

Training and Scholarship: National Statistics Office¹

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Goals and Mandates of the National Statistics Office

The National Statistics Office (NSO), as the primary statistical agency of the government, is mandated by various laws and policies to produce general-purpose statistics through censuses, surveys, and processing of administrative reports. Aside from its regular programs and projects, the NSO also provides technical assistance and support to the statistical activities of other government agencies and international organizations. The statistical information produced by the NSO serve as valuable inputs in the formulation of national development plans and programs, in the conduct of research, and in decision-making by both government and private sectors.

The NSO is also mandated to carry out and administer the Civil Registry Law through its Office of the Civil Registrar General (OCRG). The OCRG formulates and issues relevant rules and regulations on the proper implementation of the civil registration. It also serves as the central depository of documents on the civil status of persons, using automated systems to facilitate storage, retrieval, and safe-keeping of the documents. Pursuant to Article 7 of the Family Code, the NSO also issues certificates of registration of authorization to solemnize marriage (CRASM) to solemnizing officers.

The NSO therefore produces statistical and civil registration products and services for various clients.

Measuring the Contributions of the Staff to the NSO's Goal Achievement

The production of statistical and civil registration products and services requires careful planning and coordinated efforts of the different units within the office. It is within this context that the contribution of individual staff to the attainment of NSO goals are measured.

The NSO actively participates in the system-wide medium-term planning exercise that produces the Philippine Statistical Development Program. Internally, the office has its own five-year development plan (FYDP) to articulate the major thrusts for the period towards the attainment of its goals. The FYDP has ten key result areas: production of household-based statistics; production of establishment-based statistics; civil registration advocacy; civil registry archives management; human resource management; research and development; data dissemination; process management; fiscal management; and infrastructure, facilities, and other resources. With the FYDP and emerging data needs as reference, each division prepares its annual work and financial plan. Division plans are synchronized and prioritized at the department level, and consolidated as the central

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office plan. Likewise, each provincial and regional office prepares its own work plan based on the central office-defined targets for the year. The culmination of the planning exercise is the pledge of commitment signed by the senior officials to produce the expected outputs. Each individual NSO staff thus prepares his/her own commitments for the year in accordance with the commitments of the unit to which he/she belongs.

The Planning, Management and Coordination Division monitors the implementation of the plans on a regular basis. It also serves as the secretariat for the Field Awards System. Under this system, the central office department concerned rates the performance of each field office in five categories: statistical operations, civil registration, information dissemination, partnerships and linkages, and general administration. Each category has well-defined criteria which have numerical equivalents and weights. Examples of criteria are response rate, error rates, and submission of reports. The weight of statistical operations is 50 percent of the overall rating of the provincial office. The average overall performance of the provinces within a region has a weight of 40 percent of the overall rating of the regional office, in addition to the criteria mentioned above. Provincial and regional offices are then ranked on the basis of their performance rating. The top five regions and top 15 provinces receive awards in the form of trophies and cash during the national planning workshop. Starting last year support for training activities chosen by the winning regions/provinces has been added to the rewards for outstanding performance.

The annual performance rating for senior officials uses the Career Executive Service Performance Evaluation System developed by the Career Executive Service Board (CESB). Officials are rated in terms of ability to accomplish the commitments made by the offices in their area of responsibility. In addition, they are rated in terms of ability to instruct and develop subordinates, ability to execute, ability to make decisions, ability to coordinate, and ability to use resources. Senior officials are rated by both superiors and subordinates.

Performance rating of individual staff up to division chief is done every six months. The NSO has adapted the government-wide Performance Evaluation System designed by the Civil Service Commission (CSC). Under this scheme, 70 percent of the rating is based on the actual performance vis-à-vis the targets set by the individual with the concurrence of the supervisor for each relevant key result area at the start of the year. The other 30 percent is based on critical factors which affect job performance such as job knowledge, work attitude, cooperation, and punctuality and attendance. The criteria for rating the actual performance are quantity, timeliness, and quality of actual work done. Additional points are given for outstanding work done during the rating period. The numerical scores are translated into adjectival rating ranging from unsatisfactory to outstanding.

