



**MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2006 - 2008**

**September 2006**

## Foreword

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) has a good reputation, both in Mauritius and abroad, for providing a quality statistical service. This, in particular is recognized by those who influence opinion such as parliamentarians, policy makers in government, media commentators, and also by our numerous users.

For the CSO to continue to be regarded as a serious institution, it is essential that it determines its future rather than be driven mainly by pressures from the external environment. Hence the “raison d’être” of this Strategic Plan for 2006-08 whose purpose is to result in a more efficient and effective management of statistical activities at the CSO so as to better meet the data needs of users.

This plan provides a view of where the CSO wants to be by 2008. It has been formulated after taking on board the views of all stakeholders. Meetings were held with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, private sector organisations and the trade unions. I would like to mention the valuable contribution of all the CSO staff - both technical and administrative. Everyone at the CSO contributed in one way or the other in the preparation of this Plan and I have no doubt that the whole team will take up this challenge enthusiastically.

I would like here to place on record the guidance that the CSO received from Mr. R. Jugurnauth, Director of Audit and previously Director of the Management Audit Bureau, Mrs. Y. Moorghen, Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms. Last, but not least, I am thankful to the following international consultants: Mr. Bill McLennan, previously Head of the UK Government Statistical Service who carried out an audit of the structures and functions of the office, Dr. Phan Tuan Pham, Informatics Advisor at the UN Statistical Division who carried out an IT audit of the office and Dr. Oladeo O. Ajayi, Consultant from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, previously Director of Statistics of Nigeria who was on mission to assess the current situation of statistics in Mauritius, including deficiencies, constraints, good practices and strategies for improving the situation. Their reports have also served as inputs for this Strategic Plan

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# Contents

	Page
1. The Central Statistics Office	3
2. Formulation of the Strategic Plan	4
3. Our Strengths and Weaknesses	5
4. Opportunities and Threats	6
5. Our Vision and Mission	7
6. Our Principles	8
7. Our Objectives and Strategies	9
8. Action Plan	11

## 1. The Central Statistics Office

The Central Statistics Office (CSO), which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, is the official organisation responsible for the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of official statistics relating to various aspects of the economic and social activities of the country. It started operation in 1945 with a technical staff of eight persons. In order to meet the growing and diversifying demand for official statistics, the number of technical staff has been increasing gradually and has today reached 213. The Organisation Chart of the office is at Annex 1.

By virtue of the Statistics Act 2000, the CSO is the central depository for all statistics produced in Mauritius.

The main approaches used by the CSO to obtain information for the compilation of official statistics are censuses, sample surveys and administrative records.

The Office disseminates its data on its website (<http://statsmauritius.gov.mu>) and through the following publications:

- 1) Digests of Statistics – annual publications covering a whole spectrum of social and economic topics
- 2) Economic and Social Indicators – mostly quarterly publications which are designed to rapidly disseminate the main statistical data pending the publication of the detailed digests
- 3) Ad-hoc reports – tables and methodology reports following completion of censuses and surveys
- 4) Mauritius in figures – an annual publication which presents the main statistics in a pocket size format and meant for free distribution.

Since its creation in 1945, the output of the CSO has been growing continuously to meet data needs of planners and users. This development has followed a course of persistent exploration, bold practice and continued progress, and has made great contributions to the socio-economic progress of Mauritius.

To better equip the CSO to adapt itself to new situations resulting from the fast changing environment, the Statistics Act has been reviewed in April 2000. The new Act extends the list of matters on which information may be collected. It also provides for the setting up of a Statistics Advisory Council to advise, among other things, on the improvement, extension, co-ordination and harmonization of statistical activities in Mauritius, and the maintenance of independence, accuracy, relevance, integrity, timeliness and professional standard of statistical information produced in Mauritius.

In 2001, the Mauritian Government adhered to the IMF General Data Dissemination System (GDDS). This system aims at improving the quality and accessibility of data produced and disseminated by member countries of the IMF. The Government expects

to be in a position to graduate to the more stringent requirements of the IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) by 2007.

