NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS OF GEORGIA

2020-2023

Reliable Data for Right Decisions!

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FOREWORD

The National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics of Georgia 2020-2023 defines the main directions of official statistics production in Georgia and provides general rules of conduct for the statistics-producing agencies. This strategy emphasizes the importance of official statistics for the development of a democratic society and calls relevant agencies to assure reliability, objectivity and impartiality in the production of official statistics.

There is a growing need for high quality statistics in our era, taking into account that reliable data represents the basis for evidence-based and good decision making. At the same time, it is impossible to meet all the requirements at once that may arise from the statistical data users. However, GEOSTAT offers the public a set of priorities that will be acceptable to a broad range of users and will be in line with their needs.

The production of high quality statistics based on users' needs, creation of modern systems for data collection and dissemination and capacity building are the priority areas, on which the activities of GEOSTAT and the entire National Statistical System of Georgia (NSS) will be based over the next four years.

During the strategy period, we plan to establish new standards and methodologies, conduct new surveys and produce additional detailed figures, this will be important for expanding the area of statistics and for calculating baseline indicators for the purposes of UN sustainable development goals. We also plan to conduct Population and Agricultural Censuses, which will become an important basis for the introduction of the administrative registers system in the direction of their further development.

Our plan also is to improve data quality in the context of making greater use of administrative data for statistical purposes, and invest more in information technology development. The above is of great importance both in terms of efficient use of resources and reduction of respondent burden.

In addition, past experience has shown that traditional methods of data collection, such as statistical surveys and administrative data, may not be sufficient to meet the increased demand for statistics. This is one of the reasons that the agenda includes issues of finding alternative data sources and the introduction of modern technol-

ogies such as Big Data, Scanned data, Web Scraping, etc. To implement and develop them a number of activities have been planned during the strategy validity period.

Though the production of high quality statistics is our top priority, our major objective is to disseminate data in such forms that simplifies their use and improves planning and decision-making processes at any level.

The development of this strategy coincides with the centenary of the establishment of GEOSTAT. On July 25, 1919, the country's first statistical office was established, which has gone a hard but extremely significant way of development. Georgia has made a remarkable progress in the development of the country's statistical system and the implementation of the internationally acknowledged standards. However, there are still some drawbacks and difficulties in the statistical system, among which are insufficient resources. Among important challenges there still are raising consumer awareness, confidence in the work of GEOSTAT, and misinterpretation of data.

Bearing the above in mind, the present strategy aims at creating a more efficient and transparent system for the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistics in the country through active dialogue and communication with users. That will give users the confidence that statistics produced by GEOSTAT are reliable, objective, and independent from the stakeholders' influence.

Gogita Todradze
Executive Director of Geostat

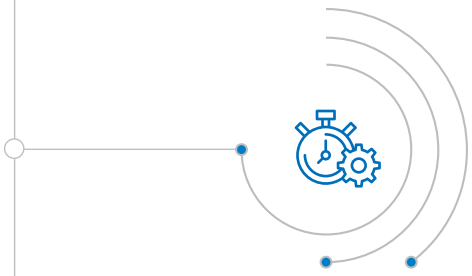
LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
AA	Association Agreement
ADAPT	Advance Data Planning Tool
AGRIS	Agricultural Integrated Survey
AOG	Administration of Government
BI	Business Intelligence
BOP	Balance of Payments
BPM6	Sixth Edition of the IMF's Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose
CPA 2008	Classification of Products by Activity
DC	Depository Corporations
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ESCOP	European Statistics Code of Practice
ESS	European Statistical System
EUROSTAT	Statistical office of the European Union situated in Luxembourg
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FRIBS	Framework regulation integrating business statistics
GA	Global Assessment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEOSTAT	National Statistics Office of Georgia
GFSM	Government Finance Statistics Manuals and Guides
GLOS	Generic Law on Official Statistics
GOG	Government of Georgia
GSBPM	Generic Statistical Business Process Model
GSS	Georgian Statistical System
HICP	Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices
HR	Human Resources
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMIS	International Merchandise Trade Statistics

ISCO-08	International Standard Classification of Occupations
IT	Information Technologies
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LOS	Law on Official Statistics
MEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
MFS	Monetary and Financial Statistics
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
MSF	Master Sample Frame
NACE REV.2	Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community
NBG	National Bank of Georgia
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistics Office
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
OCVA	Other Changes in the Volume of Assets
ODC	Other Depository Corporations
ODIN	Open Data Inventory
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21th century
RPPI	Residential Property Price Index
SDDS	Specific Data Dissemination Standard
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange
SIMS	Single Integrated Metadata Structure
SITC	Standards International Trade Classification
SNA	System of National Accounts
SPAERS	Strategic Plan for Agricultural, Environmental and Rural Statistics
UN WOMEN	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UPC	Universal Product Code
UVI	Unit Value Index

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION



This document presents a common strategy (hereinafter referred to as NSDS) for the development of a national system of official statistics for 2020-2023 as well as an associated action plan for 2020-2021. The document was prepared in accordance with the national guidelines for Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (hereinafter the national guidelines) as well as National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) guidelines developed by PARIS21 for developing countries, which provides a robust framework for capacity development in statistics.

The goal of the document is to define an overall vision for the development of the national statistical system of Georgia (GSS) that includes the country's national and international needs, addresses the data requirements of a national policy-making system, identifies the areas of priority for effective statistical development, rationalizes the conduct of statistical activities and allocation of financial resources, serves as a framework for international cooperation, includes all parts of the data production process and adheres to the latest international standards.

The legal basis for the functioning of the GSS is the Law of Georgia on Official Statistics (LoS) dated 11 December, 2009. The Law defines the GSS as "[a] set of official statistics producer entities that collect, process and disseminate official statistics on behalf of Georgia". At the same time, according to Item "e" of Article 3 of the Law, the official statistics providers are represented by Geostat and the National Bank of Georgia (NBG). Considering the framework defined by the current version of the LoS and centralized nature of statistics production in Georgia, Geostat and NBG, within their respective competences, are seen as the key actors for the coordination and implementation of the strategy. All other state agencies that produce sectorial statistics, although they are essential administrative data keepers, will support the process in line with their competences and mandates.

Geostat, as the main producer of official statistics in Georgia and the coordinating body of the GSS, is committed to maintaining public trust and confidence in official statistics by producing them in an objective and professionally independent manner. Geostat has expended great efforts and made substantial progress in recent years to develop Georgia's statistical capacity and to harmonize the country's statistical methods and standards with international norms. Back in 2010, the first NSDS was produced

covering the period of 2011-2014 to contribute to statistical capacity development process. This was the very first attempt to develop a common vision for the whole GSS.

Since 2009, the LoS has been amended several times (the latest amendment was adopted in December 2018) to ensure that the GSS can transition efficiently to producing independent, objective and reliable statistics whilst using internationally-recognized basic principles. However, the legal underpinning of the principles in the LoS needs to be further improved and aligned more closely with the relevant guidelines of the Generic Law on Official Statistics (GLOS) that was subsequently adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians in April 2016 and the European Statistics Code of Practice[1] (ESCoP).

In order to assess the GSS' compliance with ESCoP, a Global Assessment (GA) of the GSS was undertaken by the European Commission (Eurostat), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in 2019. The aim of conducting the GA was to provide an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the institutional, organizational and technical capacity of the country to produce official statistics that comply with international and European guidelines and recommendations, including the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPs) and ESCoP. These global reviews are used as important inputs in designing and evaluating the effectiveness of the NSDS. The recommendations presented in the final report of the GA are reflected in NSDS 2020-2023 to provide the framework for strengthening statistical capacity across the GSS. As it is expressed in the recent Global Assessment, the GSS, and in particular Geostat, generally comply with international and European standards to a significant extent. However, further improvement of the GSS overall is necessary, with additional work needed to achieve full compliance with ESCoP. Moreover, producers of official statistics are confronted with an increasing demand from the government, the business sector, international organizations and the public at large for timely, reliable and internationally comparable statistics for the monitoring of economic, social and environmental policies.