At present, the NSO is moving towards a new Performance Management System (PMS) developed by the CSC, having served as one of the pilot agencies during its inception. PMS is a tool for aligning the functions and targets of the departments/divisions with the organizational direction of the NSO though the

development of an Office Performance Evaluation Table (OPES) The OPES is a tool for measuring the operating unit's performance with the OPES table as benchmark. The table contains the following information: functions / activities of the unit, major final outputs, performance indicators, points, and operational definition.

Acquiring the Knowledge and Skills for Job Performance

The NSO implements the CSC-prescribed qualification standards for each position title in terms of education, training, civil service eligibility, and relevant work experience. New entrants are required to attend an orientation seminar on the organization, its mission, vision and core values; civil service rules; the work to be done, and the relationship of the unit where they will be deployed with the other units of the NSO. Supervisors train them on the job, assigning them increasingly difficult tasks as they gain work experience. At the same time, they are encouraged to continue their formal studies, especially in statistics and related fields.

Professional staff need to gain knowledge and skills in: statistical methodology and its application is specific subject matters. They update their knowledge of statistical methodology through formal education, training courses, and on the job. Supervisors are expected to act as mentor of the junior staff.

The NSO conducts training activities as part of its major activities. The training programs are classified into: in-house, local, and foreign training. In-house training programs refer to set or series of training programs organized and/or conducted by NSO. Local trainings refer to set or series of training programs conducted by local institutions or agencies. Foreign training programs refer to training programs conducted outside of the Philippines.

The NSO used to regularly conduct the Group A, Group B, Group C, MCO/CA training. The Group A is similar to the six-month general course in Statistics by SIAP. There have been 21 batches of Group A training conducted; many of the current senior officials are products of this program.. The Group B training is a two-month designed for rank and file employees who do not have sufficient educational background in statistics. At the end of the training program, participants are expected to be able to analyze and interpret statistical data, write report incorporating the results of analyses and interpretation of statistical data. The Group C training is a clerical development course which aims to train employees involved in clerical work and in simple analysis of statistical data. The Group A has been revived, while the other training programs are being redesigned for future implementation.

The MCO/CA training was designed to improve the capabilities of the fieldmen-the Municipal Census officers and the Census Assistants along the lines of various statistical operations. The training provided opportunity to thresh out problems with the subject matter division chiefs on data collection and other related census activities. Recently, the training program for fieldmen was revived as the Field Officers In-Service

Training (FOIST). Modules on management were incorporated and preparation of a provincial profile was a requirement of the course.

NSO avails of invitations for local training from government and private institutions such as the Statistical Research and Training Center, Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Civil Service Commission, Career Executive Service Board, UP School of Statistics, Philippine Statistical Association, and various other professional associations. During the current year, NSO was a recipient of the two training programs – Enhancing Management Skills (for senior officials) and Small Area Estimation (for middle level statisticians). These were managed by the Philippine Australia Human Resource Development Facility under the sponsorship of the AusAid.

The NSO has a memorandum of agreement with the Polytechnic University of the Philippines for the administration of the Master of Applied Statistics Program. Statistics classes are conducted evenings and Saturdays in the NSO, making it more convenient for NSO personnel to attend. Personnel are also invited to avail of a study-now-pay-later program entitled National Scholarship Development Fund so that they can pursue higher studies on a part-time basis. The employees’ associations – the Union of Statistics Employees, Census Provident Fund, Inc., and Census Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative Organization – also offer education loans for members. On the other hand, scholarships allow qualified personnel to go on study leave with pay..

Education Profile of Professional Staff

Professional statistical staff should have at least bachelor’s degree in statistics or related fields. Senior staff are required to have at least a master’s degree. The table below shows that there is a gap in the education requirements and actual educational attainment of some senior staff. The freeze-hire policy of government in the past few years has also prevented the organization from promoting some of the educationally qualified rank and file employees. . It is for these reasons that the NSO is vigorously pursuing its scholarship policy, the latest update of which was done in 2003.