In order to keep pace with the rapid transformation of the socio-economic environment of Mauritius, and to be able to respond to the increasing demand for statistics resulting therefrom, it is essential to plan for the long term while at the same time maximizing performance in the short term. Having a strategy enables one to ensure that day-to-day decisions fit in with the long-term objective.

## 2. Formulation of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan of the CSO was formulated after going through various steps. First, a **SWOT** analysis was carried out to identify its **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats** that it faces. Next, key issues on the basis of the results of the SWOT analysis were identified. Eventually, strategies were worked out and an Action Plan prepared.

Coming up with ideas is paramount in strategic planning. In order to have the commitment and cooperation of every staff, the whole CSO workforce (both administrative and technical) was involved from the outset. The CSO staff was divided into small groups which met to brainstorm ideas. These were then sorted into thematic groups. Group leaders then met for discussions on views expressed in their respective groups. The common SWOT analysis produced by the CSO staff contributed to the overall SWOT for the CSO.

The views of our main users from Government departments and the private sector were also sought. Meetings were held with the staff of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, representatives of trade unions and the following private sector organizations: Joint Economic Council, Mauritius Bankers' Association, Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Agriculture, Insurers' Association of Mauritius, Mauritius Sugar Producers Association and Association des Hoteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice .

All the views expressed have served as inputs in the formulation of our Strategic Plan.

### **3. Our Strengths and Weaknesses**

#### **Our strengths**

- We are recognised as an authority in statistics at the national level
- We are supported by a modern Statistics Act (the Statistics Act 2000) to carry out our mandate
- We have a well qualified workforce
- We adhere to international guidelines and standards in order to produce high quality and internationally comparable statistics
- We have an established network with local and foreign institutions. This helps our staff to gain local as well as international experience
- We produce publications covering a wide variety of topics according to an advance publication programme

#### **Our weaknesses**

- Staffing issues, particularly appointment to senior grades as well as assignment of duties to senior positions have resulted in frustration among staff. These have led to (a) a lack of team spirit and (b) internal conflicts which hamper the smooth running of the office
- Our organisation structure is inappropriate
- We do not fully meet users' needs for statistics in terms of timeliness, coverage, relevance and transparency as well as harmonisation with other local data producers
- We are not yet the central depository of statistics as provided for in the Statistics Act.
- Our resources and internal operations are such that we are not effectively addressing issues such as respondent burden, data security and website enhancement
- We have limited capacity for developing an effective management style based on accountable decision-making, priority and time-frame setting as well as leadership
- We lack competencies in Public Relations and marketing of our products and services which are not exploited to the full, particularly through our website
- We do not have adequate IT infrastructure and know-how to make effective use of IT in our operations
- Analytical capacity is lacking in our organisation

#### **4. Opportunities and Threats**

##### **Opportunities**

- Government commitment to reform the Civil Service provides an opportunity for the restructuring of the CSO
- Government's aim to transform the country into a knowledge-based economy will increase the demand for statistics and provide scope for CSO to develop new data compilation systems
- There is high level of regional co-operation which gives opportunities for skills-sharing with experts in the regions
- Our international commitments (MDGs, SDDS) provide avenues for improving our statistics

##### **Threats**

- Lengthy procedures for recruitment and promotion and resolution of dissatisfaction related thereto is the biggest threat for the development of the office
- More and more private organisations are involved in surveys and are thus competitors of the CSO
- Erroneous interpretation of our figures tarnishes our image
- Dissatisfaction on the part of data users has to be addressed sensitively and effectively

## **5. Our Vision and Mission**

### **Our Vision**

To be a key provider of world-class statistical information

### **Our Mission**

To provide timely, relevant and reliable statistics, consistent with international principles and standards, for effective decision-making and monitoring



## 6. Our Principles – *what we believe in*

- 1) **Access for all** – Our statistics are for the benefit of all citizens of Mauritius and we ensure that they can be easily accessed and used by the Government, businesses and the wider community.
- 2) **Relevance** – We are committed to producing statistics that are of practical utility to our users.
- 3) **Integrity & trust** – Our statistics are impartially produced according to professional and ethical standards. We provide objective statistics and publish them in ways which explain and inform, without advocating a particular position.
- 4) **Timeliness** – We promote informed decision through the provision of timely and high quality statistics to the community.
- 5) **Confidentiality** – We have a compact with respondents: they are encouraged to provide accurate information and we ensure that the data provided are strictly protected as required by the Statistics Act 2000. Every CSO staff is required by law to give an undertaking of secrecy. We also make sure that in publishing data, identifiable information is not released.
- 6) **Trust in our people** – CSO's ability to fulfil its mission depends on its people, not just on legislation or institutional processes. The CSO values its staff and has obligations towards them; staff in turn have obligations towards the CSO.