In this context the NSDS 2020-2023 of Georgia, which has been developed with support of UNDP Georgia and the Government of Sweden, was designed to provide a strategic vision to the national statistics system under the broader frameworks of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA). It aims to ensure adherence to EU statistical methodologies and classifications. The AA's vision for the GSS is stated in Article 286 of the document when addressing the development of official statistics in Chapter Four:

"The Parties shall develop and strengthen their cooperation on statistical issues, thereby contributing to the long-term objective of providing timely, internationally comparable and reliable statistical data. It is expected that a sustainable, efficient and professionally independent national statistical system shall produce information relevant for citizens, businesses and decision-makers in Georgia and in the EU, en-

[1] "European Statistics Code of Practice" for National Statistical Authorities and Eurostat, Nov. 2017

abling them to take informed decisions on this basis. The national statistical system should respect the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, taking into account the EU acquis in statistics, including the European Statistics Code of Practice, in order to align the national statistical system with the European norms and standards."

The NSDS 2020-2023 also creates a framework for the development of a strong and unified National Statistical System (NSS) for the collection, management, dissemination and utilization of official statistics in the country both to support national policy-making and international commitments.

In 2015, the Government of Georgia (GoG) began the nationalization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Sustainable Development Goals Council was established with four thematic working groups for the monitoring and efficient coordination of SDG implementation. The monitoring process requires high quality statistics as a decisive means to implement the SDGs and monitor the progress that Georgia is making in achieving its targets. The country needs baseline data to prepare the translation of the SDGs into national development strategies, and indicators are required to monitor and evaluate progress on a regular basis. The Agenda 2030, therefore, insists on the need for "high quality, timely, and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location". Developing a strong and well-coordinated NSS will ensure the availability of high-quality data for monitoring the progress of SDG implementation as part of Georgia's Agenda 2030 commitments.

NSDS 2020-2023 of Georgia has been prepared as a national policy document, formulated with the wide participation of key stakeholders and involvement of experienced international consultants.

1.1. METHODOLOGY

The UNDP Georgia office, under its Governance Reform Fund project, has formed a project team which was composed of external consultants (Chief Adviser, International Expert, Local Expert and Financial Expert) to support Geostat in the NSDS preparation process. Geostat initiated the NSDS development and assumed the leading role in the coordination of all necessary activities within the development process.

The strategy development phases are presented below (see figure 1):

Figure 1: **NSDS development process**

The strategy preparation followed an inclusive approach involving all elements of the Georgian statistical system (GSS), which envisaged the harmonizing and coordinating of all GSS activities and objectives and the development of a common programming tool.

The first step in the NSDS design process involved stakeholder consultations to prepare a situation analysis of the NSS in Georgia. Geostat, supported by UNDP, organized a series of meetings with different stakeholders. A total of 32 interviews and meetings were conducted, including meetings with: all Geostat departments (including the top management) and all government entities that represent either the official statistics providers or the key administrative data keepers and data users[2]. In addition, two focus group meetings were conducted with international organizations and data users (researchers, academia, business associations, etc.) to capture the key challenges of the GSS from the perspective of the main statistics users beyond the public sector.

The results of stakeholder consultations were summarized and analyzed using the SWOT framework. The situation analysis was also based on the results of the GA. The GA was undertaken by a team of experts from UNECE, EFTA and Eurostat using a standard methodology agreed for ENP countries. The assessment objective was to review strengths and weaknesses of the GSS and propose recommendations.

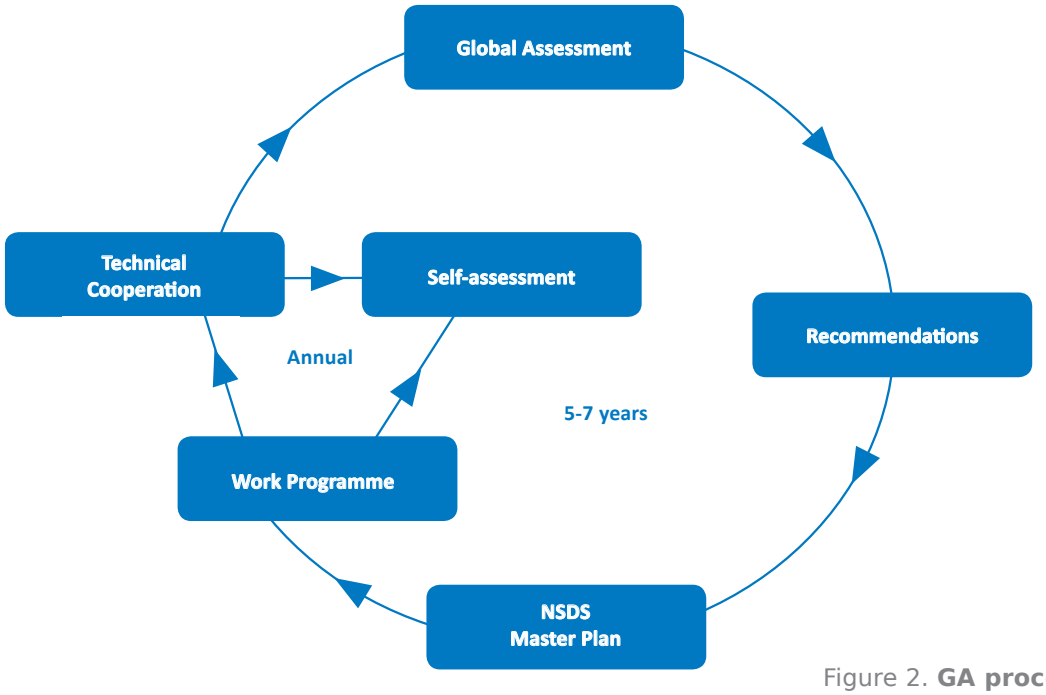


Figure 2. **GA processes (UNECE)**

[2] The follwing state agencies were consulted with: National Center for Desease Control and Public Health; Ministry of Internal Affairs; National Bank of Georgia; Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development; National Toursim Administration; Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture; State Services Development Agency; Ministry of IDP from Occupied Territories, Health, Labour and Social Affaiers; Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport; Sectoral Commitee of Georigian Parliament.

As shown in Figure 2, GA recommendations are integrated into the NSDS 2020-2023. The previous NSDS, covering the period 2011-2014, did not take into account the previous GA carried out in Georgia (2012) as the exercises were not chronologically aligned.

Active engagement and contribution from all entities (line ministries, government agencies) concerned with data production within the GSS have been critical throughout the NSDS design process. The process of elaborating the NSDS is participative, inclusive and widely integrates issues, challenges and needs from all participating producers and users of official statistics. The GoG has expressed its support for this participatory process by establishing a High-Level Interagency Council to coordinate the process of NSDS development. Those serving on the Council include representatives of line ministries (at the level of First Deputy Ministers), NBG (represented by its Vice President), and the Administration of the Government of Georgia (AoG). The Council was chaired by the Executive Director of Geostat. At the technical level, Interagency Working Groups were created under the High-Level Interagency Council to build a platform for user-producer consultations and to review in detail sectorial statistical development issues, capacity development and the overall coordination of the GSS. Working Group Members were made up of Heads of Departments/Heads of Divisions of Geostat (as Facilitators/Group Leaders) and middle level managers representing statistics/analytical units of Ministries/NBG/AoG within the GSS. The Department of Strategic Planning, Coordination and Communication of Geostat undertook the role of Secretariat.

Three working groups with the following remits were established:

Working Group 1 on Statistical Production Processes and Data Quality

Working Group 2 on Coordination, Communication and Dissemination

Working Group 3 on Capacity Development

The situation analysis allowed for the prioritization of key challenges facing the GSS and served as a basis for Logical Framework Development. Logical Framework (see Chapter 7) represents a hierarchy of strategic goals (priorities) and objectives, identifying their indicators and the targets to be achieved.

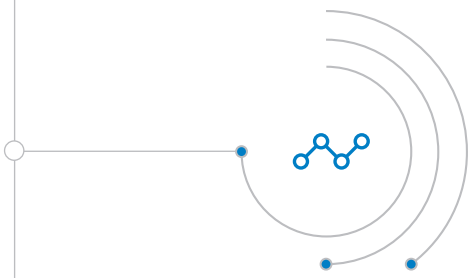
Mission, Vision and Strategic Priorities were identified and agreed with the Interagency Council. The Logical Framework was used as a skeleton for the NSDS and was followed by the identification of strategic directions, which were further disaggregated into a set of activities to achieve the NSDS targets.

The NSDS drafting was accompanied by the drafting of an action plan. In order to ensure the integration of NSS needs, and to address the most pressing challenges, the action plan was developed with the active involvement of the Interagency Working Groups. The Working Group members participated in two workshops, providing recommendations and inputs for the preparation of the NSDS, reporting to the project team and discussing and giving feedback on the Strategy, Action Plan and M&E Plan.

