

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

by
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1. Introduction

The production of official statistics is an activity strongly dependant of methodologies related to the definition of concepts and models of data collection and treatment, but also dependant of leadership and clarity on the process of production them.

Given that we are dealing with an activity with a strong impact in the assessment of governmental policies and in the international comparison of equivalent data among diverse countries, also in the sense of obtaining international comparisons in order to better understand and analyse a world in growing globalization, it has been for more than a century that diverse international bodies and independent agencies have been developing an important work of harmonizing and normalizing of concepts and procedures.

Nowadays, the integrity and international recognition of a national statistical system depends a lot in the way it applies the methodologies internationally defined and in the way its statistical data is comparable with the ones provided by other countries, in short the relevance of a NSS depends very much on the leading role and clarity of the National Statistical Office.

On the other hand, due to the effect of globalization and the major access to means of global communication, like the satellite television or the internet, the users also become more and more demanding, given that they have the possibility of easily accessing to statistical information, about the same theme, provided by its own country and compare it with the ones from other countries. This possibility creates an always growing dynamic of demand from these users, more in what concerns to the quantity of information, as in relation to its quality.

Thus, one of the determining aspects of the system of production of official statistics goes from providing the “right indicators” for each statistical area, or else to clearly guiding the production system to supply data that is really relevant for the assessment of performance from the various areas of governance and of the country as a whole.

Concerning the component of quality, there is a more and more important movement towards the provision of quality indicators of the data provided by producers of official statistics. This information is very important, more in the sense of giving credibility to the respective information as well as in warning the users for the limitations that the information may have. Far goes the time in which the producers of official statistics could consider themselves “beyond suspicion”, by the simple fact of belonging to the State!

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This paper aims to present, in a resumed way, our views and experience about the importance of leadership in the definition of clear vision and strategies of development of its national statistical system so that it can be better tuned with the needs of the users of official statistical information. In the paper, we will highlight the important role leadership and clarity in statistical development. Taking in to account the role of foreign assistance in building our National Statistical Systems, will be also highlighted upon reporting its role in the exercise.

2. Leadership – a quick review

What is the meaning of leadership? There are different definitions of leadership. It's a controversial topic in the way each individual or society is looking at the definition of leadership, most often our definitions are influenced by our past and existing environmental circumstances.

One can say that leadership as to be the capacity and will to rally people to a common purpose willingly, together with the character that inspires confidence and trust and a leader a person responsible for achieving organizational objectives through the work of others, by creating the conditions in which they can be successful and for building and maintaining the team that he or she is a member of.

In a changing environment the entire staff, particularly the managers, has to learn to manage change and recognize challenges posed by changes as opportunities of development. Fear in the relationship between managers and staff has to be removed from the mind of the staff. This is culturally important in our societies.

This climate will help to remove the resistance² from the staff usually intrinsic to a process of change. One way of dealing with resistance is by leading by example, clear focus, communicating, and involvement, linking persons to results and turning threats into opportunities.

Since 1994 that the United Nations adopted a set of principles for the production of statistical operations (Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics) which are clear in what concerns to “obligations” from producing entities and the statisticians involved in the production of official statistics.

The following table synthesizes some of those fundamental principles, from which stands out a clear message of impartiality and independence for all the entities and people involved in this activity that we see as important to approach in the framing of the theme under development in this paper.

² Confusion, sabotage, defection, denial, leave, etc...

<p>1. Assurances of integrity <i>The principle of objectivity in the collection, processing, and dissemination of statistics is firmly adhered to.</i></p>	<p>1.1 Professionalism <i>Statistical policies and practices are guided by professional principles</i></p>	<p>1.1.1 Statistics are produced on an impartial basis. 1.1.2 Choices of sources and statistical techniques as well as decisions about dissemination are informed solely by statistical considerations. 1.1.3 The appropriate statistical entity is entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.</p>
	<p>1.2 Transparency Statistical policies and practices are transparent.</p>	<p>1.2.1 The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are available to the public. 1.2.2 Internal governmental access to statistics prior to their release is publicly identified. 1.2.3 Products of statistical agencies/units are clearly identified as such. 1.2.4 Advanced notice is given of major changes in methodology, source data, and statistical techniques.</p>
	<p>1.3 Ethical standards <i>Policies and practices are guided by ethical standards.</i></p>	<p>1.3.1 Guidelines for staff behavior are in place and are well known to the staff.</p>

This summary shows how the statistical production is linked to leadership and clarity touching all prerequisites of a good leadership exercise. For instance, ethical standards principle (1.3) implies the involvement of staff and good communication between the managers at all levels and staff. The issue like staff resistance and climate creation are dealt with under this principle. A leader has to manage her/his institution with professionalism, transparency and teaching her/his staff to perform in same way, which means to say - lead by example. These issues are dealt under other two UN principles set above.