Table 1. Educational Profile of NSO Staff, 2007

	Total .	Ph.D.	Master’s Degree-Stat	Master’s Degree-Other Fields	No Graduate Degree
All positions	2538	9	21	291	2217
Third level – SG 26+	18	1	3	14	-
Senior staff – SG 24 - 25	87	4	4	60	19
Supervisory –SG 18-22	94	1	7	38	48
Professional rank and file	1011	3	3	140	865
Subprofessional	1328	-	4	39	1285

Recent NSO Training Programs

The NSO is included in the list of accredited training institutions in area of statistics and civil registration per Civil Service Commission Resolution dated March 23, 1995. As an accredited training institution, the Office maintains a pool of lecturers by area of expertise. Its training facilities include modest lecture rooms, computer room, audio-visual equipment, books, and manuals among others.

The current FYDP aims to develop competent, adept, responsible, efficient and effective employees through its various training programs. The activities planned for the period include statistics, information technology, civil registration, management and supervision, and organizational development.

During the last fiscal year, NSO completed the conduct of 14 in-house training courses in 27 batches attended by 745 participants. The NSO conducts short courses for local and foreign agencies upon the request of their government or their funding institutions. The table below shows that the in-house training programs were affected by the resource constraints faced by government.

Table 2. Number of Trainings Conducted, Scholarships Aailed and Number of Participants, by Type of Program, 2004 – 2005

	Number of trainings conducted/ scholarships aailed		Number of participants	
	2004	2005	2004	2005
Total number of regular employees			2747	2770
1. Training seminars	110	62	2412	1638
1.1 Conducted in-house	38	22	1179	716
1.2 Conducted with other agencies	36	20	161	161
1.3 Statistical operations	26	8	720	192
1.4 Other programs	10	12	352	569
2. Local scholarships	30	22	30	22
2.1 NSFD	18	15	18	15
2.2 Civil Service Commission Local Scholarship Program	3	1	3	1
2.2.1 Bachelor's Degree	1	-	1	-
2.2.2 Master's Degree	2	1	2	1
2.3 Statistical Research and Training Center	5	3	5	3

2.3.1 Master's Degree Program			4	2
2.3.2 Ph. D. Program			1	1
2.4 University of the Philippines School of Economics – Master's Degree	1	1	1	1
2.5 National Defense College of the Philippines – Master's in National Security Administration	1	1	1	1
2.6 Development Academy of the Philippines – Master of Public Management	2	1	2	1
3. Foreign Scholarships /Trainings/ Consultancy/ Meetings	40	60	42	67
3.1 Short term courses	26	39	27	45
3.2 Conferences, meetings, study tours	7	13	8	14
3.3 Scholarships	4	8	4	8
4. Foreign Visitors	11	10	49	122
4.1 Apprenticeship Program and Training	4	2	24	24
4.2 Study Visit	7	8	25	98
5. Local visitors		5		111

Training and Scholarship Policies

The Personnel Development Committee

The Training Policy of the National Statistics Office was issued in February 2007 in order to provide appropriate opportunities for personal and professional growth of the staff and in order to maintain an exemplary workforce with knowledge and skills for effective and efficient performance of activities. The policy covers the scope, role of the Personnel Development Committee (PDC), guidelines for nomination, responsibilities of NSO and the trainees and monitoring of the policy implementation.

The Scholarship Policy was issued in July 2003. The policy included the procedures for nomination, selection, granting of all local and foreign scholarship programs, along with the administrative requirements of the selected employees being handled by the agency.

As a matter of policy, the recipients of training/scholarship grants are obliged to serve the NSO after completing their studies for a minimum period depending on the length of the training/scholarship period. Grantees are also expected to submit a training report, including an action plan for echoing the training and applying the new knowledge and skills in their work. These obligations are embodied in a contract between the recipient and the NSO.

The Personnel Development Committee oversees the implementation of these policies, with the Human Resource Management Division serving as its secretariat. The Deputy Administrator serves as its Chairperson. Members are the department heads and the president of the Union of Statistics Employees. It reviews the various training/scholarship programs and candidates for such programs. It submits recommendations, including the shortlist of nominees for training/scholarship grants, to the Administrator for her action. The PDC also monitors the implementation of the contracts as well as the action plans.