



NEWSLETTER



Bhutan National Statistics Development Strategy

Building National Statistics Development Strategy

Issue 1

May 2008

Over the years the Royal Government of Bhutan, like many policy makers in developing countries and the international development community, have become increasingly aware of the importance of statistics in informing development interventions and measuring achievements. In recognition of this transition to evidence-based policy making, the February 2004 Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results held in Marrakech called on countries to implement strategic planning activities to develop their Statistical Systems.

The National Statistics Development Strategy (NSDS) provides a framework and action plan for building the statistical capacity to meet both current and future data needs. In particular the aim is to align the statistical development strategy with wider poverty-focused national development programmes and strategies. As a result the Bhutan's NSDS will be consistent with Bhutan's overall development vision as articulated by Gross National Happiness and the 10th Five Year.

The NSDS provides a vision for where the Bhutan Statistical System (BSS) should be in five to ten years, sets priorities and identifies milestones for getting there. It presents a comprehensive and unified framework for continual assessment of user needs and priorities for statistics and for building the capacity needed to meet these in a more coordinated, synergistic and efficient manner.

The BSS is decentralized and the ministries, departments or agencies are compiling various statistics in their own field for their own policy purpose. The National Statistics Bureau (NSB) which is the central agency in charge of statistics has the responsibility of coordinating

the BSS as well as compiling fundamental statistics and disseminating integrated statistical information. NSDS design will integrate sector requirements and will offer an opportunity to streamline and strengthen the BSS, resulting in limiting duplication of effort and wastage of resources. All BSS stakeholders, whether they are users or producers, will be associated to NSDS design.

The NSB has received support from the World Bank's Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB) to design Bhutan's NSDS. Two consultants bring in the process with international and national perspectives, experiences and trends in statistical organization and management, and they provide technical assistance on how to proceed with the design of the NSDS.

The NSDS design will follow the guidelines and recommendations developed by the Partnership in Statistics in 21st Century (PARIS21), a global consortium of policy makers, statisticians, and users of statistical information whose objective is to promote a culture of evidence-based policy making and monitoring in all countries.

The NSB is pleased to have this Newsletter to report on the progress of Bhutan's NSDS process. It will be disseminated by email and hard copy to all the BSS stakeholders, and posted on the NSB website. The Newsletter will be issued once a month until the end of the process.

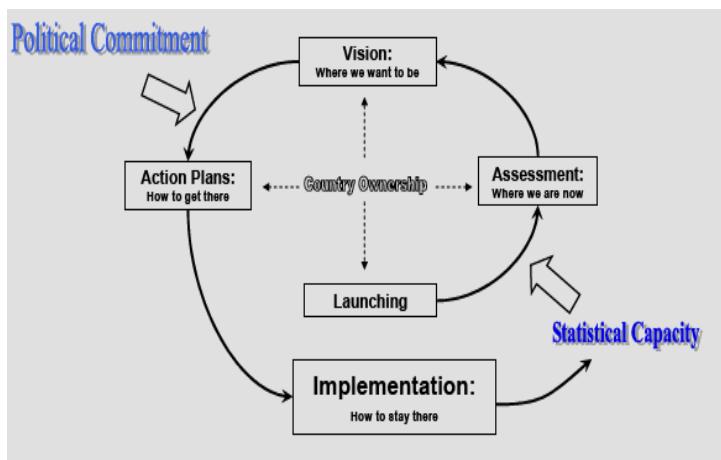
Therefore, on behalf on the NSB and the technical working group, I would like to solicit your cooperation in this process of strengthening the statistical capacity of our BSS.

Director, NSB

NSDS Process¹

How the strategic planning process can be used in the preparation of an NSDS is illustrated in the following figure. The process starts with an **assessment** of the current situation. It proceeds to map out a **vision** – where stakeholders want the system to be at some point in time, then defines how to achieve that through the adoption of **action plans** that ensure the sustainability of these improvements. The process is certainly not linear, and effective strategic management is continuous with regular feedback, monitoring, and adaptation as conditions and needs change. No matter how good the strategy adopted is, but it could be determined by its **implementation plans**.

Strategic Management Illustrated – Breaking the Vicious Circle



Assessment of the Current Status of the National Statistical System

Building on existing processes, a range of assessments will be needed, including the following:

- Collecting and analysing existing documentation
- Identifying user satisfaction, current and future needs for statistics, and existing data gaps
- Assessing each key statistical output against agreed quality criteria

¹ The description of the process is extracted from *A Guide to Designing a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)*, PARIS 21 Secretariat, November 2004. For further information see www.paris21.org

- Assessing methodologies and the quality of statistics
- Taking stock of existing capacity (for example, infrastructural, technical, and resources) to meet the identified data needs and fill data gaps
- Reviewing the legal and institutional framework, linkages, and coordination arrangements
- Assessing organisational factors using tools such as a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis

Developing the vision and identifying strategic options

These activities build on the assessment, including:

- Agreeing a mission and vision statements
- Agreeing on desired results
- Setting priorities and strategies, employing scenarios to deliver the vision and results

Preparing the implementation plan

It is important to point out that “right strategies” are not all that is needed to make an NSS effective. The strategies have to be properly and effectively implemented through a costed and time-bound action plan, including a financial plan incorporating proposals for external assistance.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The most important consideration is to see strategic management as a continuous process and the preparation of the initial document represents only the beginning. To be effective statistical systems must remain flexible and respond to new demands for data and a changing environment. Any medium-term plan, therefore, will inevitably require modification in the light of experience. The strategic management process, therefore, needs to build in mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress, to review the strategy and to make modifications when required.

Current situation of the NSDS process

The NSDS design has started beginning of May 2008.

A technical working group (TWG) will supervise the NSDS process. The TWG is chaired by the Director of NSB and it consists of appointed technical staff from key Government

institutions which are compiling statistical data. The NSDS draft proposal will be discussed and finalized during a joint workshop with all stakeholders of the BSS. A general schedule of the process has been set up and the consultants are currently assessing the BSS situation.

	May				June				July					August				September			
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
0. Management & meetings																					
TWG meeting (T)			T							T				T						T	
Consultation workshop (W)																	W				
International consultant's mission																					
1. Assessment																					
2. Vision & Strategy definition																					
3. Action Plan																					
Finalisation of NSDS and implementation plan																					

Contact persons: Mr. Cheku Dorji, Mr. Sonam Gyeltshen and Mr Tashi Dorjee, National Statistics Bureau, Coordination and Information Division, Thimphu
 Phone 975-2-325402, Mail: tashidoz@yahoo.com, sawnam@gmail.com, chekunsb@gmail.com, www.nsb.gov.bt