



# National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS III) of the Gambia 2024-28

## Summary



Republic of The Gambia



This document was developed by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics, as the supervisory authority and co-ordinator of the national statistical system. PARIS21 provided support and guidance.

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# I. Background and rationale

The Gambia has for many years grappled with challenges related to meeting increasing national needs for statistics necessary to design, implement and monitor national development policies and programmes. To this end major strides have been made related to the formulation of legislation to guide statistical activities in the country. The current Statistics Act of 2005 provides for a sustainable, effective, and efficient national statistical system (NSS) for the Gambia and also established the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) as a supervisory authority and coordinating the NSS.

Weaknesses have been identified with the current Statistics Act as such a revision of the Act is underway. The proposed revised Act is expected to provide the legal basis to adequately respond to the contemporary statistical needs of the country and properly address the coordination of the national data ecosystem and evolving data revolution. Once enacted, the Act would be widely disseminated both within the entire NSS and the public in general. It is hoped that with wider dissemination of the Act all stakeholders would recognize their responsibility to contribute to addressing the statistical needs of the Gambia.

There has been a tangible need to better coordinate the statistical system of the country for the provision of accurate, timely and relevant statistics. In response to this need two national strategies for the development of Statistics (NSDS) have already been designed and implemented. Both NSDSs were meant to build a reliable statistical system that was responsive to the national statistical needs. The first generation of NSDS was implemented over the period 2007-2011 and focused mainly on building the capacity of the GBoS, and the second was implemented over the period 2018-2022 and covered 11 MDAs of the NSS. Both strategies were designed to respond to national data needs in general, with specific emphasis on the needs of the national development plan and other sectoral plans.

The NSDS III was developed with the participation of all stakeholders guided by experiences from the implementation of the past statistical strategies with the aim for the NSS to deliver on priority user-driven data demand from the NDP III, Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. Therefore, the NSDS III is aligned with the key development agendas data demand.

## II. Organization framework of the NSS

The national statistics system comprises the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS), individuals, institutions and all other stakeholders involved in the data production industry in the Gambia. **The National Statistical System of the Gambia** comprises:

- The National Statistics Council, which is the advisory body to the national statistical system and oversees the Bureau's policy activities;
- The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS), which is the leading authority of the national statistical system;
- Other producers of official statistics, consisting of all ministries, departments, agencies and other organizations in the Gambia that develop, produce and disseminate official statistics in accordance with the Statistics Act.
- Respondents, consisting of persons, households, private and public entities that are requested to provide information about themselves, including their activities, through data collections carried out by producers of official statistics.
- Administrative data providers, consisting of national and local authorities and other organizations that provide producers of official statistics with data collected primarily for administrative purposes.
- Users of official statistics, including the general public, the media, researchers and students, businesses, national and local authorities, non-governmental organizations and international organizations who receive or access official statistics.

# III. Assessment of the national statistical system

As part of the preparatory activities for the design of the NSDS III, an assessment of the NSS was conducted following the PARIS21 NSDS Guidelines 3.0.<sup>1</sup> The assessment focused on the national statistical system's capacity and its outputs. Key points were reviewed including legal framework, organizational framework, human resources, statistical production, data dissemination and access, data demand and supply. All member institutions of the NSS took part in the assessment. The assessment findings and recommendations are summarized as follows:

***The national statistics legal framework governed by the Statistics Act 2005 is outdated.***

A new statistics bill reflecting new international statistical developments and promoting modernization and innovation of the NSS was developed and validated by the NSS in 2019. However, it is yet to be passed by the National Assembly. The NSDS III has proposed a review of the bill to further bring it up-to-date before it is passed into law. The NSS has undergone some modernization in the implementation of statistical activities, hence the need to revise the Act to make it attune to recent statistical developments including the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017-2026 (SHaSA 2) adopted in January 2018 at Addis Ababa by the Assembly Heads of States and Governments of the African Union as “the Continental Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Africa for the next 10 years”.

