

Example Five-Year Multi-Annual Statistical Plan for a National Statistical Office

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Introduction

This five-year plan is intended for **all stakeholders of the national statistical system** – from NSO leadership and staff to other data-producing agencies, oversight bodies, and users of statistics. It uses **shared terminology and standards** so that everyone has a common understanding of the goals and methods. See annex A for the most important terms. All producers in the system are expected to apply uniform concepts, definitions, and classifications, as encouraged by international guidelines. The plan also emphasizes a culture of **continuous learning and improvement**. It draws on findings from the NSO's recent self-assessment of quality, ensuring that lessons learned inform the planned improvements. This approach echoes UN NQAF guidance to promote ongoing enhancement of processes. In short, the plan not only charts a course of action but also builds a shared language and learning mindset among its audience.

The plan is established in line with UN NQAF about the multi-year plans (Requirement 1.4). The plan is function-based meaning it aligns the strategic initiatives with the NSO's core functional areas: *Strategy & Leadership*, *Capability Development*, *Corporate Support*, and *Production*. See figure 1 below.

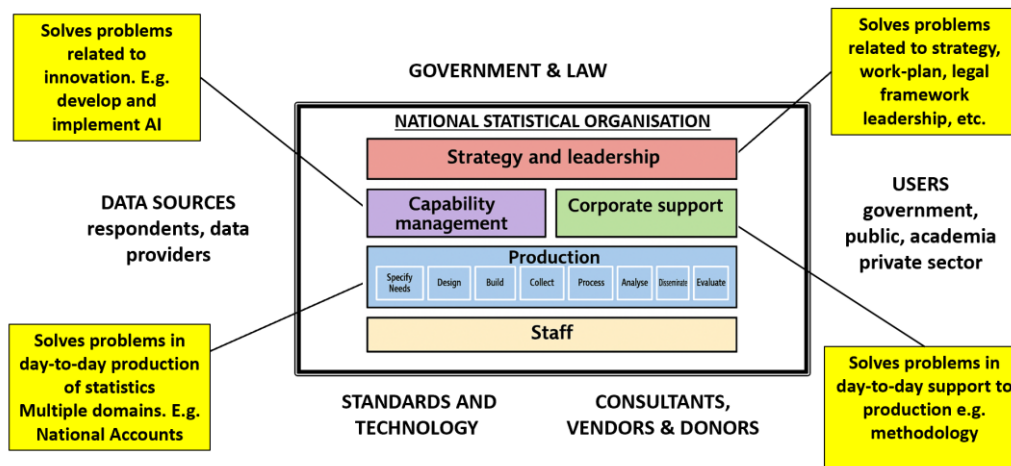


Figure 1: Functional differentiation of an NSO (GAMSO areas) and their system-environment relationships.

Each part of the plan addresses a specific problem area. By structuring the plan around these functions, the NSO ensures that **structural challenges** (like fragmented processes and resource gaps) are approached holistically rather than in silos. The result is a targeted roadmap that links each major program to the function responsible for executing solutions.

Current Situation

SWOT ANALYSIS – MAIN RESULTS

- Strengths: High user trust, Skilled core personnel, Legal mandate for data
- Weaknesses: Fragmented production systems, Outdated IT infrastructure, Insufficient HR in key areas
- Opportunities: Administrative data access, AI for automation, Regional collaboration
- Threats: Declining response rates, Budget constraints, Loss of technical expertise

SELF-ASSESSMENT (SELECTED UN-NQAF ELEMENTS)

- Requirement 9.1 (Resources): Scored as "partially adequate." Budgeting and HR allocation processes exist but are not aligned with program needs.
- Requirement 11.6 (Standardized Systems): Scored as "low." Production still siloed; limited cross-departmental standardization. Plans for integration not yet implemented.
- Requirement 4.3 (Stakeholder Engagement): Scored as "moderate." Feedback mechanisms exist but not used systematically in planning.