The action plan has been prepared with the national guidelines stipulating the activities, defining the activity output indicators and indicating the responsible entities, date of implementation and budget. The M&E Plan has been prepared to enable monitoring of NSDS implementation performance and establish baselines, milestones and targets for each indicator.

The Draft Strategy, Action Plan and M&E Plan were presented to and discussed with the Interagency Council. Once all feedback and comments were collected and integrated, the final version was sent for approval.

2. SITUATION ANALYSIS



The situation analysis was performed using the Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis method. The SWOT analysis, through which the conditions affecting GSS were systematically analysed, was performed based on information received from the 32 interviews and meetings with Geostat top management and departments, other government entities. Two focus groups with users and partner organizations as well as consultations with GA team were also conducted to ensure that the statistics producers, administrative data keepers and key users were also represented. Apart from the meetings, the situation analysis was performed using information from the official GA report and Gender Assessment of the National Statistical System in Georgia developed with the support of UN WOMEN. Primary recommendations from both reports were incorporated in the strategy and associated action plan. The situation analysis chapter also covers background information on the GSS, some major recent reforms, the current trends and rationale behind the NSDS development.

2.1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In July 2019, Geostat celebrated its 100th anniversary, emphasizing the existence of a long history of official statistics production in Georgia. On July 25 1919, the Central Statistical Committee was set up. The Committee was tasked with managing all of Georgia'ssignificant statistical work. In 1921, the first charter for the state statistical bodies of Georgia was published. After that, a large portion of the statistics of the Soviet Union were produced in Georgia for over 70 years. Between 1991 and 1995, the statistical activities in the country were carried out by the Social and Economic Information Committee established by the Supreme Council of Georgia. From 1995–1997, the State Department of Social and Economic Information carried out the work in accordance with the Law of Georgia. From 1997-2004, the State Department of Statistics of Georgia was established and carried out all statistical activities. Then, in 2004, the Department of Statistics was merged with the Ministry of Economic Development of Georgia and from this period until 11 December 2009 the Department of Statistics carried out the country's statistical activities as a subordinated body of the Ministry of Economic Development of Georgia. The Law of Georgia on Official Statistics adopted in 2009 created a foundation for the establishment of an independent entity, LEPL National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat). Since then, Geostat has operated independently as the main producer and coordinator of official statistics.

2.2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

According to the LoS, enacted on December 11 2009, there are two institutions that are recognized as official staistics producers: Geostat and NBG. According to the law, apart from statistics produced by Geostat and NBG, statistics produced by other administrative entities only qualify as official statistics if they are produced using the methodology and standards approved by the Geostat Governing Board. The Board is yet to approve a methodology to be used by any other entity except Geostat, therefore, all other state entities are recongnized only as administrative data keepers and data providers for the compilation of official statistics. However, although not stipulated by the law, the Ministry of Finance, as a producer of Government Finance Statistics, is another producer of official statistics. The Ministry follows the international methodology but the Board has not formally approved it. There may be other examples as well. The GA also refers to this issue while commenting on the coordination of the NSS and emphasizes importance of a clear distinction between producers of official statistics and data providers. Criteria for the clear and systematic identification of other official statistics producers and their outputs should be established and these criteria should be included in any future revision of the LoS.

Geostat, in accordance with the legislation of Georgia, represents an institution established for the production and dissemination of official statistics and carries out its professional activities independently. Geostat was established and operates in accordance with the LoS and based on the Decree №406 of the Government of Georgia "On the Establishement of Statute of LEPL - National Statistics Office of Georgia", dated December 31, 2013. Geostat activities are also governed by the Constitution of Georgia, the Law of Georgia on Legal Entities of Public Law, the General Administrative Code of Georgia and other normative and subordinate Acts.

Geostat is the coordinator of the statistical system of Georgia. By law, it ensures the coordination of work with official statistics-producing bodies, makes recommendations on standards and methodologies required to produce statistics, coordinates the exchange of information with administrative bodies for the production of statistics and promotes the implementation of approved standards and methodology.

NBG is responsible for producing the country's economic and financial statistics and disseminating them in compliance with the strict standards of the International Monetary Fund. According to Item "h" of Section 3, Article 3 of Organic Law of Georgia on National Bank, NBG is responsible for the production of financial, monetary and external sectors' official statistics in accordance with international standards. Monetary statistics describe the surveys of NBG, the banking sector, and other financial institutions. As for external sector statistics, these represent data on the balance of payments, external debt, the international investment position and international reserves. Statistics produced by NBG are published on the NBG website on pre-determined dates.

2.3. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT TRENDS AND RATIONALE FOR NSDS

Geostat produces statistics on all domains (except monetary, financial and external sector statistics produced by NBG and government finance statistics produced by MoF) relying heavily on its own capacity. To a lesser extent, it also utilizes each sector's administrative data. Most of the sectorial statistics produced by Geostat come from survey data. Globally, 70% of produced statistics are generated from primary data and Geostat conduct over 240 surveys per year. Administrative data is mainly provided by the state entities.

Substantial progress has been made in the GSS by steadily improving its capacity and performance since 2004. In May 2010, Georgia subscribed to the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). At the same time, the effectiveness of the statistical system as assessed by the World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicator has increased significantly. However, the recently concluded Global Assessment has identified a number of important weaknesses in the system and has raised concerns specifically about its capacity to meet current and future demands for statistics in a sustainable manner. These concerns were largely confirmed and elaborated on in the conclusions of the stakeholder consultations. Therefore, the preparation of an NSDS, based on good practice and the PARIS21 guidelines, is a high-priority item on the Georgian government's agenda. In addition, the statistical system in general will face a number of challenges over the next few years and the preparation of an NSDS will provide an opportunity to address them in a systematic manner.

Geostat led the development of the first NSDS covering the period 2011-2014. Its objective was to enable the development of an integrated statistical system in conjunction with a national data quality framework, international standards and recommendations for social, economic and environmental statistics. However, the recommendations of the first round of the GA carried out in Georgia (2012) could not be integrated into the master plans or statistics development strategy 2011-2014, as these processes were not chronologically aligned. Additionally, no monitoring and evaluation results of this first NSDS implementation effort are available.

Further incentive for the development of an NSDS is the need for upgrading the existing legislative base so as to align it more closely with international standards (e.g. GLOS and ESCoP). The current redac-

tion of the LoS defines the purpose and principles of official statistics and determines the legal grounds for the keeping, storing and disseminating of statistical information. Despite the periodic updating of the LoS, the legal foundation for official statistics in Georgia is not fully in line with the recommendations set down in the GLOS. The recent GA's (2019) final report drew attention to a number of shortcomings. In particular, there are difficulties that arise from the respective roles assigned under the LoS to the Governing Board and Executive Director of Geostat regarding the fundamental statistical principle of professional independence. Furthermore, the status, term of office and appointment/dismissal procedures of the Executive Director need to be aligned more closely with international recommendations. Other issues have been identified in respect of the principles relating to the Mandate for data collection and statistical confidentiality. The implementation of these principles is critical in order to ensure the credibility of statistical information and confidence among the key stakeholders. Persistent efforts to maintain and increase this confidence will be required in the coming years.

The GA has identified a particular strength of the GSS to be the nature of its centralized statistical system, within which official statistics predominantly produced by Geostat. However, although they are not formally recognized, there are other important producers of official statistics, such as NBG and MoF), and administrative data keepers/providers to take into account. Geostat is the coordinating body of the official statistical system, but this position needs to be further strengthened. Scarce and fragmented statistical resources and capacities (outside of Geostat, NBG and MoF) create unbalanced expertise communication and coordination in the GSS. Overall, weak coordination of the GSS has a negative impact on the planning of additional indicator production. Furthermore, Geostat does not have sufficient control over the quality of the data provided by public sector entities and this negatively affects the quality of both the basic administrative data and the quality of the final statistical product. Issues of quality in administrative data introduce a vicious circle with a sequence of causes and effects between: low quality, low use, high respondent burden and low statistical capacity of the providers. The improvement of administrative data and registers (e.g. farm register, population register, etc.) is therefore an essential objective of the new NSDS.

While quality is treated as a priority issue in the production of individual statistical outputs, more progress could have been made in the development and implementation of an integrated quality management system to be applied throughout the organization. While the establishment of such a system in compliance with international standards would have significant resource implications, it should nevertheless be pursued as a priority objective in a targeted and pragmatic manner paying careful consideration to the resources available.