***The NSS coordination remains weak and needs to be revamped and capacitated.***

In terms of performance in coordination and harmonization of statistics in the Gambia, GBoS is rated fair to good by different partners. However, the final evaluation of the NSDSII implementation rated the coordination very poor at 27%. Furthermore, partnership or collaboration between NSS agencies and different data actors from the country's data ecosystem is recognized by half of NSS members who completed the assessment questionnaire. NSS members should be sensitized on the provisions of the Statistics Act and the respective roles of NSS members for coordination of the system to be more effective. Improved coordination would lead to a more coordinated approach to the implementation of the NSDS and specifically the production of statistics.

***Although, good progress has been made in data production by introducing innovative methods, data gaps remain significant with regards to increasing data demand from the national development plan and sector strategies, as well as regional and international development agendas.***

Furthermore, according to findings of various assessments of the NSS, demand for data is largely limited by inadequate knowledge of the need for data in the planning and implementation of development priorities. Findings of the NSS assessment show that overall, 3/5 of NSS members are involved in data

collection and/or are compiling and maintaining statistical databases. However, most of the planned activities in NSDS II were implemented by GBoS leaving a big data gap. There is therefore need to sensitize the general public and development practitioners about the importance of statistics in our quest for national development. Producers of statistics should also be sensitized on the country's reporting obligations as it relates to the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Planning of national statistical activities should bear in mind the responsiveness of such plans to the NDP data needs so that such plans can be more responsive to national and international data needs of the country. For instance, developing an adequate and strong Civil Registration and Vital statistics System (CRVS) would be a foundation for a sustainable and efficient administrative system relevant to produce timely data and statistics for better monitoring of development agendas.

***Low statistical capacity of human resources in the NSS continue to limit data production, dissemination, access and use.***

Many MDAs do not have a statistics unit manned by persons with a statistical background. For MDAs to adequately respond to national statistical needs there is need to setup statistics unit in all member institutions of the NSS and provide them with personnel with relevant statistical training.

***Funding for national development data and statistics remains inadequate.***

The assessment results showed a very low budgetary allocation to the production of statistics in the country vis à vis data demand. Only 17.6% of the NSS had a dedicated budget as part of the national government budget to produce priority statistics. Only 12% of the initial budget of the NSDS II activities conducted by GBoS were disbursed and mostly funded by development partners. Effective coordination of development partners for the purpose of resource mobilization and technical support to the NSDS III is weak and needs to be improved. There is therefore an absolute need for a sustainable and adequate resource mobilization to secure domestic financing for the NSS activities as well as coordinated and better funding by development partners.

***Satisfaction with data quality, production time, efficiency and accessibility were on average rated as good by both MDAs and development partners whilst the quality of statistical products was largely rated as satisfactory by both.***

However, room for improvement in the timely production of statistics has been raised.

## IV. Major challenges

The NSS has over the years been faced with a number of challenges that impede progress in statistical development. These challenges can be summarized as follows:

- The impact of COVID-19 was felt by Gambian statistical system at all levels and the measures taken could not solve all the problems generated by the pandemic. The COVID-19 led to delays in the conduct of some socio-economic surveys and even the 2023 Population and Housing Census which would negatively impact the availability of data for planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- The delay in the finalization of the NDP led to some delay in the preparation of the NSDS III since planned statistical activities in the NSDS have been aligned to the NDP monitoring framework.
- Weak capacity of stakeholders in the field of statistics and limited knowledge of stakeholders in data gap analysis continues to pose a challenge for sectors' adequate and timely responsiveness to national and international statistical needs.
- Statistical activities in the Gambia continue to be grossly under-funded by the government hence the need for resource mobilization to bridge the funding gap. The NSS does not have adequate capacity in resource mobilization which is limiting the resources they can mobilize for the NSS.
- Statistical capacity is weak in most MDAs which poses a challenge for MDAs to provide sector data needs in a timely manner.