Of course the leader her/himself personality and management style plays also a very important role. S/he has to be a visionary, inclusive and not exclusive in her/his management style, and lead by example. Her/his concerned has to be creation the

necessary conditions for good performance and delivering of results of her/his team, i.e. results oriented leadership.

3. The Development of Mozambique's National Statistical System

The National Statistical System of Mozambique created by the Law no. 7/96, of 5th July of 1996³ is of centralized type and it is composed by the following organs:

- **the High Statistics Council (CSE)** – Which is the State Organ that supervises and coordinates the NSS-M;
- **the National Statistics Institute (INE)**⁴ – which is the NSS-M Central Executive Organ. Its task is the notation, selection, coordination and diffusion of the country's official statistical information;
- **the Bank of Mozambique**⁵ (BM) – which ensures the centralization and compilation of monetary and exchange statistics that as necessary to the prosecution of an efficient policy in these dominium. By delegation of INE competencies, the BM coordinates the production of the Balance of Payments;
- **the Coordinating Council for the General Population Census (CCRGP)** – which is the NSS-M organ, responsible for the management of the process of the Population and Housing General Census.

It is very important to have clear from the beginning which organ has the leading role in the process of National Statistical System development. The Statistical Act sets clearly that the above organs are the leading bodies of the NSS-M with INE in the centre of whole process.

INE as the NSS-M Central Organ, besides the official statistics production under its direct and exclusive responsibility for the census and for the surveys not integrated in the diverse ministries, ensures the coordination of the entire system. The production role of the INE was delegated to six line ministries for the current statistical production that is directly related to its mandates, which are the case of the ministries of Health, Education, Labour, Agriculture, Science and Technology, and Fishery. INE assures those Delegated Organs and the Bank of Mozambique perform their statistical responsibilities following sound methodologies, official classifications, definitions and observe the release statistical publications plan approved by the High Statistics Council. In this regard, official statistics in the country are those produced by INE, the Bank of Mozambique and by the INE Delegated Organs.

³ Statistical Act of the National Statistical System of Mozambique

⁴ Created on the 28th August 1996 by the Presidential Decree nr 9/96, its presidency (President and 2 Vice-Presidents) having been appointed in April 1997, also by a Presidential Decrees.

⁵ Central Bank of Mozambique

Planning is linked to the process of leadership and clarity and indeed plays a major role in the process. During the planning process a couple of questions have to be answered. What we want, how and when, linked to costing, time and required human resources.

One of the main starting points for the development of any System, in particular the National Statistical System is to define with clarity its mission and from which define to the best possible the vision and the objectives to pursue in a certain period of time.

These were three steps taken by NSS-M since 1993 when the Government decided to reformulate the Statistical System in place to date, starting by elaborating with the support from an International Consultancy very experienced in a National Statistical System, the diagnosis of the statistical situation in the country, the improvement that the system should observe, the involvement of all the stakeholders and in how long. Thus, after about 3 years of consultancy, various workshops with all stakeholders at the country level, nationals and foreigners, the legal basis of statistical activity was produced, strictly observing the pertinent recommendations from the United Nations, the organization and structure of the central executive organ of NSS-M and all the other legal apparatus.

The following step was the development a strategic plan that could give body to a vision, mission and purposes identified. The elaboration of the first strategic plan of NSS-M covering the period 1998-2002 had as a central objective the creation of the foundations of the System, namely the adoption of nomenclatures, accomplishing of Population Census that created conditions for the definition of an updated sample frame for the surveys conducted later on in the framework of the Survey's Integrated System to Households and the Agricultural and Livestock Census⁶, elaboration of a comprehensive plan of human resources development to undertake the activities included in the Plan.

Another two very important components treated in this period were the statistical literacy and the image of the institution which still features in the current plan. For better dialogue and better use of official statistical information produced, a series of works were undertaken, all oriented to the reading and better use of statistics. A 20 year experienced journalist was recruited to coordinate this activity. In the context of the institutional image and of its characteristics and functions, the logotype of the institution, uniforms for surveyors, standardization of covers for our publications, creation of a homepage⁷, audited accounts by independent entities and the spreading of reports of auditing were determinant in the trust, prestige and image of the NSS-M and its central executive organ (INE).