The current organizational structure of Geostat is very much based on the traditional "product"-based model. In the context of the current limited resources available to Geostat, this may be the most appropriate structure to adopt. However, some consideration should be given to adopting a more "functional" model based on the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) principles. This

model is increasingly becoming the norm for developed national statistical systems. This would be particularly relevant in the context of making greater use of administrative data for statistical purposes and of benefitting from increased investment in IT resources.

In addition to the issues stated above, the GSS is under intense pressure from changing user needs and the growing demands from users such as politicians, government bodies, international organizations, development agencies, researchers and NGOs. Both the "needs" and "user profiles" are different in the current climate. Geostat and other statistics producers in the GSS must first cope with the urgent, dynamic needs of users.

Although the general capacity of the GSS to produce timely and comprehensive statistical information has increased in recent years, there is still room for significant improvement to provide statistics in an internationally comparable manner, based on the highest quality standards. In Georgia, as elsewhere, users need to have internationally comparable data. Therefore, the GSS should initiate harmonization studies to fully adopt the up-to-date international methodologies and classifications (e.g. SNA 2008, GFSM 2014, NACE Rev. 2, EU NUTS etc.). New indicators are needed in the domains of energy, construction, persons with disabilities, culture, sports, informal sector, social, etc. There is also a high demand for disaggregated statistics to facilitate gender and regional analyses, which are especially necessary for the SDG monitoring process. In this respect, the data collection process and data dissemination should be modernized by Geostat and other statistics producers in the GSS with up-to-date IT solutions. Moreover, greater use should be made of alternative data sources including administrative registers and big data together with the establishment and development of integrated sectorial information systems (EMIS, ASHMIS etc.). Moreover, a user-producer platform should be established to strengthen the consultation process with users. Continuous monitoring of user satisfaction, timeliness and user-friendly website are other critical issues which should be developed in the GSS data dissemination process.

Over the course of the Strategy's implementation, priority must be given to the planned Census of Population (in conjunction with the linked Census of Agriculture) being conducted to the highest possible standard. This is required to provide comprehensive and accurate information on the population, land distribution and the agricultural sector at national, regional and local levels. In addition, information collected during the censuses should be used, in conjunction with relevant administrative and register data, to develop population and farm registers for statistical purposes. High-quality population and farm registers are a vital component of a national statistical infrastructure – not only as a source of high-quality statistical information, but also as a reference framework for future and ongoing statistical surveys and analyses.

The successful implementation of the NSDS is very much dependent on the resources available to Geostat and the GSS as a whole. The GA report voiced serious concerns in regard to the level and quality of resources (staffing, financial, IT and accommodation) available to Geostat. With regard to staffing,

it was noted that the number of employees at Geostat was significantly lower than those employed in comparable National Statistical Institutes elsewhere, notwithstanding that Georgia has a highly centralised statistical service. Persistent under-investment in IT, in terms of skilled staff, hardware and software, was also noted and it was recommended that an expert assessment should be undertaken without delay as an initial step towards addressing this critical issue. Finally, the accommodation available and the working conditions of staff were considered to be sub-standard and not conducive to promoting high staff morale and a positive public image. Regarding the human resources, another issue is the absence of a capacity development policy and training programme/strategy. This problem is not isolated to Geostat, but is observed throughout the whole of the GSS. Some government entities engaged in statistical activities in Georgia do not have any qualified statistical staff. Therefore, the development of statistical and analytical capacity within these public institutions is a key issue for the GSS. Overall, the GA report recommended that the Government of Georgia "recognise the need to significantly increase the staff, financial and information technology resources available to Geostat to meet current and emerging needs for improved statistics in a sustainable manner." Accordingly, the NSDS is very much framed on the basis of a positive response to this recommendation.

2.4. SWOT ANALYSIS

Based on consultations with the GA team and the final list of recommendations, meetings with GSS members, focus groups and other stakeholders' consultations, the current challenges and needs of the statistical system were analysed and systematically organised using the SWOT framework, as shown below:

S Strengths

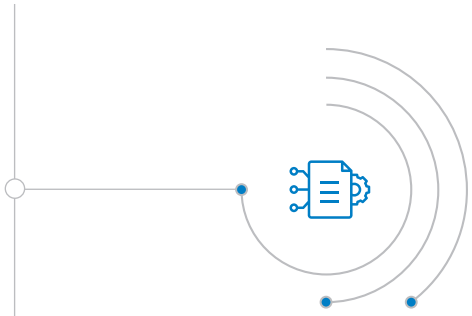
- Highly centralized system of official statistics production led by Geostat results in a very efficient use of the limited resources available for official statistics;
- Free access to administrative data sources;
- Highly qualified staff and network of experienced interviewers at Geostat;
- Good experience of international cooperation supports Geostat on its way to greater compliance with International and EU statistical standards Good relations and cooperation between the main statistics providers: Geostat, National Bank of Georgia and Ministry of Finance;
- Geostat has placed an increased focus on data quality improvements. There is a dedicated structural unit as well as the interagency working group on quality issues at Geostat.

- Weak coordination and lack of clear distiction between producers of official statitics and data providers negatively affects the level of coordination of the NSS;
- Despite the very centralized statistical system, the staffing levels in Geostat are significantly below those in other comparable countries. Significant underinvestment in the Information Technology hardware and systems required by a modern NSO;
- Accommodation conditions at the Geostat are quite poor and restrictive and need to be improved to facilitate the anticipated increase in staff numbers and to provide a better working environment that will improve staff morale overall and support the retention and recruitment of qualified staff;
- Law on Official Statistics needs to be aligned more closely with the Generic Law on Official Statistics to ensure full compliance with ESCoP;
- The efficiency of the statistical production process should be improved to reduce reliance on traditional approaches and, in particular, to develop electronic reporting and the greater use of administrative records;
- Limited “user-centric” view. Statistical production processes should be more agile to respond to the changing needs of users;
- The existing training system is not targeted well enough at the development of needed expertise for statisticians and IT staff at Geostat;
- Geostat does not have enough control over the quality of the data provided by public sector entities;
- There is room for improvements in statistics dissemination practice to support the use of statistics by various user groups.

- The implementation of the SDGs in Georgia, with the development of high priority indicators to monitor progress, will heighten the need for high quality statistics and enhance the role and public profile of Geostat;
- Sectorial Ministries have a growing need for high quality statistics to support evidence-based decision making and policy impacts monitoring in the time of reforms;
- Implementation of the Global Assessment recommendations will improve the level of conformity with European statistical standards;
- The modern technologies like “open data” and “big data” can increase the sources available for official statistics production;
- Access and availability of administrative data should be exploited further to support the development of new indicators;
- The conduct of well-planned and resourced decennial Censuses of Population, Housing and Agriculture will improve not only the quality and coverage of data available at national and local levels but also provide a basis for developing essential population and farm registers for statistical purposes.

- The high dependence on a relatively small number of skilled and experienced staff limits the capacity of Geostat to develop new statistical products and to systematically assure the quality of existing outputs;
- Underinvestment in Information Technology limits the ability to adopt more cost-effective statistical methodologies and puts the sustainability of existing systems at risk;
- Limited resources to further improve the level of salaries and accommodation may challenge retention of qualified staff and development of strong IT at Geostat;
- Reorganization of sectoral Ministries may lead to partial loss of data sources;
- Insufficient financial recourses;
- Poor infrastructure;
- Outflow of qualified personnel.

3. MISSION



The GSS provides the statistical evidence needed by the Government and other users to support the economic, social and environmental development of the country. The statistical system also aims to meet its obligations to report statistical data to regional and international agencies using scarce national resources effectively and efficiently.

Geostat, as the main statistical producer and coordinator of the GSS, has continuously made progress in developing its activities, while endeavouring to keep pace with international developments and best practice in order to support decision makers through the provision of high-quality statistical information. In this respect, the NSDS is designed to further strengthen the statistical capacity and infrastructure of Geostat and NBG and support the GSS as a whole in the production and dissemination of high-quality statistics to meet user needs in line with international standards and requirements.

The mission of the GSS is determined in this direction within the framework of the NSDS 2020-2023 of Georgia and it is stated as follows:

The mission is to produce and disseminate high-quality, timely and relevant official statistics in an effective manner based on user needs to inform good decision making and enhance public accountability.