# V. Approach to designing the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2024-2028

The final evaluation of the implementation of the NSDS II 2018-2022 and the assessment of the national statistical system was conducted where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the NSS were identified and guided the development of NSDS III. The recommendations served as inputs for the design of the NSDS III strategic framework and sectors' multi-annual action plans.

The preparation of NSDS III is guided by the new NSDS Guidelines 3.0 published by PARIS21 in 2021. An attempt has been made to mainstream the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017-2026 (SHaSA 2) in NSDS III. Similarly, the Strategy is aligned with and driven by the data needs of the new National Development Plan (2023-2027), ECOWAS regional statistical development, the AU 2063 Agenda, and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The NSDS III has been designed to respond to both national priority data needs and to support international reporting obligations. The aim is to have a national M&E process that is harmonized and a “one stop shop” for key development data and statistics on both national and international plans and agreements. The NSDS III is placed at the heart of the NDP monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

## The vision

A fully functional and resilient National statistical system that produces and disseminates quality statistics in response to user needs by 2028.

## The mission

Establish an innovative, integrated, and well-coordinated NSS that produces and disseminates official statistics of high quality in a transparent, accessible, and timely manner and advances its effective use for decision making.

## NSDS III strategic framework

The NSDS III strategic framework is based on four (4 pillars), seven (7) strategic objectives and thirty-one (31) outputs presented in Table 1.

Each of the four pillars selected includes strategic objectives whose achievement is conditioned by the expected outputs.

**Table 1. NSDS III pillars, strategic objectives, and outputs**

Pillars/Strategic Objectives/Outputs	
Codes	Headings
<b>1</b>	<b>Strengthening and improvement of the governance of the national statistical system (NSS)</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Improve the efficiency and the coordination of the NSS</b>
1.1.1	Institutional coordination and communication mechanisms are improved
1.1.2	The new NSS legal framework is effectively adopted and put in place
1.1.3	The provisions of the new Statistics Act are popularized after its enactment
1.1.4	The capacities of the Directorate of Coordination at GBoS are strengthened
1.1.5	Statistical units are set up and given substantial resources in all MDAs
1.1.6	A thematic group on statistics for Development Partners is created and holds quarterly meetings
<b>2</b>	<b>Development of NSS's quality and sustainable capacities</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Train and make available quality and sustainable human resources throughout the NSS</b>
2.1.1	The new GBoS organizational structure is implemented
2.1.2	A sustainable training policy and programme is developed and implemented
2.1.3	A statistical training Centre complex is built
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Provide the NSS with modern infrastructure</b>
2.2.1	The GBoS building is remodeled and becomes more functional and operational
2.2.2	MDAs' statistical units are provided with operational workspaces
2.2.3	Technological environment is reinforced and improved
2.2.4	Statistical infrastructure is improved
<b>3</b>	<b>Improvement of the production of quality statistics</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Improve the NSS's data production and dissemination systems</b>
3.1.1	Regular and periodic surveys are carried out
3.1.2	The statistical information base is expanded
3.1.3	The gender statistics system is strengthened and improved throughout the NSS
3.1.4	The system of administrative statistics in the NSS is developed and improved
3.1.5	A national data release and dissemination calendar is developed and made public
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Provide the NSS with statistical quality management tools</b>
3.2.1	A National Data Quality Assessment Framework (NDQAF) is developed and implemented
3.2.2	Policies governing data operations are finalized and implemented
3.2.3	NSS capacity assessments are organized including on outputs, data gaps, etc
<b>4</b>	<b>A sustainable financing strategy and a resource mobilization strategy are developed and implemented</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Develop a sustainable and realistic financing strategy</b>
4.1.1	National resources are dedicated to - and effectively used for - statistical activities
4.1.2	The National Fund for the Development of Statistics is created and operational
4.1.3	Development Partners are mobilized and committed to finance the NSS activities
4.1.4	Enhance relationships with local & international bodies
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Develop and implement a sound and realistic resource mobilization strategy</b>
4.2.1	An advocacy strategy is developed
4.2.2	Political will and ownership by the government are improved
4.2.3	Statistical culture is improved at all stakeholders' levels including private sector and civil society
4.2.4	National stakeholders are mobilized on statistical funding
4.2.5	The community of Development Partners is mobilized on statistical funding

The achievement of outputs is conditioned by the implementation of core activities which are retained in the sectoral and national actions plans which complete this chain. For each sector, these activities are deemed to be priorities for obtaining the monitoring and evaluation indicators of the National Development Plan, Agenda 2063, and the SDGs.

