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General Notice

NAMIBIA STATISTICS AGENCY

No. 18

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NAMIBIA STATISTICS POLICY

This policy document provides the basis guiding the process of data collection and dissemination. The aims, objectives, principal attributes and strategies of an efficient statistical system are explained in the document. In addition, the policy strives to give details on how an efficient statistical system can be created within the framework of the Namibian legal system.

The objectives of the Government with regard to statistics include:

- (i) to produce statistics that are relevant, comprehensive, timely, trustworthy, accessible and focused on meeting the needs of Government, research institutions, business and public at large;
- (ii) to produce dependable statistics according to professional standards, i.e. statistics designed and produced according to accepted well founded statistical theory, and according to internationally methods and practices;
- (iii) to ensure continuous adaptation to international and regional standards, practices and procedures, and synchronization with international and regional protocols;
- (iv) to ensure co-ordination and co-operation among the government offices/ministries/agencies that produce statistics;
- (v) to ensure a high regard for the professional autonomy of those who collect, process, analyze and present statistics;

- (vi) to prevent abuse of respondents and minimize respondent burden; and
- (vii) to maintain strict protection of the personal and corporate privacy of respondents, and strict confidentiality of the data they supply.

The policy will serve as a guide to fulfill the mission of the National Statistical System to;

- collect, process, analyze and disseminate quality statistical data and information in a coordinated and timely manner,
- raise public awareness about the importance and role of statistical information to society,
- promote the use of best practice and international standards in statistical production, management and dissemination,
- promote the use of statistical data and information at individual, institutional, and national level, especially for evidence-based policy design and decision-making, and
- build sustainable capacity for the production, use and protection of statistical data and information in the country.

I would like to recognize the contribution to this work from the international fraternity. Last but not least, I would like to express deep appreciation for the valuable inputs made by organisations and individuals during the policy dialogue that enriched this document indeed.

T. K. ALWEENDO
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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1. Purpose of The Policy

The Government of Namibia showed its commitment to relevant, high quality and timely statistics by creating the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) in terms of (Section 6) of the Statistics Act, 2011. The strategic importance of statistics was further underlined when it was included amongst the objectives of the National Statistics System (NSS) promoting the use of statistics for evidence-based planning and decision-making; policy design; and monitoring and evaluation of policies and decision-making (Statistics Act, Section 5).

These steps have ushered in a new era of opportunity for the role of statistics in Namibia. The Statistics Policy sets out the intent of the Government in relation to key features of the NSS, aiming to support implementation of the Government's commitment to statistics, and achieve the objectives of the NSS for statistics and statistical development. It will also serve to increase public confidence and trust in official statistics produced according to this Policy.

The objectives of the Government with regard to statistics include:

- (i) to produce statistics that are relevant, comprehensive, timely, trustworthy, accessible and focused on meeting the needs of Government, research institutions, business and the public at large;

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- (iii) to ensure continuous adaptation to international and regional standards, practices and procedures, and synchronization with international and regional protocols;
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- (vi) to prevent abuse of respondents and minimize respondent burden; and
- (vii) to maintain strict protection of the personal and corporate privacy of respondents, and strict confidentiality of the data they supply.

2. Context

The Policy is set within the framework of the Statistics Act which specifies that the NSA must formulate “the national statistics policy of Namibia” (Statistics Act 7(2)(a)(i)), and the NSA Strategic Plan 2012/2013- 2016/2017 which states that “The development of the NSS will be addressed by (the NSA) taking the lead in formulating a system-wide policy and strategy for statistical development...”.

The Policy applies the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and is consistent with the requirement in the Statistics Act that the NSS should function in accordance with those Principles. The Policy also adheres to the African Charter on Statistics and with the statistics principles and Regional Statistical Programme of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

3. Applicability and Scope

The Policy applies to and addresses the main concerns of all the components of the NSS specified in the Statistics Act (Section 3); they are statistics producers, respondents, users of statistics, research institutions, and training institutions. Important roles are also played by private survey institutes, international organizations as providers of funds and technical support for statistics, and statistical offices of other countries; these are reflected in the Policy. The Policy relates to demographic, economic, financial, environment, social (incl. health and education) and similar statistics at national, regional and local levels. The Policy aims at ensuring that statistics are representative of the country at large, mirroring concerns and conditions of all regions, sectors and population groups.

