

Innovations in Official Statistics in the Philippine Statistical System

by

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Abstract

At the turn of the new millennium, the world experienced major changes brought about by globalization, rapid technological advancement and the unsustainable use of the environment. This gave rise to new challenges to national and international statistical systems. These challenges need to be addressed if statistics is to serve its purpose in society and they offer opportunities to statistical offices and statisticians to be relevant to national development.

In recent years, just like in other parts of the world, the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) has inevitably faced increasing demand for high quality statistics. This puts pressure on the management of the PSS raising governance issues that used to be either ignored or taken for granted. In addition, the rapid developments in information, communications and technology (ICT) have resulted in greater sophistication of data users as well as relatively more efficient and more effective ways of communicating and using statistical products and services in the PSS.

Recognizing not only the need but more importantly the benefits of addressing these challenges, the PSS, through various policies and programs of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) as the coordinator of the PSS as well as through the individual initiatives of the various components of the PSS, has introduced new and innovative approaches to the delivery of statistical services to its many stakeholders. These include, among others, crafting of new and relevant indicators, implementation of new statistical programs and policies; use of modern data collection and management methods; institutionalization of novel information dissemination techniques; and, establishment of new communication and advocacy strategies.

However, the introduction of innovations in official statistics in the PSS has not been easy. Human and financial constraints coupled with the relatively low appreciation of statistics, particularly, by local government executives have caused delays if not hindered the introduction of new statistical products and services in the country. Nonetheless, the PSS continues to do its best in providing the critical data support for planning, decision making and policy formulation and remains steadfast in advocating for greater investments in statistics by the Philippine government.

This paper presents the various innovations in official statistics in the PSS that have been instituted and/or have been pipelined for institutionalization, despite resource constraints, to enhance the relevance of statistics in nation-building. The Philippine experience shows the important role of the international statistical community and multilateral and bilateral development partners in building the statistical capacity of developing countries. It also shows that progress depends on the commitment and willingness of statistical offices to adopt and institutionalize internationally-recognized best practices in statistics.

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