ISSUES IN FOCUS

Fragmented production systems:

At present, statistical production is handled via disparate systems and processes that do not interoperate. Different departments and agencies maintain separate data platforms and methods, leading to duplication, inconsistent quality, and inefficiencies. This fragmentation runs counter to the recommended practice of implementing integrated, standardized production systems across the NSS. The lack of a unified production framework undermines coherence and cost-effectiveness in the statistical processes.

Inadequate financial and human resources:

The NSO faces constraints in its budget and workforce. Funding is not keeping pace with the expanding data demands, and there are shortages of skilled staff in key areas (e.g. IT, methodology). As a result, the NSO struggles to fully implement its work programme. Current resources are insufficient to meet the statistical development needs of the country, which affects the scope, quality, and timeliness of outputs. These gaps in financing and human capital hamper innovation and put at risk the sustainability of ongoing statistical activities.

Mission, Vision, and Strategic Programs

Mission: *To provide high-quality, timely and impartial official statistics that meet user needs and support evidence-based decision-making.*

Vision: *A modern, integrated national statistical system that is coordinated, innovative, and responsive to the country's emerging information requirements.*

In line with the Generic Law on Official Statistics, this five-year plan sets out a clear **vision and strategic priorities**, defining what the NSS must achieve to satisfy user needs and how these goals will be accomplished with available resources. To realize the mission and vision, the plan is organized into **five strategic programs**. Each program has a specific objective and deliverables, ties into one or more of the NSO's functional areas, and has resources allocated (in total, ~100 person-years across all programs). The programs are as follows:

PROGRAM 1: INTEGRATED STATISTICAL SYSTEMS

Objective: Establish a unified, standardized production system for official statistics.

Key Deliverables: Deploy a common IT infrastructure for data processing and storage; implement standardized data collection and processing workflows (adopting GSBPM and a single metadata repository).

Roles (GAMSO): *Strategy & Leadership* – set organization-wide standards and mandate the use of a central production platform; *Capability Development* – build and configure the integrated IT systems, and train staff in all agencies on new tools and procedures; *Corporate Support* – invest in shared ICT infrastructure and maintain common statistical registers/classifications; *Production* – adopt the new unified processes across surveys and administrative data operations, phasing out legacy systems.

Resources: Approximately **25 person-years** (significant IT development and training effort in early years).

PROGRAM 2: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Objective: Ensure adequate funding and human capital for sustainable statistical operations.

Key Deliverables: Develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy (e.g. secure increased government funding, donor support, and cost-recovery for certain services); launch a comprehensive staff development program (including recruitment of critical skills and continuous training for existing personnel).

Roles (GAMSO): *Strategy & Leadership* – advocate for higher budget allocations and endorse policies (or legislation) that support official statistics, leveraging the NSDS as a tool for investment ⁶; *Capability Development* – design and deliver training curricula, mentorship, and knowledge transfer initiatives to build staff skills (especially in new methods and IT); *Corporate Support* – strengthen human resource management (streamline hiring, improve retention via incentives) and optimize the budgeting process to allocate resources efficiently; *Production* – prioritize statistical activities to match resource levels (focusing on core outputs first) and improve productivity through staff multi-skilling and process streamlining.

Resources: Approximately **20 person-years** (spread across expert training, HR initiatives, and stakeholder engagement for funding).

PROGRAM 3: METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND DATA MODERNIZATION

Objective: Modernize statistical methods and diversify data sources to better meet evolving information needs.

Key Deliverables: Establish a *data innovation lab* to pilot the use of new data sources (e.g. big data, geospatial data, mobile data) and advanced techniques; update key statistical methodologies and IT tools (for example, introduce modern imputation methods, automation in data collection, and API-based data access for users).

Roles (GAMSO): *Strategy & Leadership* – foster partnerships with data providers (e.g. other government agencies, private sector) and incorporate the use of alternative data into the national strategy; *Capability Development* – conduct research and development projects on new statistical methods, testing their feasibility and quality; build staff expertise in areas like data science and GIS; *Corporate Support* – upgrade technological infrastructure (high-performance computing, big data storage) and update legal/institutional frameworks to facilitate use of administrative and third-party data; *Production* – integrate successful pilots into regular production (e.g. use administrative data to replace or complement surveys, apply new estimation techniques to improve accuracy and timeliness).