The users of statistics play a decisive role in the NSS as does coordination and cooperation within the NSS. The statistical independence of the NSA as specified in the Statistics Act (Statistics Act, 7(2)(b)), and the professional and ethical standards applicable to statistics producers (Statistics Act, (34)) are fundamental to the successful functioning of the NSS especially underlying the confidence of users in the accuracy and objectivity of the statistics produced by the NSS. The Policy addresses these issues.

The Policy is made up of broad, high-level policy statements on the essential features of statistical operations and statistical development and on relations among the components of the NSS. It covers the production, management and dissemination of government statistics which comprises the entire statistical process carried out by producers of statistics, from the identification of needs, to the collection, compilation and dissemination of data, and including providing advice to the user. It covers products and services of the statistics producers. It also covers the main aspects of relationships between producers and respondents, producers and users of statistics, and cooperation between producers of statistics and the research and training institutions.

The Policy provides the framework within which the NSA Strategic Plan and the Business Plan and sectoral statistical plans are prepared.

The principles underlying the Policy, where relevant, also apply to the National Spatial Data Infrastructure Policy for Namibia.

4. The Future

More detailed statements, guidelines, and procedures may be developed over time for some of the policy statements.

The Policy will be reviewed from time to time and will be kept current in response to new developments. Implementation of the Policy will also be assessed from time to time to ensure progress and reviews of progress in relation to the Strategic and Business Plans will serve this purpose.

5. Effective Date

This Policy becomes effective when endorsed by the Board of the NSA and approved and issued by the Minister of Statistics.

6. The Policy Statements

This Policy becomes effective when endorsed by the Board of the NSA and approved and issued by the Minister of Statistics.

The policy statements are arranged under four features:

- Institutions and management: this feature relates to the institutional arrangements and management approaches to support statistical operations and development.
- Outward focus: this feature reflects the aims of the NSS to meet user needs for statistics and promote their use.
- Operations: this feature encompasses key aspects of the collection and production of the NSS.
- Capacity and development: this feature relates to the various aspects of statistical capacity and development that are required to ensure sustainable statistical institutions and operations.

6.1 Institutions and Management

i. Scope of business

The NSS will operate within the provisions of the Statistics Act and other relevant laws and will fully implement those provisions.

ii. Corporate philosophy

a. NSA

The NSA is to be a sustainable, performance-driven, fully operational centre of excellence in statistics. It reaches out to the public at large to meet its needs for statistics at all levels (national and sub-national), while providing leadership and coordination of the NSS and support to the NSS producers in order to build their institutional capacity.

b. NSS

The NSS will be a coordinated and sustainable entity: collecting, producing, harmonizing, integrating, analysing, disseminating, and using statistics. As well as integrating statistical research, training and having concern for respondents' involvement in the statistical

processes, over the whole range of demographic, economic, financial, environmental, social and similar statistics, at national and sub-national levels, in an efficient and effective manner.

iii. Co-operation and co-ordination of the NSS

The NSS will undertake its operations and develop its institutions in a coordinated manner. This means in particular when it comes to harmonizing the statistics, avoiding duplication of work, sharing data, and engaging in complementary and joint work, through principles of constructive and cooperative partnership. Creating real synergies

This policy involves:

- establishing a co-ordination committee to promote coordination within the NSS;
- ensuring inclusion of users and producers of statistics in coordination initiatives; and
- co-ordination and partnerships with institutions outside the NSS which may be partners or co-producers and whose work is relevant to the NSS (see 3 Applicability and scope above).

iv. Regional and international status

The NSA and the NSS will (a) raise their capacity and performance to join the leaders in statistical capacity and operations not only within Africa, but also more broadly among other vibrant developed and developing nations of the world. The organization will (b) enhance the existing positive relations with international partners (national statistical offices and regional and international organizations), and (c) play a meaningful role in international statistical cooperation.

v. Achieving objectives in a cost-effective and efficient manner

The resources assigned to the NSS will be managed prudently and responsibly to enable the objectives to be achieved efficiently and effectively.