## V.2. NSDS III Implementation Framework and Budgeted Action Plan

The NSDS III (2024-2028) is a five-year plan meant to support statistical development in The Gambia. It has been designed to consolidate the gains made during implementation of the first and second NSDS, support NSS members left out of the previous NSDS and strengthen statistical capacity in the entire NSS. The NSDS III action plan mirrors priority statistical activities of the NSS. Consultations with members of the NSS culminated in the consolidation of all sectoral statistical plans which were aligned to the National development Plan, Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. In addition to GBoS, 17 MDAs contributed to this exercise.<sup>2</sup> The national statistical action plan includes selected activities required for the production of the various outputs. There are a total of 166 activities of which 16 for pillar 1; 71 for pillar 2; 65 for pillar 3; and 14 for pillar 4.

The activities budgeted in the NSDS III are identified as priority that are expected to significantly contribute to national statistical development. The total investment on the national statistical action plan amounts to USD 103.10 million or GMD 6.08 billion at the exchange rate of 1 USD= 59 GMD. Pillar 3 dedicated to innovating and improving the production of quality statistics alone represents 71.1%. The investment distribution and weights of the four (4) pillars are reflected in table 2 below.

**Table 2. Summary investment on NSDS III by Pillar from 2024 to 2028**

Pillars Codes	Headings	Investment required (USD million)						%
		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total	
1	Strengthening and improvement of the governance of the national statistical system	0,10	0,18	0,19	0,20	0,22	0,89	0,9%
2	Development of NSS's quality and sustainable capacities	1,61	10,32	3,07	1,81	1,53	18,35	17,8%
3	Innovation and Improvement of the production of quality statistics	17,58	10,93	15,00	12,69	17,06	73,26	71,1%
4	A sustainable financing strategy and a resource mobilization strategy are developed and implemented	0,05	1,23	3,16	3,08	3,08	10,60	10,3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19,34</b>	<b>22,66</b>	<b>21,42</b>	<b>17,77</b>	<b>21,90</b>	<b>103,10</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

Note: This is a summarized version of the required investment on the NSDS III Action Plan. For a detail breakdown of the planned outputs and activities refer to the main NSDS III document.

## V.3. Financing of the NSDS III Action Plan

The funding of the implementation of NSDS III Action Plan requires sustainable and adequate national budget allocation to statistical development as well as coordinated support from development partners based on national priority needs. This will be done with several schemes including the units responsible for the activities implementation. If the activities selected in the action plan fall within the scope of the routine activities of the various actors, it is likely that they will be mostly financed by the national budget. In any case, each statistical sector stakeholder will have to deploy appropriate financing mechanisms according to its budgetary provisions, including the call for technical and financial partners who support their sectoral statistical activities.

In The Gambia, the production of statistics has perennially been hampered by the availability of adequate funding. The country will therefore prepare and adopt a resource mobilization strategy based on the strengthening of the statistical culture and the political will which are likely to ensure the mobilization of internal resources for the benefit of statistics. Upon adoption of NSDS III by Government, a round table will be organized to mobilize resources for the financing of the NSDS Action Plan.