The intense use that the government, the Breton Woods institutions and other international agencies and users in general, have been making of the official statistical information produced by NSS-M, also played a major contribution to system development.

⁶ Main economic activity in the country, comprising more than 70% of the Mozambican population.

⁷ www.ine.gov.mz

The good relationship with media, NSS-M statistical activities has good coverage which has greatly contributed for what was possible to reach, so far, in terms of image and prestige of the system.

The investment in quality and in image revealed itself very important for the NSS-M actual status. In fact, as the Statistical Office from the United Kingdom (NSO of UK)⁸ defines *“if you are a producer, ... your reputation depends on delivering quality outputs and services.”*

The NSS-M second strategic plan, currently under implementation, covering the period 2003-07, has subjacent quality and sustainability. This last aspect foreseen, giving to the Mozambican technicians major command in the conduction of the tasks to be done and self-confidence necessary for regulating production of official statistics in the country.

During this period the involvement of foreign consultants in the statistical production and actions of specialized training, also of short term missions was drastically reduced. With view to ensure the statistical quality required of the statistical information produced, a quality plan was designed and it is under implementation. On the other hand, the short term consultancies were directed to ensure that the Mozambican technicians strictly observe the methodologies defined, if the recommendations left by the previous missions were strictly followed, in brief, the short term consultants accomplished missions of statistical auditing.

The strategic objectives of the two above mentioned plans were defined together with the users, both national and foreigners and other producers of statistical information. Besides the formal forum established in the Statistical Act, namely the High Statistics Council, a serial of workshops were undertaken to get the final drafts that were submitted to the High Statistics Council for evaluation and approval. In the current Strategic Plan there are included indicators objectively verifiable for a more realistic monitoring of the development of the plan. One of the most important indicators related concerns to statistical production, clearly establishing how each result/publication is provided and when.

The process of elaboration of the Strategic Plan for the period 2008/12 started with the core objective to setup a system of statistical information of higher frequency and quality at local level, in particular at district level, administrative unit defined as unit base of development and of combat to absolute poverty in the Mozambique's National Development Agenda 2025 and all Government Plans.

Therefore, for each of the NSS-M planning cycles, particularly in its development, the central objectives were clearly defined together with all the stakeholders as a way to which the development of NSS-M is a fast, consistent and in a sustainable. This clarity of course and purposes to be attained helped greatly during the INE talks to the Government and Cooperation partners in funding the plan of activities and, on the other hand, it allowed a greater engagement from the implementators as well.

⁸ http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about_ns/quality_strategy.asp

Within the NSS-M strategic plan, the Human Resources are considered the main asset of the System. Internally, through annual opinion surveys and of regular technical advices at all levels, the feeling of the staff is being taken into account, trying to keep them motivated and as part of the NSS-M development process. It is in this process, activities and challenges to be faced by the System that the needs of human resources and the needs for training are identified. The scarcity of skilled people that the country faces in the area of statistics, demography and computing for statistics, the threat of HIV/AIDS⁹ and the challenges to NSS-M in the future, promoted in 2002 the creation of a degree in Statistics in the country's oldest public university.

The staff pyramid designed for the Central services and for the INE provincial branches¹⁰ and the needs from the INE's Delegated Organs, taking into account the tasks to be accomplished by each staff member combined with the tasks that are defined to each one of the organs previously mentioned, the training of Masters in the above mentioned areas and in the area of Management was also given priority.

Besides the activities and challenges previously mentioned, in the designing the NSS-M Human Resources Development Plan, a particular attention was given to long binding of the staff in the System and to the impact of HIV/AIDS. In this last aspect a comprehensive program and duly articulated with the National Plan for the Combat to the HIV/AIDS was designed and it is under implementation. This program is directed to staff prevention and awareness, including the ad hoc recruited personnel for the fieldwork of surveys and census.

4. The role of cooperating partners in developing NSS-M

The National Statistical System of Mozambique (NSS-M), in pursuing the goals defined in its Strategic Plan, namely the production of reliable statistics, with the required quality and comparable, foreseeing to meet, amongst other issues, the challenges of development, particularly the poverty reduction, and given its strong technical and financial limitations, it relies in the international cooperation as one of its main strategies.