4. VISION

The vision for Georgian national statistics provides a medium to long-term framework for statistics development. It communicates the desired future of the GSS and is, therefore, the reference frame for setting the strategic goals and objectives of the NSDS.

In accordance with the LoS, the GSS is comprised of Geostat, NBG and other public entities that either produce official statistics or provide administrative or other data as an input to their compilation. The mandate of the GSS is to produce and disseminate high quality statistics in a professionally independent manner that meet real user needs to inform good decision making and enhance public accountability. In fulfilling its mandate, the GSS must also respect the interests of respondents through actively minimising the statistical burden it imposes and protecting the confidentiality of individual statistical returns.

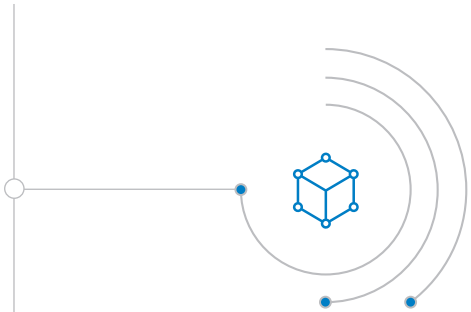
International statistical principles and best practices, such as the Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics adopted by the United Nations, have been promulgated to guide the production of official statistics worldwide. A core objective is to ensure that reliable and relevant official statistics are produced in a transparent manner, free from political and other external interference, in order to obtain the trust of all users. Furthermore, since international comparability is a key requirement, adherence to the maximum extent to internationally agreed statistical standards and methodologies is essential for the GSS.

The ESCoP provides a comprehensive reference quality framework for systematically ensuring that national statistical systems comply with the aforementioned requirements. The GA used the Code as the basis for assessing the GSS and hence, in concrete terms, full compliance with the ESCoP will represent a central pillar of the vision for the system.

In short, the NSDS must ensure that the GSS is developed so that it is “fit for purpose” in meeting the real needs of users while adhering to international statistical principles, standards and methodologies.

The vision for the Georgian Statistical System is to create a well-coordinated, user focused and efficient national statistical system based on international standards.

5. VALUES



The list of core values of GSS consist of the values related to the institutional environment and all statistical processes.

- Professional Independence
- Objectivity
- Reliability
- Data confidentiality and security
- Efficiency
- User focus
- Managed statistical burden on respondents

6. STRATEGIC GOALS

The objective for the elaboration of the NSDS 2020-2023 is to provide the GSS with a strategic instrument to plan, implement and monitor the next steps of Georgian statistical development under the global objective of complying with the ESCoP principles. The NSDS seeks to be "fit for users' needs" when responding to users' (government, public and private sectors, civil society, academia & research, international organization etc.) growing demand for high quality, credible statistics through enabling the GSS to deliver high quality statistical outputs in line with challenging international standards for official statistics.

The strategic goals of the NSDS, and the objectives under these goals, have been derived from the situation analysis including the results of the Global Assessment and consultations with GSS stakeholders. The strategic goals are designed to exploit the existing strengths of the GSS, use the available opportunities, solve the identified weaknesses and ward off present risks.

The main pillars of the strategy can be summarized as addressing the following issues:

- Changing user needs for improved statistics in the various sectoral domains;
- The development and effective deployment of scarce and fragmented statistical resources and capacities in the GSS;
- The need to improve the quality of administrative data used for statistical purposes;
- The increasing demand for disaggregated statistics and for improved coverage of partially covered and emerging areas of statistical interest (e.g. energy, migration, construction, disabilities, culture, sports, informal sector, social protection, etc.);
- The urgent need to upgrade the technology, the HR practices and the available accommodation/equipment/facilities to improve the effectiveness of processes and thus cope with high pressure to produce high quality statistics in a sustainable manner;
- The need to tackle overall weak coordination in the GSS.

Setting out strategic priorities is critical in responding to the issues identified in the GA and situation analysis. The prioritization provided a framework for the efficient allocation of resources in the implementation of the NSDS and in the development of the GSS over the four years, thus reducing the risk of diverting attention away from the key challenges.

In this context, three strategic goals have been identified on which to focus during the implementation of the 2020-2023 NSDS of Georgia. Strategic objectives, with implementing activities, have been grouped and elaborated under each of the three strategic goals. The strategic goals, related objectives and activities are explained below. The goals were formulated using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) principles. Each goal has specific targets and indicators to measure their achievement. Targets and indicators were derived by Geostat in collaboration with GSS members to ensure that goals and associated targets are feasible and relevant. Please refer to Chapter 7 for the list of indicators and targets per strategic goals and specific objectives.

6.1. STRATEGIC GOAL 1:

PRODUCE HIGH QUALITY OFFICIAL STATISTICS BASED ON USER NEEDS

Meeting the real needs of users for high-quality official statistics at national, regional and local levels is the core function of the GSS. Geostat and the other statistical producers and data providers in the GSS are committed to strengthening their capacity to deliver to the maximum extent an increased range of statistics that are based on international statistical standards and quality criteria. Users' demand for statistics varies greatly according to their purpose and their capacity, literacy and knowledge in use of statistics. Therefore, a review of both current and potential data demand was undertaken. User needs cannot be properly met unless these have been properly identified, understood and prioritized. While the needs of all users will be taken into account in developing the statistical programme, priority will be given to the provision of statistics required for the support of evidence-based policy making and for the development and monitoring of national programmes. Another important process that the GSS needs to support through provision of high-quality statistics is SDG monitoring. By the end of the strategy period the GSS, and Geostat in particular, are aiming at being able to produce almost all SDG quantitative indicators, which are to be produced by NSO. Geostat and the GSS partners, in the context of the NSDS 2020-2023, will work collaboratively to respond to user needs in a coordinated manner.

This strategic goal has two dimensions: ensuring that the produced statistics are of high quality and that official statistics are tailored to user needs, or in other words are "fit for purpose".

Objective 1.1.

Production of statistical information to support evidence-based decision making

The very purpose of official statistics is providing impartial quality information on relevant matters. High quality official statistics play an important role in the decision-making processes of various different users (policy makers, researchers and civil society as a whole).

The policy makers in Georgia, as in other developing countries, are regularly faced with the tasks of answering complex questions and making difficult decisions. To support informed decision making, sound, reliable and timely statistical information is crucial. It is up to the GSS to produce data that could demonstrate the current state-of-play in an easily comparable manner. It should be stated that macroeconomic policies and structural reforms must rely on high quality statistical information. The statistical information that policy-makers receive should be relevant, timely and accurate to make informed decisions on policy directions. The GSS should enhance their methods to increase transparency and availability of data through improving data clarity, data distribution channels and communication with users.

Users have a very long list of needs for statistical data in various sectors such as macroeconomic statistics, monetary statistics, social statistics, agricultural and environment statistics, and they should be encouraged to identify their own priorities. Therefore, a regular user-producer dialogue is to be established to monitor changing needs of users. Additionally, a number of new indicators will be developed based on close cooperation with respective stakeholders. For example, sport, culture and education statistics indicators will be defined in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport. Based on the priority list of indicators developed in consultations with the Ministry, Geostat will develop an appropriate methodology and produce the indicators that are of urgent need by the Ministry for proper policy planning and monitoring. Similarly, regional statistics indicators will be defined in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure to identify the priority indicators needed for policy making at the national level as well as in local municipalities. Considering these user needs and the requirement of high-quality statistics, the GSS will work on the further development of sectorial statistics, namely the National Accounts, Monetary Statistics, Business Statistics, Social Statistics, Demographic Statistics, Price Statistics, External Sector Statistics, Agricultural and Environment Statistics.

Vital activities to be conducted within the strategy timeframe are the Population and Agricultural Censuses. Both will be conducted concurrently in 2023. Apart from being the core statistical programme and the primary source of data on the population and economy, the Population Census has a special significance in the light of several dependent activities being planned within the strategy period. Firstly, the census will allow for population data to be collected disaggregated by gender, municipalities, urban/rural and other important classes. Secondly, data provided by the Census will serve as a good basis for the development of statistics on internal migration. Considering that the existing information on internal migration is quite limited due to the lack of incentives for people to register their factual changes of address, the Census of Population is therefore the only source that can provide reliable information on internal population movements within Georgia. Finally, the Census plays a vital role in the development of high-quality statistical population register (Objective 3.4, Chapter 6.3). The Ministry of Justice and State Services Development Agency, (SDA) which maintain the Civil Register together with Geostat, will work on linking the existing register with the Census return to allow construction of a statistical population register. Similarly, the Agricultural Census that is planned to be conducted in conjunction with the Population Census will allow for construction of a Farm Register (Objective 3.4, Chapter 6.3). Geostat will closely cooperate with MEPA to integrate information from the Census with the Farm registry and develop a high-quality statistical Farm Register. Although both Censuses are planned under the NSDS and directly linked to several activities of this strategy, it should be noted that the budget, methodology and timeframe for both Censuses will be approved by a special commission established by GoG.