Resources: Approximately **20 person-years** (phased R&D projects and incremental adoption over five years).

PROGRAM 4: QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND STANDARDS ENHANCEMENT

Objective: Strengthen **quality assurance and standardization** across all statistical processes.

Key Deliverables: Implement a National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) within the NSO and other producers, including regular quality reviews of key outputs; produce updated methodological guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all stages of statistical production (survey design, data collection, validation, dissemination, etc.).

Roles (GAMSO): *Strategy & Leadership* – enforce a formal quality policy and schedule periodic quality assessments for the NSS, ensuring that quality considerations are built into planning and evaluation; *Capability Development* – train staff on quality management practices and the use of quality indicators, and set up a dedicated quality assurance team or task force; *Corporate Support* – develop and disseminate standardized frameworks (classifications, concepts, metadata standards) and provide tools for documentation and quality monitoring; *Production* – apply the common standards and quality checks in day-to-day data collection and processing (e.g. using checklists, peer review of outputs, documenting metadata and revisions thoroughly), and address any quality issues identified through review cycles.

Resources: Approximately **15 person-years** (quality experts, training, and ongoing review processes).

PROGRAM 5: USER ENGAGEMENT AND DATA DISSEMINATION

Objective: Improve user engagement, data accessibility, and trust in official statistics.

Key Deliverables: Establish regular user-producer consultation mechanisms (such as a user advisory committee or annual user satisfaction surveys) to gather feedback on statistical

products; modernize dissemination platforms by developing an open data portal and enhancing the NSO's website with interactive visualizations and more timely releases.

Roles (GAMSO): *Strategy & Leadership* – ensure that **user needs** drive priority-setting by incorporating feedback into the multi-year programme, and uphold transparency commitments (e.g. release calendars, revisions policy); *Capability Development* – build capabilities in data communication (train staff in visualization, media communication) and implement new dissemination technologies (APIs for data access, mobile-friendly data apps); *Corporate Support* – maintain robust IT support for dissemination systems, enforce dissemination standards (branding, formats, quality of release) and **handle** outreach (press releases, social media) to

improve statistical literacy; *Production* – tailor statistical outputs to user needs by providing relevant disaggregation's, explanatory metadata, and ensuring timely, frequent publication of high-demand indicators.

Resources: Approximately **20 person-years** (including IT development for the portal, communications, and ongoing user outreach activities).

Coordination and Governance

Objective: To ensure **effective coordination** of the National Statistical System through a hybrid governance model that combines centralized leadership with collaborative oversight. This model leverages both the authority of the NSO and the guidance of a multi-stakeholder council. **Key parties** involved include: the **Statistical Council** (a high-level advisory body) which provides strategic direction and represents user interests, the **NSO** as the central coordinator and technical leader, and **other statistical agencies** (ministries, central bank, etc.) as active participants in planning and production. Under this arrangement, the NSO prepares the multi-annual and annual statistical programmes in close consultation with users and other producers, while the Statistical Council advises on priorities to ensure the programmes align with national needs and resources. This hybrid approach balances top-down strategy with inclusive participation, aiming for a coherent yet flexible national statistics program.