## 7. Our Objectives and Strategies

### ***Objective 1: To improve the quality of our statistical products and services***

Strategy 1: Ensure relevant data are produced

Strategy 2: Improve reliability, accuracy and timeliness of statistics

Strategy 3: Ensure compliance with international standards and guidelines

Strategy 4: Improve the transparency of our statistical products and services

### ***Objective 2: To boost staff motivation and satisfaction***

Strategy 1: Ensure good communication within the office

Strategy 2: Enhance human resource development

Strategy 3: Encourage knowledge and experience sharing

Strategy 4: Consolidate social integration of staff

Strategy 5: Provide a more conducive working environment

### ***Objective 3: To improve data dissemination***

Strategy 1: Enhance the readability of our publications

Strategy 2: Improve the website

Strategy 3: Devise user-friendly means of data dissemination

***Objective 4: To assist in the development of the National Statistical System***

Strategy 1: Facilitate the preparation and implementation of the National Strategy for the development of Statistics (NSDS)

Strategy 2: Make arrangements for better coordination, collaboration, networking and information sharing

***Objective 5: To raise public awareness about statistics and the CSO***

Strategy 1: To promote public understanding of Statistics

Strategy 2: To develop a corporate identity for the CSO

Strategy 3: To raise the corporate image of the CSO

***Objective 6: To make more effective use of IT***

Strategy 1: To sensitize staff on optimal use of IT

Strategy 2: To implement an e-business plan for the CSO

## **8. The Action Plan**

The Action Plan is the most important element of the Strategic Plan. It has been devised after taking into consideration the Mauritian socio-economic situation.

Currently, the investment ratio in Mauritius is deemed largely inadequate and there is need for higher FDI flows. In this context, subscribing to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) of the IMF will prove useful; it will facilitate the country's access to international capital markets, potentially implying higher levels of foreign investment in Mauritius.

For the CSO, the implications of adhering to SDDS relate mainly to improvement in timeliness and periodicity of some statistics such as Quarterly National Accounts, employment and unemployment. These are priority issues in the Action Plan. In addition, the CSO will continue to disseminate an advance release calendar for its publications. Other implications are that the CSO will pursue good practice, as described in the IMF's Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF), with respect to the integrity, methodological soundness, accuracy, reliability, serviceability and accessibility aspects of their data. All these aspects are catered for in the Action Plan.

However, having a plan is not an end in itself. It needs to be operationalized and monitored. Once the Action Plan is operationalized, it is necessary to assess how much has been achieved vis-a-vis the Plan's objectives to enable corrective measures and if necessary, revision of strategies. Thus, performance reviews that will include quarterly progress reports are to be conducted.

As regards funding, the CSO is a public-funded institution and thus the budget will be provided by Government.

**Objective 1 : To improve the quality of our statistical products and services**

**Strategy 1: Ensure relevant data are produced**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To organise regular consultative meetings with our main users in ministries and government departments, the private sector and trade unions	On-going
2	To conduct user surveys and adapt our products and services according to users' needs	On-going
3	To devise CSO's work program in consultation with the Statistics Advisory Council	At the beginning of each year

**Strategy 2: Improve reliability, accuracy and timeliness of statistics**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	Release Quarterly National Accounts (QNA) within 3 months after the reference quarter	December 2007
2	Release quarterly employment and unemployment estimates within 3 months after the reference quarter	December 2007
3	Release quarterly wage rate index within three months after the reference quarter	December 2007
4	To set up a co-ordination committee for the reconciliation of figures published by the CSO and other data producers	On-going
5	To establish a harmonized system of data collection for establishment surveys	June 2007
6	To devise methods for producing comparable time-series data whenever there is a change in methodology	As and when the need arises