Another important activity is the implementation of an improved agricultural statistics programme, in line with the AGRIS methodology of the FAO, better covering user needs such as farm productivity and profitability indicators, agricultural labour data, and aligning more comprehensively with international commitments. In addition to these, there is a high demand on the regional statistics to support both municipalities and national authorities in designing and monitoring of regional policies. The development of gender-disaggregated indicators is another priority issue for the GSS. In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, the formation of indicators for the SDG Monitoring Process is an expectation for all users. In this context, the GSS will aim to expand its statistical reach, producing new indicators and developing disaggregation components to existing key indicators (by regions and gender).

The main targets of this objective are to improve and maintain the high satisfaction rate of the public sector users as well as to reduce in time needed to respond to public sector user-data requests, by providing the requested statistics within 5 working days on average.

The main activities to reach the relevant objective are summarized by directions below.

Direction 1.1.1.

Expand statistical areas and production of new indicators

Activity	Result in 2023
Conduct Time Use Survey (TUS) and develop additional indicators disaggregated by gender	TUS results are published, at least 20 new indicators are disaggregated by gender. The gender statistics are produced in accordance with the latest international methodologies
Further development of regional statistics	Possibilities of production of statistics at municipal and regional level are assessed; Short list of priority indicators is developed in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders; Key demographic, social and business statistics have been published by regions of Georgia
Develop statistics for calculation of baseline indicators for SDGs which are not available by 2019	At least 95% of SDG indicators to be covered by Geostat are developed.
Develop Financial Accounts for financial sector	Financial sector financial accounts for stocks are developed and published Financial accounts for flows (revaluations and OCVA) are published

Direction 1.1.2.

Development of National Accounts

Activity	Result in 2023
Development of quarterly GDP by expenditure approach in constant prices	Quarterly GDP by expenditure approach in constant prices is available at Geostat website
Development of sectoral accounts	Methodology is developed and sectoral accounts are published
Development of supply and use tables in nominal and constant prices by types of activities and products according to NACE Rev. 2 and CPA 2008	Supply and use tables in nominal and constant prices by types of activities and product according to NACE Rev. 2 and CPA 2008 are published
Development of Input-Output tables	Methodology is developed and input-output tables are published

Direction 1.1.3.

Expand the area of business statistics

Activity	Result in 2023
Identification and development of short-term business statistics (STS) indicators in accordance with FRIBS	At least 3 STS indicators are identified, developed and published
Development of 1-4 tables of tourism satellite accounts	Published tables 1-4 of tourism satellite accounts
Development of at least 5 additional business demography indicators	At least 5 additional business demography indicators are published

Direction 1.1.4.

Improvement of social statistics

Activity	Result in 2023
Update the methodology for poverty and living conditions statistics	Methodology is reviewed and updated in line with recent international standards. Additional indicators are developed and published
New additional indicators on labour statistics are produced.	At least two new indicators on labour market statistics are developed and published including Median Earnings and Gender Pay Gap
Develop education statistics	In close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport additional indicators are obtained from administrative sources. At least 5 new indicators are published
Develop sports statistics	The set of indicators is identified in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport; At least 3 new sport statistics indicators are developed and published
Develop culture statistics	Methodology for theatres and museums survey is updated; at least 3 new culture statistics indicators are produced and published
Develop health statistics	At least 3 additional indicators are obtained from administrative sources and published

Direction 1.1.5.

Production of demographic statistics which are compatible with EU standards

Activity	Result in 2023
Improvement of the quality of the causes of death indicators	Share of ill-defined causes of death is reduced to 20%. The baseline data (2019) - 33%
Creation of the base for migration statistics development: a) Development of methodology for internal migration statistics b) Development of methodology for international migration statistics	In close cooperation with Migration Commission the methodology is developed; The use of nontraditional administrative sources for migration statistics are tested (e.g. Big data)
Conduct Population Census	Methodology and questionnaires are developed and approved by the State Commission; Census fieldwork is conducted
Creation of the base for population projection introduction	Methodology for introduction and conduction of population projection is elaborated and published; Capacity building of relevant staff is conducted

Direction 1.1.6.

Development of new indicators on agricultural and environment statistics

Activity	Result in 2023
Conducting the Agricultural Census	Agriculture Census is conducted together with the Population Census
Further implementation of the Strategic Plan for Agricultural, Environmental and Rural Statistics (SPAERS)	Data archive is created and access to the anonymised microdata is provided; Computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) method is implemented in all relevant surveys; Classification of agricultural holdings is updated in compliance with international standards and data users' needs.
Implementing Agricultural Integrated Survey (AGRIS)	Existing questionnaires are updated; 2 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators (2.3.1 and 2.3.2) are calculated and published
Development of waste statistics	At least one indicator on waste statistics is calculated and published
Development of environment statistics	At least one additional United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) indicator is calculated and published

Direction 1.1.7.

Increasing the volume of price index

Activity	Result in 2023
Development of Domestic Supply Producer Price index	Domestic Supply Producer Price Index is available on the Geostat website
Development of Producer Price Index for Telecommunication Services, Warehouse and Storage services and Tourism agencies' services	Methodology is developed and approved by Geostat Board; Producer Price Indices for Telecommunication services, Warehouse and Storage services and Tourism agencies' services is available at Geostat website.
Development of Residential Property Price Index (RPPI)	Pilot index calculation is conducted using 3 methods as per recommendations of IMF RPPI data series are developed and published.

Direction 1.1.8.

Development of External Sector Statistics

Activity	Result in 2023
Development of external trade indexes (Export–Import Unit Value Indices) on the basis of the Foreign Economic Activity Commodity Nomenclature (HS) by sections	External trade unit value indices (UVI) are published
Develop the international trade in services statistics	Pilot survey is conducted in 2021; Regular surveys are conducted since 2023 and results are published
Development of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by size and age of enterprises	FDI by size and age of enterprises is published
Development of existing FDI indicators according to the BPM6 manual	Existing FDI indicators are published in accordance with the BPM6 manual
Development of domestic export statistics	Domestic export statistics is published
Mirror Comparison in International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS)	Mirror Comparison in International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) with pre-selected partner country is conducted and published

Objective 1.2.

Production of official statistics in full compliance with international standards and guidelines

Statistical production in the GSS is a comprehensive process requiring knowledge and experience as well as extensive planning. One of the most important criteria for reliable statistics is the consideration of international norms at every stage of the statistical production process.

The GSS aims to follow the statistical methodologies and standards set for the statistical programme of the European Union and to focus on complying with the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice. The GSS needs to perform harmonization studies in order to adopt the international methodologies and classifications. Considering the high importance of comparable and reliable statistical information during the EU integration process, there are a number of areas where methodological improvements are required in the field of statistics:

- Macro-Economic Statistics
- Agricultural Statistics
- Social Statistics
- Business Statistics
- International Trade Statistics
- other statistics (e.g. environment statistics, regional statistics, etc.)

Geostat, as the coordinator of the GSS, will continue to strengthen cooperation with international partners to further implement international standards, guidelines and best practices in the implementation of the statistical programme. Geostat will foster greater cooperation with the NSO of different countries for effective exchange of experience and ideas through study visits, joint events and other collaborations. Geostat will actively participate in international and regional trainings, workshops as well as joint international projects to support smooth introduction of the most recent international standards and methodologies. In this regard, particular importance is placed on the possibility of integration of NSO into a European Statistical System (ESS). For this, active participation in ESS activities is considered necessary in line with the Eurostat Code of Principles for International Cooperation which was adopted at the meeting of the Policy Group for Statistical

Cooperation (PGSC) in 2007. Through this, Geostat staff will be integrated into the European statistical network, which will increase the motivation for professional development and upskilling to the level of their ESS peers. Moreover, Geostat, along with the other statistics producers of Georgia, will have the opportunity to foster new partnerships and collaborate with the European scientific community,

The main directions under this objective will include a review of the existing methodology for Price Statistics, External Trade Statistics and Labour Force Statistics, producing essential steps necessary to make adaptations and ensuring compliance with international standards considering the methodological developments and recommendations provided by international statistical studies. In this respect an important activity is introduction of the latest standards on Labour Force Survey (LFS) in close cooperation with ILO, based on the resolutions adopted at the 19th and 20th International Labour Conference as well as introduction of International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) in labour market survey. The new standard and classification will allow updating the existing classification of self-employed and improve compliance of labour statistics with the most recent international standards. The Financial Corporations Survey being conducted by NBG will be developed in accordance with IMF's improved methodology. NBG will develop a methodology for Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM) to be introduced in the Balance of Payments (BoP).