- *Strategy & Leadership:* The NSO (led by the Chief Statistician) and the Statistical Council work together to set **strategic priorities** for the NSS. The Council, representing a broad range of stakeholders, **advises the Chief Statistician** on the content of multi-year and annual programmes – ensuring that user demands are addressed and that planned activities are feasible within budget. The Chief Statistician retains decision-making authority on statistical programmes, using transparent criteria to include contributions from various producers while avoiding duplication. This joint strategic oversight guarantees that all agencies move in one direction under a common vision.
- *Capability Development:* The NSO coordinates capacity building and innovation across the NSS. For example, it may organize **inter-agency training** sessions, share methodological research, and lead joint development projects (such as the data innovation lab under Program 3). Other agencies contribute by identifying their capacity needs and participating in shared solutions. This function ensures that improvements (new tools, methods, skills) are spread throughout the system rather than confined to one agency.
- *Corporate Support:* The NSO provides centralized support services and standards to all producers. Common **infrastructure and guidelines** (IT systems, quality frameworks, classifications, etc.) are developed by the NSO and made available system-wide. All agencies are expected to use these **uniform standards and methods** to promote consistency. Additionally, coordination mechanisms (working groups, task forces under the Council or NSO) handle cross-cutting administrative issues, such as resolving data access problems or aligning on confidentiality protocols. Each agency's internal support units work in tandem with the NSO's guidance, ensuring legal, financial, and IT practices are harmonized across the NSS.
- *Production:* Line ministries and other producers are responsible for **data production in their subject-matter areas** (e.g. health stats by the Health Ministry, financial stats by the Central Bank), but they do so under the umbrella of the national statistical programme. They coordinate with the NSO to plan surveys and data collections, which are then included in the unified work programme. The NSO monitors these activities to ensure they meet quality standards and **avoid overlaps**, and it compiles or consolidates outputs as needed for national indicators. Through committees or the Council, producers share their workplans and methodologies, so that one agency's data can be used by others and efforts are complementary. In this hybrid model, **communication flows both ways:** the NSO provides technical oversight and integration, while

other agencies provide subject expertise and data, resulting in a well-synchronized production system for official statistics.

Monitoring, Learning, and Adjustments in one year plans

Objective: To create a **continuous monitoring and learning** mechanism that allows the plan to be refined and adjusted over the five-year period. Rather than treating the statistical program as fixed, this approach emphasizes adaptability: the NSO will regularly evaluate progress, learn from experience, and make course corrections as needed. **Key mechanisms** include embedding improvement teams within the organization, conducting periodic performance reviews, and soliciting stakeholder feedback on an ongoing basis. For example, small **internal improvement teams** (drawing staff from different functions) might be tasked with reviewing specific projects or processes and recommending enhancements every year. Likewise, mid-term evaluations of the multi-annual plan will be carried out to assess what is working and what needs change, ensuring the plan remains relevant in light of new developments.

- *Strategy & Leadership:* The NSO's leadership, together with the central coordination body (e.g. the Statistical Council or a steering committee), **monitors implementation progress** on a regular schedule. They track key performance indicators for each program (such as milestones achieved, quality metrics, user satisfaction levels) and hold quarterly or annual review meetings. In these forums, decision-makers assess whether strategic objectives are being met and identify any deviations or emerging issues. **Governance arrangements** support this adaptivity – for instance, the multi-year plan is formally updated together with one-year plans, with approval from the Council or government if necessary. Top management's commitment to observing how well the organization's own processes are functioning ensures that the strategy itself can evolve in response to feedback.
- *Capability Development:* Continuous learning is operationalized by the capability development function. Staff are encouraged to capture lessons learned from each project or innovation (e.g. documenting what worked or failed in a pilot using big data). The NSO might establish a knowledge base or community of practice where these insights are shared. **Improvement teams** (or a dedicated quality and innovation unit) analyze this input and translate it into updated practices or training. For example, if a self-assessment or user survey reveals a gap, the NSO can quickly organize a training or develop a new methodology to address it. By treating every project as an opportunity to build know-how, the NSO's capabilities continuously adapt and grow throughout the plan's lifecycle.
- *Corporate Support:* The support functions provide the **infrastructure for monitoring and adjustment**. This includes setting up information systems to track progress (e.g. dashboards for project status, budget execution, and quality indicators) and facilitating the reporting process. The NSO prepares periodic **implementation reports** on the multi-annual program – detailing achievements, obstacles, and any proposed adjustments – and submits them for review. These reports, along with the Statistical Council's opinions, are made public to maintain transparency. Administrative processes are also kept flexible: for instance, budgeting is reviewed so that funds can be reallocated to priority areas identified during reviews, and human resources policies allow for shifting staff to new high-priority tasks. In essence, corporate support ensures that the mechanisms to learn and adapt (meetings, reports, data systems, etc.) are in place and effective.
- *Production:* Feedback from the **front lines of data production** is a critical driver of improvement. Field staff, subject-matter experts, and analysts who carry out the statistical operations regularly report any issues, inefficiencies, or data quality concerns they encounter. A channel (such as an improvement log or periodic debrief workshops) is set up to funnel these insights back to planners. Production units also react to changing circumstances – for example, if response rates drop in a survey, they might test new collection methods and share results with the capability development function. Through this continuous feedback loop, operational teams help fine-tune survey designs, processing techniques, and dissemination practices in real time. The NSO thus