**Strategy 3: Ensure compliance with international standards and guidelines**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To upgrade professional knowledge and maintain awareness of developments, procedures and standards through Professional Membership to renowned international statistical institutions	On-going
2	To review and update methodology in line with international recommendations	On-going
3	To identify international Benchmarking Partners with a view to attain worldclass excellence	On-going

**Strategy 4: Improve the transparency of our statistical products and services**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To prepare documentation on work methods and procedures	December 2006
2	To disseminate the documentation on work methods and procedures	June 2007

**Objective 2 : To boost staff motivation and satisfaction****Strategy 1: Ensure good communication within the office**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To establish an open system of management, with regular meetings between management and heads of units	On-going
2	To make effective use of LAN for internal communication	On-going

**Strategy 2: Enhance human resource development**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To prepare a training plan according to the training needs of the office	Every two years
2	To implement the training plan	On-going
3	To make use of a performance management system	As from December 2006
4	To prepare a policy for staff rotation	December 2006
5	To implement policy for staff rotation	March 2007

**Strategy 3: Encourage knowledge and experience sharing**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To find and maintain the right balance of complementary skills - technical, analytical, problem-solving and teamworking, within each Division.	On-going
2	To set up Work Improvement Teams within and across Divisions	On-going
3	To organise regular presentations by staff	On-going

**Strategy 4: Consolidate social integration of staff**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To devise a programme of recreational activities	Yearly
2	To set up a suggestion scheme to improve team activities	December 2006

### **Strategy 5: Provide a more conducive working environment**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To review accommodation requirements of each unit and submit a report to the Director	Yearly
2	To implement the recommendations in above-mentioned report	Yearly
3	To follow up action for the construction of a building for the CSO	On-going

### **Objective 3 : To improve data dissemination**

#### **Strategy 1: Enhance the readability of our publications**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To prepare guidelines on how to prepare statistical reports	December 2006
2	To organize in-house training on statistical reporting	March 2007
3	To prepare a template for statistical reports so that they have a standard look and presentation	March 2007
4	To continually benchmark our publications with those of renowned statistics offices	On-going

#### **Strategy 2: Improve the website**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To disseminate statistics according to subject-matter	September 2006
2	To release documentation on methodology through the website	June 2007
3	To make the website interactive and dynamic	December 2007



**Strategy 3: Devise user-friendly means of data dissemination**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To produce soft copies of census and survey reports for quicker and easier dissemination of statistical information	On-going
2	To prepare user-friendly brochures to be distributed in the context of African Statistics Day	As from September 2006 (yearly)
3	To include thematic maps in statistical reports where possible	On-going

**Objective 4 : To assist in the development of the National Statistical System****Strategy 1: Facilitate the preparation and implementation of the NSDS**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	Preparation of an NSDS for Mauritius	December 2006
2	Ensure that the NSDS is being implemented	December 2007

**Strategy 2: Make arrangements for better coordination, collaboration, networking and information sharing**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To organize workshops with data suppliers and other producers of statistics for information sharing to alleviate respondent burden	adhoc
2	To seek the involvement of the Statistics Advisory Council	On-going

**Objective 5 : To raise public awareness about statistics and the CSO**

**Strategy 1: Promote public understanding of statistics**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To prepare and disseminate materials on statistical literacy through talks and presentations	On-going
2	To prepare a student's corner on the CSO website	December 2006

**Strategy 2: Develop a corporate identity for the CSO**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To have a logo designed for the CSO	December 2007
2	To have a Statistics House	December 2008

**Strategy 3: Raise the corporate image of the CSO**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To officially launch the Strategic Plan and the Customer Charter	November 2006
2	To publish a newsletter and ensure wide circulation	March 2007
3	To publish an annual report	February 2007 and yearly

**Objective 6 : To make more effective use of IT**

**Strategy 1: Sensitize staff on optimal use of IT**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To update guidelines for IT security, use of computer, LAN and internet resources	On-going
2	To give a short training on IT security measures, use of computer, LAN and internet resources	On-going

**Strategy 2: Implement an e-business plan for the CSO**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Time frame / Completion date</b>
1	To implement the e-business plan	December 2008