



Status Report on Documents and Processes Supporting National Strategies for the Development of Statistics

This paper updates the Steering Committee on progress in developing NSDS documentation needs. The Steering Committee is invited to endorse the hierarchy of documents and reference materials, including the Knowledge Base and a collation of case study material on implementation issues.

The Steering Committee is also invited to comment on the documents prepared so far and agree on parallel processes to present, review and start to use them, before producing final printed and electronic versions of the documents towards the end of 2005, whilst noting that they will continue to be living documents with periodic revisions.

The Steering Committee is urged to attach a high priority to this work within the work programme of the Secretariat as well as to commit themselves to supporting these activities and, through the NSDS approach, more coherent and coordinated national and international support for statistical capacity building.

Background

1. The last Steering Committee meeting welcomed the set of documents being prepared to support NSDSs, comprising key principles, design guidance, advocacy documents and “How to” Notes. It was agreed:

- that the documents must reflect the diversity in countries and not be presented as a rigid ‘blueprint’;
- policy makers particularly from developing country and countries that have already designed an NSDS should be included in reviewing the documents;
- the NSDS process needs to be coordinated with other major initiatives.

2. The PARIS21 Secretariat has continued to develop these documents and has incorporated comments received following the last Steering Committee from the World Bank, IMF, European Commission and DFID. These impressed upon the Secretariat particularly the need to separate out advocacy from guidance to managers of the NSDS; to make the documents more user friendly; and to reinforce the text on building upon existing work and initiatives, including PRS monitoring as well as frameworks and instruments such as the General Data Dissemination System, Multi-Annual Integrated Statistical Programme, Data Quality Assessment Framework and Statistical Capacity Building Indicators.

NSDS documents and reference materials

3. Taking account of the Steering Committee’s comments a hierarchy of documents and materials has been developed, as follows:

- NSDS Essentials (formerly known as Key Principles);
- Making the case for an NSDS (advocacy document);
- Guide to designing an NSDS (for managers of statistical systems);
- NSDS Knowledge Base (formerly known as “How to” Notes).

These are summarised in the table below, showing their purpose, intended audience, nature of dissemination and languages. The first three of these are presented as draft documents which are attached to this note. A presentation will be made to the Steering Committee on organising the Knowledge Base as a virtual reference library.

4. The logic is that the **NSDS Essentials** summarises the more detailed materials, drawing out the main messages to inform the NSDS design process and serves as an agreed set of criteria against which the quality of NSDSs and their processes can be judged. The **Guide to designing an NSDS** covers a broad range of issues to explain the rationale behind NSDSs and sets out the principles of strategic planning, assessment, consultation, costing, funding, and implementation. The Guide is necessarily broad and will be under-pinned by more detailed, supporting ‘How to’ notes in the Knowledge Base.

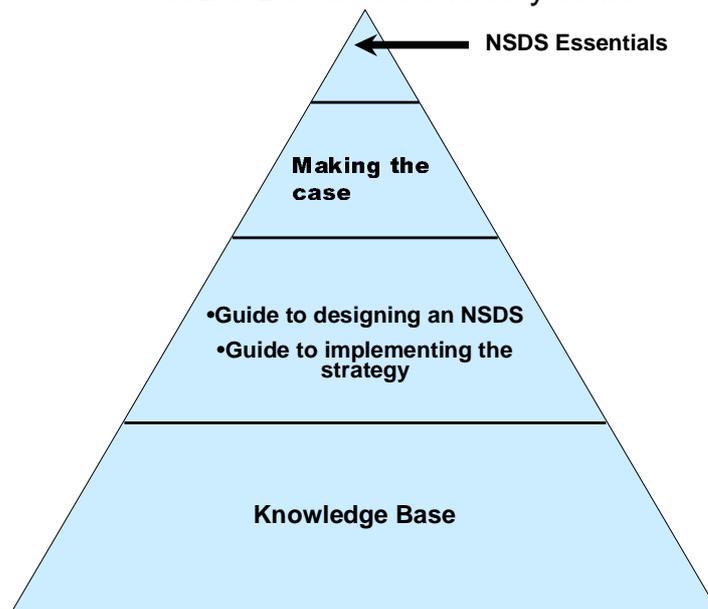
5. The conceptual framework for the **Knowledge Base** will be developed over the next few weeks, including the relationship to existing document centres, particularly those held by PARIS21 partners. A prototype will be presented to the Steering Committee. It is currently proposed that Knowledge Base will be a virtual library comprising four domains: general background documents (e.g. the UN’s Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics); notes to support the design process (e.g., how to carry out a SWOT analysis, a stakeholder analysis, a user needs assessment, Human Resource strategy, assess data quality, etc); strategy implementation; and national strategy documents. The middle two domains are the highest priority and most in need of development. Most of this material exists already but where there are gaps new guidelines will be commissioned and submitted for scrutiny by international reviewers.

