSs. Ideally, this will ensure that statistical information produced in the member countries is rendered comparable through harmonised methodologies, while co-ordinating the availability of data according to a well-defined timeframe.

The relationship between the national and regional processes is illustrated in the graphic on the following page.





PARIS21 and the RSDS process

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

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

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

- Supporting regional entities in strategy 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 regional levels: co-ordination of all national and regional statistical system actors but also between governments and their communities of donors.
- Providing on-demand advisory services in certain fields: statistical legislation, training.
- Providing specific support to regions where fragility is an important issue or regions of small islands.
- Sharing information on experiences from other regions in designing and implementing strategies.

