



THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
STATISTICAL CAPACITY
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The relevance of NSSs

- Reliable data are central to public administration
- Recent recognition that National Statistical Systems are integral to the achievement of new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- “Data are the *lifeblood* of decision-making”



2

Political Economy Challenges of NSO Capacity-Building

WHY NOT CREATE CAPABLE NSOS?

- Resource scarcity
- Contingency
- Misaligned incentives
- Accountability

WHY CREATE CAPABLE NSOS?

- Constrain future incumbents
- Monitor future incumbents
- Short x long-term
- External pressure
- Past agreements among members of regime
- Signal policy credibility

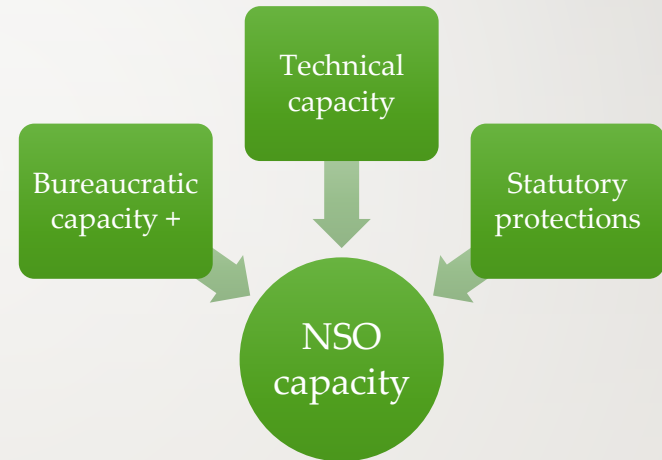
Towards autonomous NSOs?

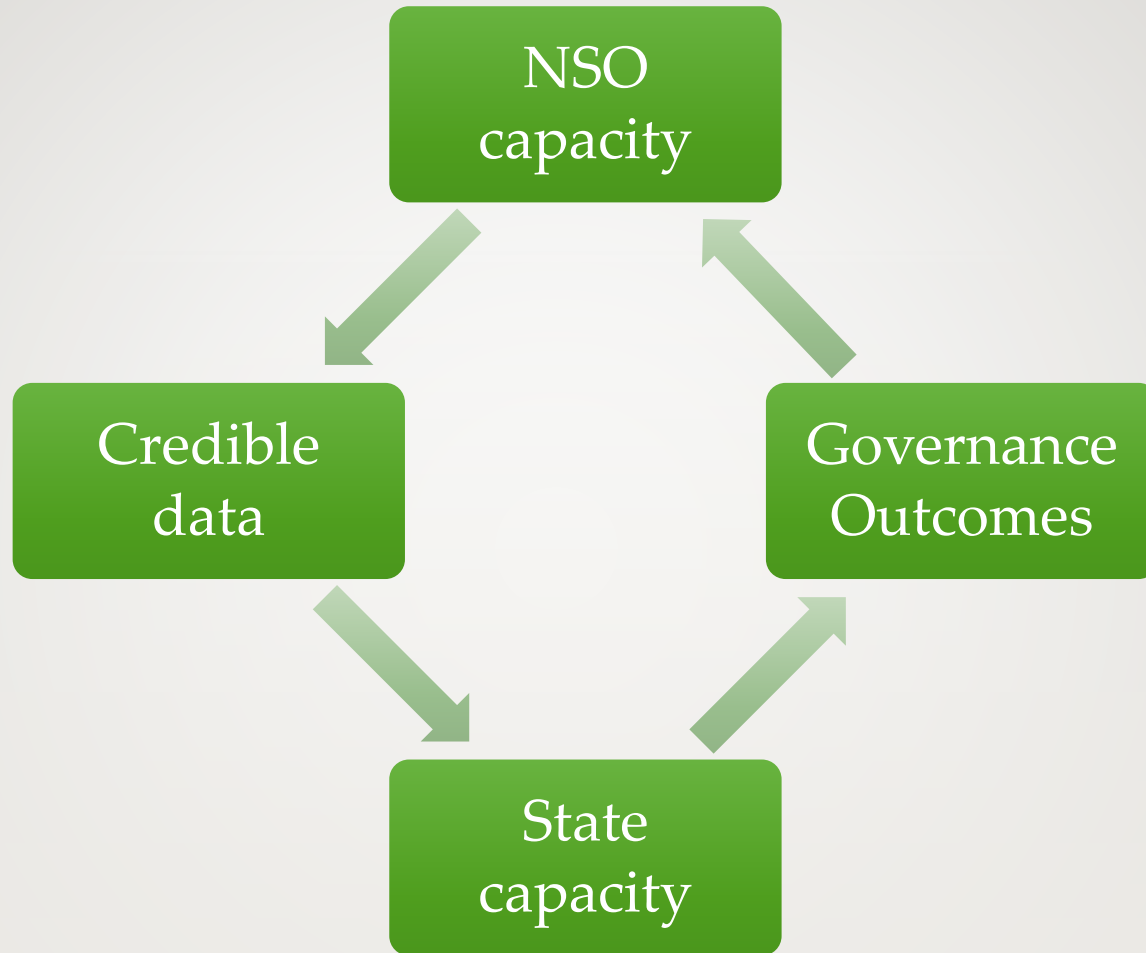
- United Nations (2003):
“A special circumstance affects statistics: the results of the activities of statistical agencies must be replicable to be believable, but realistically the user cannot replicate them.”
- De jure protections
 - Collegiate tenure
 - Budget
 - Review
- De facto protections
 - Agency credibility
 - Expertise
 - Popular legitimacy and diffuse support

4

The challenge of measuring NSO capacity and autonomy

- Bureaucratic capacity +
 - Data on *esprit de corps* + education + specialization
- Technical capacity
 - Internal surveys of NSOs
 - Procedural soundness
- Statutory protections





Thank you.

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