This policy involves:

- outsourcing where appropriate and cost-effective;
- undertaking new data collections only when judged to be essential to provide needed data and only after establishing that no existing data sets including data collections of other ministries, and estimations, can satisfy the need;
- assessing, aligning and rationalizing survey programmes;
- encouraging data sharing among government departments;
- using sampling in place of full enumeration where such an approach provides data with appropriate quality for the intended purposes; and/or
- using administrative data to the maximum extent possible to meet the needs for statistics, subject to their suitability for the purpose, and with appropriate safeguards including securing the confidentiality of personal information.
- Instituting a pricing policy to levy charges on certain products and services

See also Section 6.3 (iii) in Respect for providers of raw data (respondents) below

vi. Prudent and sound governance

The NSA will exercise prudent and sound governance in accordance with the prescriptions and guidelines of Statistics Act, 2011 and the State-owned Enterprises Governance Act, 2006 (No 2 of 2006).

vii. Good and transparent management

The NSS will apply good governance and public transparency in the management of its operations including in relation to methods and procedures for the production and dissemination of statistics and in relation to its financial affairs.

viii. Up-to-date legislation

Statistics legislation will be reviewed regularly and changes will be introduced to meet changing needs and maintain supportive legislation. Other legislation will also be reviewed to ensure no conflict with and no weakening of the powers contained in the Statistics Act will occur.

ix. Protection of property rights and Government liability

While encouraging and promoting the use of its outputs, the NSS will protect the Government's intellectual property rights in those outputs and protect the government from liability arising from, or connected to, the use of any material published by the NSS.

6.2 Outward Focus**i. Consistency with government objectives**

The NSS operations and development will be consistent with the objectives of the Government of Namibia as set out in national, sectorial, and sub-national policy documents. These include the Namibian Government's Vision 2030, the National Development Plans, and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and contribute towards the sustainable socio-economic development of Namibia.

ii. Contributing to an informed society

The NSS will contribute to further developing an informed society in which statistics are increasingly used for evidence-based planning and decision-making, policy design, and monitoring and evaluation. This goes for Government and the private sector, to promote growth and prosperity, for social dialogue as well as for measuring and understanding progress in Namibia, particularly towards the overarching goals of the National Development Plans.

This policy involves:

- creating greater awareness about the role and importance of statistics in society and generally engaging in statistical advocacy;
- assisting users in interpreting and understanding statistics;
- enhancing the use of statistics by encouraging as many people as possible to use statistics and make better and more frequent use of them;
- commenting publicly on statistical issues, and to promote transparency, unfair criticism and misinterpretation of statistics, as far as considered suitable; and
- maintaining positive relationships with the news media in their roles as analysts and disseminators of statistical information.

iii. Meeting user needs

The NSS will produce, manage, and disseminate relevant, high quality, coherent, comparable, timely and accessible statistics that will meet user needs in government including regional and local government, and the private sector, for evidence-based planning and decision making, policy design, and monitoring and evaluation.

This policy involves:

- maintaining an effective approach for identifying user needs and satisfaction and aligning and updating data collections to respond to them in a robust way;
- publicizing the availability and location of statistics so that they are easy to find;
- presenting statistics in a clear, understandable, and easy-to-use form;
- disseminating statistics in a timely manner compatible with international recommendations;
- providing supporting metadata (description of data), according to standardized metadata systems, that facilitates proper interpretation of data and assessment of its suitability for a user's purposes;

