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**Managing Statistical Development and Information Technology for  
National Statistical Offices**

Country Paper of Maldives

By  
Fuwad Thowfeek  
Assistant Director General, Statistics Division  
Ministry of Planning and National Development  
Male', Maldives

## MALDIVES – COUNTRY PAPER

### **1. Management Issues of using ICT in the Statistics Division of MPND (NSO)**

a) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought about drastic change in the NSO's work environment. The implemented ICT methods within the NSO has helped to minimize

- **Work Load:** Provision of Computer systems for every individual staff of the NSO employed in various sections, has enabled an automated environment for each particular staff, resulting in minimized manual labor output from the staff (41 PCs for 41 staff members in the Statistics Division alone)

- **Data Analysis time:** Softwares/applications implemented for statistical data analysis saves lot of time engaged in manipulating statistical data. Applications implemented for tasks involving CPI (Consumer Price Index), LES (Large Establishment Survey), SES (Small Establishment Survey), etc have reduced the total data analysis time spent on it. Examples of some software in use are CS Pro, Blaise, MS-Office, E-Views, Paradox, etc

- **Accuracy:** IT provision has minimized a great extent the erroneous results produced by human interaction with crucial data. Programs/applications custom made to suit various data entry requirements of the NSO, has helped in reducing and preventing logical and data-flow errors caused by human interaction (data entry personnel)

- **Delayed output:** Time consuming publications such as Census data, Statistical Yearbook, etc has benefited greatly from ICT implementation by shortening its publication time to a great extent. IT provision within the NSO over the years have also helped to reduce the outsourcing expenditure incurred on these timely publications accordingly.

- **Complexity of data storage and retrieval:** IT provision within the NSO has brought about data storage and data retrieval solutions. LAN connectivity within the NSO's work environment has enabled constant touch with data, via server systems. MOC (Management of correspondence) implementation now caters the correspondence flow in the NSO in general.

#### **b) NSO Strategy (MPND strategy):**

Ministry of Planning and National Development, being the NSO of Maldives has taken initiatives in strengthening its IT strategy in gaining upper hand in sustaining reliable national statistics. The NSO serves IT provision as a balance between data reliability and time taken for data collection and publication.

#### **c) ICT Project priority :**

Ministry of Planning and National Development gives optimum priority for ICT projects which boosts its potential in the areas which suffer low ICT implementation.

**d) As the head of NSO how ICT used to improve office intelligence:**

Encourage staff to make use of ICT solutions available within the NSO (eg: usage of essential hardware/software solutions)

Encourage the NSO staff to implement ICT solutions for improving the NSO's work environment (eg: suggest data storage/data protection issues)

Encourage ICT training for staff

**2. Managing ICT effectively and efficiently:**

**a) ICT investments and expenses:**

ICT Investments made on large scale surveys such as Population and Housing Census, has always proved fruitful. For the first time the NSO used ICR scanning systems as part of the ICT solution implemented during the Census 2006 data processing. This implementation enabled us to complete the data processing task within a time frame of 4 months, which turned out to be a reduced time of 2-3 months in comparison to the data processing time taken for the previous Census data processing task. Generally this technology is effective as long as trained personnel subsist within the NSO to sustain this technology .

**b) ICT for growing demand of official statistics:**

Statistics Division of MPND (Ministry of Planning and National Development), necessitates to have ICT compliance to meet large scale data collection, data analysis and data publication in the most feasible and efficient way.

**3. Government ICT strategy and NSO ICT strategy link:**

The Maldivian government's (ITDP) strategy is the core solution, which the Maldives NSO is currently seeking. NSO mainly seeks a common portal for data accrument and data dissemination nationally with the respective line ministries, which would be achieved once the Government Network of Maldives is established under the IT Development Project strategy. This will result solving the problems in the sector wise produced data redundancy and data reliability to a great extent within the government.

**a) In-country training for ICT personnel:**

The NSO focuses on efficient ICT maneuver through timely trained ICT personnel. Some of the in-country trainings induced in favour ICT personnel are the following

- MCAD

- MCSE (Microsoft Certified System Engineer)
- CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Administrator)
- Autocad

**b) Suitability of training for NSO:**

Suitability of trainings induced to the NSO personnel depends mainly on the following factors :

- Field of training
- Quality of training
- Scope of training
- Commitment of NSO personnel willing to render professional service to the NSO after training

**4. Obstacles in the use of ICT within the NSO:**

The use of ICT in Maldives NSO necessitates for overcoming the various barriers which hamper ICT implementation and ICT usage within the NSO. Major obstacles faced by the Statistics Division in the Maldives in achieving sustainable ICT implementation and usage are as follows:

- *Technology*: Familiarizing with new technology requires time. In the Maldives time is treated crucial like any other NSO. Thus seeking un-occupied time from routine work of staff of the NSO to familiarize with new technological provision happens to be challenging.
- *Expertise*: Availability of professional staff within the NSO is below its demand. The available expertise is bound to limitation when it comes to ICT implementation.
- *Cost*: As ICT implementation requires investments ranging from minor scale to large scale, the Maldives NSO greatly depends on the availability of funds in implementing and using ICT solutions within its frame work. Available funds of the NSO are sometimes insufficient for new ICT programs. Large scale surveys and Censuses require large scale investment in implying ICT solutions.

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