remains agile: **monitoring data quality and operational metrics**, learning from day-to-day experiences, and making incremental adjustments to processes or outputs. This iterative approach ensures the five-year plan is not static; it is a **living strategy with changes put into 1 year plans**, ultimately leading to better performance and higher quality statistics.

Annex A: Selected Important Terms

- **National Statistical System (NSS):** The ensemble of statistical agencies within a country that produce official statistics. Typically includes the National Statistical Office (NSO) and other government agencies (e.g., central bank, ministries) that produce statistics.
- **National Statistical Office (NSO):** The central agency responsible for coordinating the NSS and often the main producer of official statistics in a country. Sometimes called the National Bureau of Statistics or similar.
- **Multi-Year Statistical Programme (MYSP):** A multi-annual strategic plan outlining the development and production of official statistics over a set period (e.g., 3-5 years), including mission, vision, strategic programs, and resource allocation. It can take the form of a **National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)**.
- **Annual Statistical Programme:** The yearly implementation plan derived from the MYSP, detailing the statistical activities to be carried out in a given year (surveys, censuses, data releases, development projects) ³⁹.
- **UN National Quality Assurance Framework (UN-NQAF):** An international framework providing principles and requirements for quality in official statistics. It includes 19 requirements across several principles (e.g., coordination, resources, methodology, outputs) that NSOs should aim to meet to assure quality ^{1 8}.
- **Generic Law on Official Statistics:** A model law (developed by international organizations) that countries can adapt for their statistical legislation. It outlines the legal basis for official statistics, covering the mandate of the NSO, NSS coordination, statistical programmes, data collection, confidentiality, etc. Key articles (e.g., 10–14) deal with governance and planning of the NSS ^{16 4}.
- **GAMSO (Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations):** An international reference model that categorizes the activities of a statistical organization into four broad areas: **Strategy & Leadership, Capability Development (or Management), Corporate Support, and Production** ³. It extends the GSBPM to cover overarching and managerial processes in addition to core production.
- **GSBPM (Generic Statistical Business Process Model):** A standard framework describing the set of steps needed to produce official statistics (from specifying needs, through data collection and processing, to dissemination and evaluation). Typically underpins the **Production** component of GAMSO.
- **SWOT Analysis:** A strategic planning tool for identifying internal **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** of an organization, and the external **Opportunities** and **Threats** it faces. Used in assessing the current situation as a basis for strategy formulation.
- **Stakeholders:** All parties with an interest in official statistics, including data users (government, businesses, researchers, public), data providers (households, enterprises, administrative data holders), partners (donors, international organizations), and those involved in production (other agencies in NSS). UN-NQAF Principle 2 highlights managing relationships with stakeholders ^{43 15}.
- **Quality Assurance Framework (QAF):** A set of policies, procedures and tools that an NSO uses to ensure the quality of its statistical processes and outputs. For example, having a quality policy, standard checklists, audit and review processes, following UN-NQAF guidelines.
- **Person-year:** A unit of resource measurement equivalent to the work of one full-time person for one year. Used for high-level planning of human resources in the MYSP.