- offering a full range of publication options and utilizing the most effective modes of dissemination of statistics for the Namibian environment, including maintaining a statistics library/resource centre with public access;
- ensuring that official statistics are disseminated in forms that enable and encourage analysis and re-use; e.g. Excel format
- preparing and disseminating analyses of statistical data, and conducting and publishing results of research and development of statistical methods and techniques to enhance the value of statistics to users;
- Releasing micro-level data sets to researchers for further analysis with appropriate safeguards for the protection of the confidentiality of such data sets;
- ensuring that those statistics collected under the Statistics Act while using public funds are produced, disseminated and made available and accessible to users as a public good; and
- limiting any general product pricing to recovery of dissemination costs.

iv. Consulting with users

The statistics-producing organizations of the NSS will consult with users on their needs, and be responsive to those needs, as far as possible, to maximize the public value of statistics to users.

v. Public confidence and trust in official statistics

The NSS will strive to build and maintain public confidence and trust in the accuracy and objectivity of the official statistics of Namibia.

- the NSA working consistently with, and protecting, the statistical independence granted under the Statistics Act; ensuring that the staff of the NSS conducting their work according to the Code of Practice (to be) issued by the NSA, setting out the professional and ethical standards applicable to statistics producers;
- making decisions according to strictly objective, impartial, professional, and transparent, statistical considerations; and maintaining integrity in relation to statistical operations such that the public interest prevails over organizational, political or personal interests;
- developing and implementing the concept of Namibian Official Statistics as provided for in the Statistics Act;
- disseminating statistics on an impartial basis according to a publicly released Advance Release Calendar;
- disseminating the results of all statistical collections conducted as soon as the work is completed and as soon as possible after the reference period;
- publicly releasing data so that all users have equal access to the data simultaneously;
- establishing rules and principles for allowing any pre-release access to statistics in their final form, making those rules publicly available, and publishing details of those who have access prior to release; and
- enforcing, when considered appropriate, penalties provided for under the Statistics Act for “Offences in connection with the Agency”, “General offences”, and “Regulations” (in relation to inappropriate disclosure of information, failing to comply with the Oath of Secrecy and other matters).

vi. Support for collaboration with research institutions

The NSA will work with research institutions and the scientific and academic community to promote research and development in statistics. This will allow the NSA to capitalize on the contribution they can make to the statistical process and development, and the value they can add to the statistical outputs of the NSS through their research and analysis.

vii. Support for training and education in statistics

The NSA will work with the national producers of statistics and the training and education institutions to support and promote high-standard on-going statistical training and education

to meet the growing and changing needs of the NSS. It will also market the statistical institutions as attractive places to work and build careers.

6.3 Operations

i. High quality data

The NSS will focus on the improvement and maintenance of the quality of Namibian statistics in all its aspects namely strong institutional support, assurances of integrity, sound methodology and statistical procedures, accuracy and reliability, and serviceability including relevance, timeliness, and accessibility.

- the NSA setting the required standards for Namibian statistics which will be compatible with (i) national user needs and the purposes for which statistics are required, (ii) regional and international standards and (iii) well founded statistics theory and best practices;
- ensuring the standards are fully complied with in the processes used by the institutions of the NSS, including through the use of statistical audits of major statistical fields; and
- designating statistics as official statistics according to established criteria.

ii. Confidentiality of information

The NSS will promote a culture of confidentiality among its staff and will maintain the privacy of data providers (individuals, households, government bodies, undertakings including enterprises, or any other organizations, and other respondents). It will maintain the confidentiality of the information they provide, will use the collected information only for statistical purposes, and will ensure the physical protection and security of collected data.

iii. Respect for providers of raw data (respondents)

The NSA will treat providers of raw data with respect and maintain positive relationships with them, enlisting their cooperation in supplying needed information. Always minimizing the burden on their time, respecting their privacy, and maintaining the confidentiality of information provided.

This policy involves:

- limiting the range and detail of statistical demands to what is absolutely necessary;
- ensuring that the cost burden on data suppliers is not excessive and is proportionate to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics;
- providing the provider with adequate explanations concerning data requests including the reason why a collection is considered necessary;
- framing questions that are compatible with the admin records of corporations and using the most convenient mode of response.
- informing respondents to statistical surveys and censuses how confidentiality will be protected.