#### **V.4. Monitoring and Evaluation of NSDS III**

During implementation of the NSDS III Action Plan, monitoring and evaluation activities would be implemented by sectors guided by the results-based logical framework matrix (annex 1 of NSDS III). Depending on the outcome of the monitoring and evaluation, appropriate corrective measures will be taken to maintain or even improve the trend of implementation of the NSDS III. Regular annual activity reports will be produced, a mid-term review and a final evaluation of the implementation of the NSDS III will be conducted during the second term of 2025 and the last semester of 2027 respectively. Whilst GBoS as the coordinating body of the NSS would take the lead in these monitoring activities, MDAs would be responsible of monitoring their statistics sector planned activities.

**Table 3. Surveys and Censuses Programme**

S/N	Surveys and Censuses	Time frame & Costs (USD)					Total
		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
1.	Integrated Household Surveys (IHS)		1 439 524		1 788 689		3 228 212
2.	Demographic & Health Survey (DHS)		1 995 800		2 224 718		4 220 518
3.	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)	704 400		785 195		875 257	2 364 851
4.	Annual Labour Force Survey (LFS)	345 004	384 576	428 687	477 857	532 667	2 168 790
5.	Child Labour Survey	300 000		334 410		372 767	1 007 177
6.	Malaria Indicator Survey (MIS)		13 085		683 406		1 296 491
7.	The Gambia Social Registry	4 557 872		5 080 660		5 663 412	15 301 944
8.	National Migration Survey	246 239		274 483		305 966	826 689
9.	Agricultural Census						-
10.	Annual Agricultural Survey						-
11.	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment Survey						-
12.	Tourism visitor survey	7 000	9 000	10 000	10 000	10 000	46 000
13.	Monthly Consumer Price Statistics Survey (CPI)	38 700	43 139	48 087	53 602	59 751	243 279
14.	Monthly Producer Price Collection for the Quarterly PPI Publications	24 600	27 422	30 567	34 073	37 981	154 642
15.	Economic Census	280 050				432 382	712 432
17.	Business Establishment Survey	281 629		349 940			631 569
18.	Enterprise Census	314 000		410 919		510 589	1 235 508
19.	Enterprise Surveys	256 540		301 178		374 231	931 948
20.	Informal Sector Survey	407 634		454 389		506 508	1 368 531
21.	Quarterly Establishment Survey for Quarterly GDP estimates	167 037	186 196	207 552	231 359	257 896	1 050 039
22.	Annual Establishment Survey for annual GDP estimates	44 300	49 381	55 045	61 359	68 397	278 482
23.	Horticulture Survey	40 000					40 000
24.	Cross Border Trade Survey	301 896	336 524	375 123	418 150	466 111	1 897 804
25.	Conduct of the 2023 Population and Housing Census	8 604 087					8 604 087
26.	Sustainable Development Goals	117 992		146 611		182 173	446 776

	Survey						
27.	Biannual User Needs and Satisfaction Survey		196 299		243 912		440 211
29.	National Disability Survey	470 176		584 220		725 926	1 780 321
30.	Compilation of tourism satellite account	8 000					8 000
31.	Tourism Establishment Survey	46 000		48 000		52 000	146 000
32.	Non profit institutions serving households (PNSH)	25 000				25 000	50 000
33.	Gross fixed capital formation survey (GSCF)	25 000				25 000	50 000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17 613 156</b>	<b>5 280 944</b>	<b>9 925 066</b>	<b>6 227 125</b>	<b>11 484 013</b>	<b>50 530 303</b>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://nsdsguidelines.paris21.org/en/homepage>.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA), Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)/Department of Planning (DOP), Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reform, Policy Coordination & Delivery, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE), Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST), Ministry of Transport, Work, and Infrastructure (MoTWI), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MoGCSW), Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTRIE), Department of Forestry, Department of Water Resources (DWR), Central Bank of The Gambia (CBG), Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA), Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA), National Population Commission (NPC), National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA)

To better co-ordinate its national statistical system, the Gambia developed its third national strategy for the development of statistics (NSDS) in 2023. Building on its first NSDS for the period 2007-11 and the second NSDS, implemented from 2018-22 which focussed on capacity building within the Gambia Bureau of Statistics, this third NSDS aligns with data needs for key development agendas: NDP III, Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

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