The cooperation which NSS-M is benefiting covers a wide spectrum of areas in the statistics area, playing an outstanding role in the undertaking of some statistical operations which today make up a very important data sources for the National Statistics System of Mozambique, as it is the case of the 1997 Population and Housing Census and the Agricultural and Livestock Census of 1999/2000, which we consider part of the statistical building foundations. To stress that the results of these two statistical operations were very well accepted by the national users, as well as by the international users, which denotes the strong commitment and collaboration of the national and international professionals involved.

⁹ rate of national incidence in 2004 was of 16.4%

¹⁰ one Master per five Graduates in the Central Services and one Graduate per five Medium Level Technicians in the Provincial Delegations, in average by the end of 2007

In Mozambique, all projects in the statistical area are designed and executed with the involvement of national technicians, from the conception and implementation phase to the compilation and dissemination of the definitive results, which allows an earning of experience and a national accountability at all levels, so that we can progressively move towards to the desired “technical autonomy” and sense of national ownership.

The System has been benefiting financial technical assistance from a couple of Cooperating Partners, namely the Scandinavian Countries, the Italian Cooperation, UNICEF, UNFPA, USAID, Portugal, Federal Republic of Germany, FAO, the French Cooperation, IMF and the European Union, these last two ones partners in the context of the regional intervention at the level of the Portuguese Speaking Countries, and with the World Bank and the African Development Bank at SADC¹¹ region.

Donor’s driven approaches must be avoided in the cooperation exercise, particularly in the development of a national statistical system. The top management of the National Statistical System has to be on control and command of the entire process. Therefore, a especial forum has to be established do deal with the coordination and monitoring of technical and finance assistance provided by the cooperating partners to the Statistical System.

A Steering Committee meets three times a year to assess the performance of the cooperation and support programmes to NSS-M, to evaluate INE-M plans of activities and the respective grades of accomplishment. These meetings are privileged for exchanging of information among the entities that are members of the committee that is lead by INE-M’s President and comprehends, besides the INE-M management team, the team leader of the Programmes and its respective accounting managers, and it involves representatives from NSS-M cooperation partners.

An aspect always present in the analysis and deliberations of this Committee is the non duplication of efforts, the need of a growing exploitation of the synergies created by the intervention of the different partners and harmonization of goals.

The adjustments seen as necessary to the programmes, like the reallocation of funds, for example, are analysed and approved by the Committee, as well.

The control of the results fulfilled from each component of the Plans¹² is done through reports, according to the following steps:

- a) INE-M elaborates semestral reports, which are sent to the High Council on Statistics and Cooperating Partners;
- b) these reports are evaluated by the Steering Committee;
- c) the financial auditing reports are presented to the Steering Committee members for evaluation;

¹¹ Southern Africa Development Countries

¹² The NSS-M has two kinds of plans: a five-year plan and business plans for each year. Both plans cover all NSS-M entities

- d) in a launching of a specific outcomes of a statistical activity the INE-M Presidency or an INE-M senior officer holds a press conference where the findings are presented and the methodology followed and other technical issues are explained;
- e) regular statistical production is announced via press release or/ and INE-M's Portal;
- f) the copies of INE-M reports are sent to Government and the Co-operating partners after being evaluated and approved by the High Statistical Council.

Further more, all the technical and financial foreign assistance is given under the assumption that the Government should be increasing its contribution to the budget for the NSS-M activities in a proportion above the inflation annual rate average from last year. Subjacent to this agreement with the Government, it is underlying the principle of phasing out agreed between INE-M and the Co-operating partners in all programs and projects of statistical cooperation. Therefore the training component in such programs and projects has a meaningful importance in their respective budgets. The international interventions of the gap filling type concentrate a great deal of our attention, trying to reduce them as much as possible and keep them while they are really necessary due the lack of national capacity. Even in these cases, taking into account that eventually the users got used to receiving a certain statistical product, special attention is paid to ensure the continuity of the national production, with quality, after such technical assistance has been terminated. These aspects (continuity and quality) should always deserve special attention in the National Statistical System development processes.

5. Clarity of results

Leading implies clarity (aim and purpose; method and measures roles), climate (structure, resources, systems and culture) and competence (skills and knowledge; attitude and behaviour). The entire team has to be on board of the endeavour, which means to understand its role, what we are trying to achieve and how (plans/ strategies) and how we will monitor the process. It is also important to find out whether or not the team has the right resources, skills and technical knowledge and the behaviour and attitude towards success.