As a result of the efforts made to achieve the objective, at the end of the strategy period more than 90% of the key statistics indicators will be produced in accordance with the most recent international standards and guidelines.

The main activities to reach the relevant objective are summarized by directions below.

Direction 1.2.1.

Harmonization with international methodologies

Activity	Result in 2023
Harmonization with HICP methodology in Price statistics	Methodology is adapted to national context and approved by the Board of Geostat; Harmonized CPI is produced and published along with the existing CPI
Use of renewed Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP 2018) while creating consumers basket	COICOP 2018 is translated and adopted by the Board of Geostat; COICOP 2018 is introduced in the CPI survey
Process and disseminate External merchandise trade data in accordance with Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) at a maximally detailed level (5-digit level)	External merchandise trade statistics by Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) is produced and published
Introduce the latest standards in Labour Force Survey (LFS) based on the resolutions adopted at the 19th and 20th International Labour Conference	The national LFS methodology is updated according to the ILO new standards; The LFS is carried out according to the new standards, results are published
Introduce International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) in labour market statistics.	Employment statistics is calculated according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08.
Develop Financial Corporations Surveys based on the IMF's improved methodology	New Survey of National Bank of Georgia is developed and published; New ODC and DC Surveys are developed and published
Develop methodology for Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM)	FISIM records are published in BoP

Direction 1.2.2.

Cooperation with international partners

Activity	Result in 2023
Continue active cooperation with international organizations and partners	Geostat staff members actively participate in international trainings/workshops and projects; Cooperation projects with international partners to modernize statistical production processes are realized
Strengthening cooperation with colleagues in different countries to improve the exchange of experiences, ideas and knowledge	Cooperation with NSOs of different countries established; Study visits to Georgia for foreign colleagues and vice versa are organised; System for exchanging of information on new methodologies and technologies established
Developing new partnership and collaboration with scientific community	Conditions of new partnership and collaboration with scientific community identified; At least 2 meetings per year conducted with scientific community

Objective 1.3.
Cooperation with international partners

The basic provision for quality statistics is to produce the statistics as comparable, consistent, up-to-date, timely and appropriate to the specific needs. It is expected that the statistics produced throughout the country will meet the criteria.

The quality of existing statistics/indicators needs to be continuously monitored and improved to fit the dynamic context in which the GSS operates. For instance, Geostat has the challenges of reducing the information gaps relating to the non-observed economy in the national accounts. Therefore, the methodology for non-observed economy estimation should be elaborated and at least two additional surveys be conducted. Similarly, the introduction of software for data processing and analysis of national accounts will contribute to the better quality of macroeconomic statistics. To improve the quality and coverage of energy statistics additional indicators on energy efficiency and transport will be produced. NBG will continue to improve the quality of monetary statistics. The quality of flow data collection will be improved to ensure sufficient expansion of Financial Accounts reports. NBG will assign a separate, interactive statistics web page for each ODC for quality-checking purposes and, to achieve this, will use business intelligence[3] solutions. Additionally, it will develop a debt security database which will be available on NBG's website.

GSS is a part of central government and the initiative to promote open statistical data is part of a broader process to make the country generally more transparent. Georgia is a part of the multinational Open Government Partnership, which promotes accountable, responsive and inclusive governance. Supported by a formal national commitment towards the open data, the aim is to make all kinds of statistics, including aggregated indicators, micro-data and geo-spatial data more open, while still maintaining the requirements of individual data confidentiality. The UN Principle of Official Statistics emphasizes the importance of dissemination of information about the concepts, sources, and methods used to produce the statistics; i.e., metadata. Official statistics producers should ensure that users have access to metadata so that they have a proper understanding of what the statistics represent. During the Global

[3] Based on the parameters set, BI reporting is generally an automated process that captures and report on analyzed data. These reports can be in form of statistical data, visual charts and/or standard textual content.

Assessment interviews, several users stressed the importance of metadata availability. In this sense, the availability of information for users on the methods and quality of all outputs will be further improved and extended, based on international standards (e.g. the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and the Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS), incorporating the Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS) and the ESS Standard for Quality Reports Structure (ESQRS)).

Moreover, Geostat should continue its development of an integrated quality management system with realistic objectives, as is recommended in the Global Assessment (2019) final report. A high-level committee on quality will be established to oversee the implementation of the quality management system, with a particular focus on setting priorities for quality initiatives and reviewing progress with resultant action plans. This system will include regular quality self-assessment of the statistical outputs, in which all statistical departments will be involved. The self-assessment forms will be elaborated and introduced. The results of the regular self-assessments, together with resultant action plans, will be submitted to the high-level committee on quality. Geostat, through the high-level committee on quality, will be able to prioritise areas for detailed statistical-quality audits. As always, available audit resources and statistical priorities must be taken into consideration.

The main activities to reach the relevant objective are summarized by directions below.

Direction 1.3.1.

Improving the quality of existing indicators

Activity	Result in 2023
Development of software for national accounts compilation	Software for data processing and analysis on national accounts is introduced
Elaboration of methodology and conduction of additional surveys for non-observed economy estimation	Information gaps in non-observed economy are reduced
Development of additional surveys to expand business statistics area	Business statistics area is expanded by at least one additional survey results
Development of energy efficiency indicators	At least 5 energy efficiency indicators are published
Development of additional transport statistics indicators	Transport statistics indicators are identified by consultations with relevant stakeholders; At least 5 additional indicators are produced
Develop high-quality flow data collection system from other depository corporations	Quality of collected flow data is sufficient to expand Financial Accounts report
Develop BI interactive reports for other depository corporations to ensure data quality checks	NBG has assigned for each ODC separate interactive statistics web page, where interactive reports are published for data quality checking purposes
Develop debt securities database	Debt security database is published on NBG website

Direction 1.3.2.

Transition to the integrated structure for quality management

Activity	Result in 2023
Enhancement of an integrated quality management system and a mechanism to ensure high quality of statistical data	A quality policy document is developed; Established a high-level committee (working group) to oversee the implementation of the quality management system; A self-assessment form of activity is developed and introduced; Priorities for quality audit areas are identified.

Direction 1.3.3.

Development of metadata system

Activity	Result in 2023
Establishment of a metadata administrating system in compliance with international standards (Euro SDMX Metadata Structure-ESMS)	Metadata administering system is developed and introduced

Objective 1.4.
Promote the use of statistics

Geostat produces official statistics to inform the wider society based on data obtained from the surveys of individuals, households, establishments, and administrative data sources, transforming this raw data into finalized statistics for the decision-makers and other users. There is a need for effective advocacy to strengthen confidence in the GSS and in the use for statistics and to raise awareness of the relevance of quality statistics for development and strategic decision making. Statistics are needed to both influence the design of "informed" policies and monitor their outcomes. The improved use of statistics will help to build a culture of evidence-based decision making and contribute to transparency and accountability in national policy making. Moreover, statistics can help donors by informing their decisions concerning aid allocation and support monitoring of the implementation of their ongoing investments. Civil society will also benefit from the enhanced use of statistics as it will help them to advocate based on statistics and make arguments and democratic decisions enforced by relevant data. Other users such as research institutes and academia are benefiting from statistics as they are using the raw data for their analysis, while the improved use of statistics for media means improved objectivity of media coverage. Therefore, all levels of society can benefit from the improved use of statistics. Use of statistics can be promoted through better communication and dissemination channels as well as through improved users' literacy. Since dissemination is one of the key issues in the strategic development of statistics, and since its importance extends well beyond its contribution to the better use of statistics, it is also discussed separately below under Objective 2.3, Chapter 6.2.

The main focus of the given strategic objective is to establish an effective dialogue with users and improve the users' literacy in statistics. This is an important activity as it helps to ensure that statistics are understood and used in the correct manner and to avoid any wrong interpretations. In relation to this, results from the situation analysis showed that users felt that Geostat could also do more to improve statistical literacy, stating that helpful activities would include the provision of training courses, public seminars and workshops for the media and other user groups as well as increasing the use of official statistics in schools and other education institutes.