See also Section 1 (v) Achieving objectives in a cost-effective and efficient manner, above.

- iv. Safeguarding raw data and databases i.e. store in safe environment, back-up data and disaster recovery in an event of outage/ emergency

6.4 Capacity and Development

i. Adequate and sustained funding

The financial and other support made available for statistical activities of the NSS will be sufficient in magnitude and quality, and sustained, to enable implementation of the overall statistical Policy.

This policy involves:

- the Government providing adequate and sustained financial and other support to NSA for statistics in the national budget;
- the NSA establishing on-going relationships with potential development partners, both domestic and international, and promoting and coordinating any flow of funds and technical assistance to the NSS, such assistance to be aligned with the direction of the NSA Strategic Plan and sectorial plans;
- the NSA committing technical resources so that it is in a position to guide producer organizations in the NSS and provide technical statistical assistance; and
- the NSA seeking to generate revenue to supplement government funding by, inter alia, the sale of publications in line with the pricing policy, accepting commissioned statistical work, and concluding service agreements with appropriate persons and entities.

ii. Intellectual capability and performance culture in the NSS

The NSS will employ the highest quality, motivated staff with the required knowledge and skills, working under a supportive organizational structure and management, with a comprehensive human resources policy. This policy will include significant human resource development and training programmes. This policy involves establishing a statistical cadre, to be known as the Common Statistical Service, as part of the human resources policy, in order to enhance career opportunities and increase coordination among NSS producer organizations.

iii. Technological capability

The most appropriate information and communications technology will be acquired and used to the maximum extent possible, in all phases of the statistical process.

This policy involves the NSS acquiring and further developing the technically skilled information and communications technology staff that are crucial for the production and dissemination of high quality and timely statistical information.

iv. Administrative and logistical capability

The NSS will provide all administrative and logistical services needed in support of the statistical operations and development.

This policy involves:

- developing all necessary policies, rules and regulations; and
- ensuring the availability of organisational arrangements and logistical support to collect and process statistical information on the large scale needed from the various sources in the field.

v. Physical infrastructure

Physical infrastructure will be of high quality and adequate in scale to support operations and provide a supportive work environment for staff; the NSA will establish and maintain such decentralized/regional offices in Namibia as it considers necessary.

vi. Statistical infrastructure

All necessary statistical infrastructure will be developed and maintained including scientific methods, codes, standards, classifications, a central business register, household sampling frame, and field organization.

6.5 Statistics Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

- i. The Statistics Policy is not the sole domain of the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA), but also of different Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As) tasked with the responsibility of collecting statistics. However, the NSA as per its mandate is tasked with the coordination of statistics in the country.

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- ii. The National Planning Commission (NPC) shall be the main body responsible for policy coordination, monitoring and evaluation of Government Programs under the National Development Plans (NDP4
 - iii. The National Statistics system will be expected to play a key role in driving the implementation of the Statistics Policy initiatives.
 - iv. In addition to the critical monitoring and evaluation role of the NPC, a dedicated team of technical staff within the Namibia Statistics Agency will carry out the function of monitoring operational implementation of the Statistics Policy as the, Namibia Statistics Agency remains the key champion of the Policy.
 - v. In addition to evaluation of the Policy done by Government, independent evaluation, of implementation, by research institutions and International Statistical Organisations would also be encouraged. Both self and independent evaluations should be conducted at least once a year. The results of these evaluations will be provided to the National Planning Commission. The fact that the external evaluation would be conducted by an independent research entity will strengthen public confidence and make the implementation process more transparent.
 - vi. In addition, the monitoring and evaluation process itself the Policy will be subject to continuous review in order to keep it current in response to new developments.
 - vii. The Policy will also be assessed from time to time to ensure progress and reviews of progress in relation to the Strategic and Business Plans will serve this purpose.
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