Again, as NSO of UK establishes in its above mentioned webpage, *“if you are a costumer, the National Statistics brand will mean products of high quality, measured in terms of relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality in disseminating results, accessibility and clarity of results, comparability, coherence and completeness.”*

Leadership and the culture of clarity in the production of official statistics have to be indeed assumed under two major components: one of principles inherent to the own production System, and the other one of results from the same production system.

Producing and disseminating statistical information with quality constitutes one of the higher priorities for all organs with responsibility of producing official statistics within

NSS-M. The demand for statistics information can only be adequately fulfilled, if the data produced and disseminated to different users are of certified quality.

In looking for high standards of quality, the producer of statistics within NSS-M and particularly INE-M, is continuously making efforts in order to guarantee that statistical information be relevant, accurate, coherent, timely and accessible.

Constitute equally general guidelines of action:

- . Collaboration with universities, in order to carry out methodological studies related to the use of new technologies and carrying out different official statistics surveys for progressive improvement of accuracy of the statistics produced;

- . To foment and take statistical advantages of administrative records, with particular emphasis in social and vital statistics, in order to reduce the cost of national statistical activities and reduce the burden of the suppliers units;

- . To improve the quality of the information, by establishing new methodologies of collecting, processing and disseminating the statistical information, and through a systematic and oriented process of quality work and quality declaration;

- . Carrying out user satisfaction surveys to evaluate their satisfaction about statistical products available to them;

- . Permanent contact with users of official statistical information, particularly Government, in order to keep always present their needs;

- . Carrying out annual surveys about quality in order to monitor the methodologies used for better improvement of quality of statistical information;

- . Production of reports about main sources of statistical data, including administrative registers, source of errors, data processing, treatment of no-response, etc...

The official statistics of Mozambique are being produced having in mind, not only the users' needs, but also under permanent care of being adjusted as much as possible to the existing international recommendations. This permanent concern by the quality included in the NSS-M development strategy has greatly contributed for the acceptance of the statistical products disseminated by the System and for its credibility.

On the other hand, the production and public provision of quality indicators of the statistical information has also been assuming a growing importance role.

The Census 1997 publications, the publication of 1997 and 2003 Demographic and Health Survey editions and other Household Surveys conducted by INE have a large set of indicators about sampling errors for a significant quantity of variables at national and provincial level, which shows a growing concern in providing the users with fundamental information for a correct interpretation of data.

The NSS-M did not yet reach the level of the most developed countries, in statistical terms, in the sense of publicly determining which data can be provided according to a certain value of the variation coefficient. But we are committed to provide the users with more information that allows the assessment of the quality of official statistical data and, specially, in warning the users to have into account the statistical errors existing in the information made available.

Besides the intrinsic quality of official statistics, it is very important that the respective data is disseminated as fast as possible after the respective time of data collection. The updating of statistics is a more and more determinant factor in its quality, specially taking into account two factors from the actual societies:

- a) The growing fastness in the changing of statistics from a certain phenomenon or set of statistical units;
- b) The growing pressure over Governments in the sense of adjusting policies to the real existing situation.

Any of the previously indicated factors puts on the Statistical System a pressure that has to be understood as very positive and important for the statistical activity, under the risk of producing “history” instead of relevant indicators.

Concerning methodologies, both the publications and the INE´ site above mentioned, provide a description of the same, not always as exhaustive as it would be desirable, but we have a good perception of its growing importance for the users, so we are committed to improve it.

The elaboration of metadata included in the GDDS of IMF to which NSS-M adhered to, was an enormous contribution to the above described process, because in the metadata, the statistical processes, the limitations, coverage, etc and the respective plans of improvement are clearly presented and publicly available.

All publications and disseminated by the producing organs from SEN-M take the stamp of “Official Statistics” that distinguishes them from the others, even if they are produced by other Government entities, leaving it very clear for the user, the nature of such information.

Finally, it worth noting that after about a decade of the NSS-M, the INE and its partners within and outside the system continues striving to accomplish its mission and vision according to the following principles:

- User focus
- Continuous improvement
- Product quality commitment
- Accessibility of information
- Partnership
- Respect for the need of data suppliers
- Commitment of leadership
- Staff development

6. Final remarks

There is indeed a very strong link between leadership and clarity. For a sustainable development of a National Statistical System a strong leadership and clarity are an imperative, particularly from the top management of the National Statistical Office, whatever Statistical System the country decided to embark on. Good leadership implies to have a vision and to be clear about its mission. Good leadership relies on clear planning goals and targets. Good leadership is also about ones personal leadership.