6. The **Making the case** advocacy document sets out to encourage broader recognition by national and international policy makers and financiers of the role of statistics in development and poverty reduction and of the necessity of strategic planning. It also encourages donors to fit their assistance within the national strategy.

Governments and donors will provide more funding for statistics only if they are convinced that poverty reduction and development generally (and/or aid effectiveness) is constrained by inadequate statistics. This needs to be demonstrated and further work is underway to identify both good and bad examples of the use and availability of statistics. A range of advocacy materials will be tailored to suit various audiences.

7. The Secretariat recommends that a **Guide to implementing the strategy** will also be needed. This could be presented as a set of case studies to show what has worked and what has not worked in different situations. It could also consider specific experiences with strategies and improvement programmes, change processes and new institutional arrangements, for instance how semi-autonomous agency status has worked out when applied to statistical agencies.

NSDS Documentation Pyramid



Documents and materials to support NSDSs

Title	Audience	Purpose	Type	Languages
NSDS documents				
NSDS Essentials	All	Summary of key principles	Leaflet	E, F, S, A, P
Making the case (advocacy document)	Senior policy makers in national governments and donor agencies	To convince national governments and donors that it is worth investing more in statistics and of the value of designing and implementing an NSDS; and aligning future donor support for statistics with NSDSs	Various presentations	E, F, S, A, P
Guide to designing an NSDS	NSDS Team	Basic advice on designing NSDS	Printed and electronic	E, F, S, A, P

Title	Audience	Purpose	Type	Languages
Guide to implementing the strategy	NSDS implementation team	Case studies to show what has worked and what has not worked in different situations	Printed and electronic	E, F, S, A, P
Reference materials				
NSDS Knowledge Base	NSS and policy makers	More detailed advice and good practices aimed at building knowledge and sharing information	Web site, CDROM	Depending on the documents

E: English F: French; S: Spanish; A: Arabic; P: Portuguese.

The Steering Committee is invited to endorse the updated hierarchy of documents and reference materials, including the Knowledge Base and a collation of case study material on implementation issues.

Parallel processes to present, review and start to use the documents

8. Circulation of the three draft documents has so far been restricted to Steering Committee members. They need to be circulated for wider review, but this should not prevent NSDS design teams and others accessing them in their current form. Otherwise the target date of 2006 for all countries who want them to have an NSDS will have arrived before these supporting documents are made available to help them. Developing the documents will be an on-going process.

9. After first **taking account of any further comments by Steering Committee members received by the end of November 2004**, it is recommended that after further editing the three documents will be 'frozen' and the following parallel processes undertaken:

- **Presenting the documents for information** (not for formal approval) to the UN Statistical Commission (November 2004 for meeting in March 2005) and the Development Assistance Committee (December 2004)
- **Consulting and inviting comments** on the three draft documents from UN regional Commissions, Development Banks, specialised agencies, sub-regional bodies and national statistical agencies, including those in OECD countries. Through this process, initial feed back will be sought from countries, particularly from those who have already designed an NSDS, including from their policy makers. This phase will also include consultation on issues of the comprehensiveness of the documents e.g. whether more needs to be done to integrate sectoral statistics into NSDSs, initially through a workshop co-hosted with UNESCO's Institute of Statistics.
- **Rolling out the approach, mainly** through PARIS21's regional programmes: sending documents to NSDS teams, making presentations, regional workshops and contributing to other meetings, preparing training materials, inviting feed-back on which parts of the documents need to be changed and collating case study materials on what works and what doesn't for the Guide to implementing the strategy and Knowledge Base. During December the latest versions of the three documents will be made available through the PARIS21 and other websites and on CD-ROM

10. To be effective both the **consultation and roll out** need to be based on documents that have been edited and translated into at least French, Spanish and Arabic; and possibly Portuguese and Russian, depending on demand. The advocacy document might also need at this stage to be re-designed in a form that will make it more attractive and easy to read. Comments received throughout these processes will be incorporated with a view to **finalising printed and electronic versions of the four documents, including the Guide to implementing the strategy, towards the end of 2005**. These versions will be adapted to be fully relevant and easily understood by non-English speakers and to be relevant to different regional circumstances. Subsequent revisions might be made every one or two years to take account of feed-back and updating.

11. **During 2005 and in 2006** the emphasis will change from supporting the design of NSDSs to supporting strategy implementation, including producing the Guide on this and building the Knowledge Base with case study materials on implementing change processes. Development of the Knowledge Base will focus initially on collating “How to” notes to inform the design of NSDSs.

The Steering Committee is invited to comment on the documents prepared so far and agree on parallel processes to present, review and start to use them, before producing final printed and electronic versions of the documents towards the end of 2005, whilst noting that they will continue to be living documents with periodic revisions.

Making this happen

12. A budget has been prepared for this work, which was envisaged in the Joint Funding Proposal for PARIS21 and the World Bank’s Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building, but this proposal remains substantially underfunded. Taking forward the NSDS work is a core function of PARIS21 and should be treated as a priority for additional resources to make these processes happen. But resources are not all that will be needed. To succeed will require a strengthened sense of PARIS21 members working together and this places a particular responsibility on the founding members and other Steering Committee members to commit fully to these activities, encouraging the design and implementation of strategic approaches to statistical capacity building; and promoting more coherent and co-ordinated joint donor and national activities in support of NSDSs.

13. Strong support has been expressed by countries and regional institutions for the approach and for developing both the methodology and documentation; and some plan to put it at the centre of their work programmes. To help this process, a short note has been prepared to highlight the value added of NSDS (see Annex I below).

The Steering Committee is urged to attach a high priority to this work within the work programme of the Secretariat as well as to commit themselves to supporting these activities and, through the NSDS approach, more coherent and coordinated national and international support for statistical capacity building.

Annex I : Value added of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics

What is new?

The NSDS approach has been developed from existing instruments for statistical assessment and improvement (such as the IMF's General Data Dissemination System and Data Quality Assessment Framework), incorporates lessons learnt from the development of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and follows best practice in organisational development and management. **The value added of an NSDS is in merging best practice from these three sources in pursuit of better development outcomes: looking at statistical capacity building through a development and management lens; and looking at development policy and optimal management practices through a statistical lens.**

The NSDS should do for statistical planning and strategic management what PRSs have done for the former 5-year national development plans. The PRS approach involves a fundamental change in the relationships between stakeholders: through consultation, participation, ownership, leadership, etc. In the same way, **a good NSDS will provide a nationally-owned and led, holistic strategic development plan for statistics, which is mainstreamed as a statistics component and perspective to the design, management, monitoring and evaluation of national policy frameworks such as the PRS.** It will rarely be business as usual.

How does an NSDS add value?

The NSDS adds value to existing processes through:

- Advocacy, building political support and leadership
- Broad participation, consultation and communication
- Assessing and developing improvement plans for the 'softer' organisational and management aspects, essential for sustainability of statistical capacity building, including the institutional status of national statistical agencies
- Taking an holistic/integrated approach to assessing user (including development policy) needs and priorities
- Change management processes and sub-strategies, including for human resource and organisational development
- Costing, including cost-effectiveness, and addressing funding needs within a coherence framework for government and donors

Ten key principles of an NSDS, against which strategic management processes can be judged, are attached.

Ten key principles

NSDSs should:

- Be nationally led and owned, with high level political support and champions
- Be demand-focused and integrated within national development policy processes
- Be developed in an inclusive and consultative way
- Assess all statistical sectors and user needs and provide a vision and strategic plan for national statistics
- Set out an integrated statistical development programme to build capacity to deliver results, which is prioritised and timetabled, but also flexible enough to cope with change
- Address institutional and organisational constraints and processes, including resources, for the sustainable development of statistical systems and outputs
- Build quality “fit for purpose”, drawing on best international practice and standards
- Build on what exists and is being developed and continue to satisfy immediate needs for statistics during the NSDS process
- Respond to user needs but be realistic about resources
- Serve as a coherent framework for international support for statistical development