In this context, Geostat should actively promote the use of statistics, in particular for the facilitation of greater evidence-informed policy making and develop further its partnerships with universities and researchers to improve mutual understanding of needs and capabilities. This will im-

prove the analytical and data processing skills across GSS member institutions and will strengthen working links between the GSS and Geostat. Additionally, it needs to increase its efforts to improve statistical literacy, for example through organising trainings, public lectures/seminars for media and selected users and collaboration with education authorities to promote a greater focus on statistical literacy in the educational system. The effectiveness of literacy development programmes will be measured using pre and post-tests introduced at educational literacy development programmes. Such programmes will be conducted regularly with the aim of having at least 100 people with post-test scores of 70% or above annually by 2023.

Besides organising trainings for various user groups, special attention must be given to the provision of capacity building for GSS members, namely those representing administrative data keepers or key users. Geostat, as the organisation with the highest concentration of qualified and experienced statisticians, will deliver a series of trainings on data processing and statistics/data analysis for administrative data owners and public sector users respectively. This activity will not only improve the awareness of statistics among the public sector users and improve the quality of data processed by administrative data keepers, but also will significantly strengthen the cooperative links between Geostat and other GSS members. In total, four targeted 2-3 day workshops will be conducted annually.

The directions under this objective are also related to the development of more user-friendly manner, dissemination processes, such as visualization tools, in order to increase the use of statistics by media and other user groups. Geostat has successful experience in the use of Infographic for presentation of key statistics as well as regular briefings for media. During the situation analysis phase, some users mentioned the need for more analysis of official statistics to not only present indicators, but to explain, interpret and contextualize the information. Geostat will invest in analysis of gender statistics and will elaborate and publish this information in its regular publication “Men and Women in Georgia”.

NBG publishes analytical reports on their website where, together with statistics, an analysis of recent trends is made to explain the story behind the numbers. For the presentation of the key statistics, NBG also conducts media briefings explaining the key messages for the wider audience.

To ensure that official statistics are addressing user needs, Geostat, as the main coordinator of the GSS, will establish a platform for dialogue with users to continuously monitor their changing needs as well as their own effectiveness in addressing them. Once a new need is identified Geostat will analyse the best way of addressing it and will integrate it in the statistical programme. A system for regular user satisfaction monitoring will be established to continuously track users’ perceptions of statistics in terms of quality, relevance, timeliness, trust and other. Comprehensive surveys will be conducted once every 2 years, while assessments of web-based user satisfaction survey will be conducted quarterly.

Direction 1.4.1.

Improvement of the content and channels of dissemination products

Activity	Result in 2023
Production of statistics based on user needs	The results of the user satisfaction survey are analysed; Analysis of the user needs is performed; New studies are conducted; Data dissemination system has been upgraded and statistical products have been diversified according to user needs.
Develop survey results in more understandable and visually attractive manner	Visualization materials for all major research results are prepared and posted on the website
Perform analysis of gender statistics	Analytical narrative part is added to regular publication “Men and Women in Georgia”

Direction 1.4.2.

Conducting statistical literacy activities and development of guidance documents

Activity	Result in 2023
Systemic and proactive development of user literacy	At least 100 people from selected users have participated in user literacy development programmes annually
Increase the awareness on the use of statistics in the public sector	Two workshops annually are organized for public organisations in data processing and statistics/ data analysis; Awareness of public sector users on the right interpretation of statistics is significantly improved, statistics used more actively in decision making

6.2. STRATEGIC GOAL 2:

BUILD EFFECTIVE, MODERN AND SUSTAINABLE STATISTICAL PRODUCTION PROCESSES

The Generic Statistics Business Process Model (GSBPM) has been developed internationally to provide a comprehensive and integrated framework for the production and dissemination of high-quality official statistics. It focuses on the processes that are undertaken, either explicitly or implicitly, in a sequential manner from the conception to delivery of statistical outputs. National statistical services have increasingly adopted this model in the modernisation of their systems and this has usually involved adopting a more process-based focus instead of the traditional product-based approach that dominated in the past. Geostat, which currently has a very product-based working model (i.e. organised around the statistical domain), will place greater emphasis on the process-driven working principles in the development of all elements involved in the statistical production process. In this way, Geostat will aim to make data collection, processing and statistics production faster, more accurate and more effective. For this purpose, within the GSS, the initial aims are to promote the use of administrative registers for statistical purposes, to expand the areas of their utilization and to increase the quality of both the statistical production process and the statistics by developing new techniques. When striving for the enhancement of process effectiveness throughout the strategic period, Geostat will apply innovative solutions and adopt the best practices developed in other statistical systems abroad.

NBG will also make certain efforts to optimize data collection processes and make statistics production more effective.

Objective 2.1.

Modernization and standardization of the statistical information production process

The current organisational structure in Geostat is very much based on the traditional "product" based model. Although it can be assumed that this may be the most appropriate structure given the circumstances due to the current limited resources, some consideration should be given to adopting a more "functional" model, based on GSBPM developed by UN.

The original aim of GSBPM was to provide a basis for statistical organisations to agree on standard terminology to aid their discussions on developing statistical metadata systems and processes. However, as the model has developed, it has become increasingly apparent that it can be used for many other purposes, in particular related to the modernisation of official statistics production. GSBPM can be also used for facilitating the sharing of statistical software, providing a structure for documentation of statistical processes, providing a framework for building organisational capability, measuring operational costs and measuring system performance.

The domain-based organisation structure may prevent Geostat from maximising the efficiency of its operations. More than 50 statistical organizations worldwide are implementing process-based organisational structures in line with GSBPM and enabled by standardised IT systems and methodologies. It would be particularly relevant for the GSS in the context of making greater use of administrative data for statistical purposes and of benefitting from an investment in IT resources. In line with this, Geostat will aim to modernize its statistical production process as part of its overall strategic goal. Preparation works for the transition to GSBPM will be realized during this strategic period. A road map for moving towards a more process-based organisational structure will be developed. The standardization of the statistical production process and the improvement of processes are also important targets. Statistical works can have their duration shortened as a result of improved efficiency of statistics production processes will be identified as well under this objective.

As a result of the improved efficiency of statistics production processes, the publishing date of at least 2 annual survey results could be reduced by 5 days and the publishing date of at least 2 quarter surveys results will be reduced by at least 1 day by 2023. Additionally, the costs of production burden will be reduced along with the burden on the respondent.

Direction 2.1.1.

Preparation works for transition to Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM)

Activity	Result in 2023
Developing a road map for moving towards a more process-based organisational structure, in line with the GSBPM	Results of IT infrastructure assessment are available; Statistical processes are described; A road map for introduction of GSBPM is developed.
Identification of statistical works which duration can be shortened due to improved statistical processes efficiency	Inventory of work processes is performed; Surveys, the production processes of which can be shortened, are identified.

Objective 2.2.

Establishment of a modern and comprehensive data collection system

Geostat is the only official statistics provider that conducts surveys for statistics production purposes. Moreover, other GSS members, when they need special statistics to be collected via surveys, sub-contract Geostat to perform the task (e.g. survey of currency exchange offices performed by Geostat and ordered by NBG). Therefore, due to its greater capacity, efforts to improve the efficiency of surveys, replace or complement them with modern digital tools and to reduce the respondents' burden are largely concentrated through Geostat. Geostat aims to establish a modern and cost-effective data collection system, taking advantage of the rapid development afforded by the adoption of modern information technologies. An expected output of this will be the availability of better quality statistics that conform to a greater extent with international standards.

New technologies are leading to a drastic increase in the volume and types of data available, creating unprecedented possibilities. The era of these possibilities represents a "data revolution" that has many definitions referring to the process of data collection and use of new data sources, including Big data. PARIS21 defines the data revolution as the pursuit of "delivering the right data to the right people in the right format at the right time". The use of such new data sources is explicitly encouraged in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics:

"Principle 5: Cost-effectiveness: Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources [...]. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents." -- United Nations (2014), Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

So-called Big data use will be considered by Geostat to complement the existing system of surveys and administrative data inputs. Use of Big data is associated with certain risks and challenges and sophisticated analytic techniques needs to be applied. Examples of new data sources possibilities to be considered by Geostat within the strategy time frame include, but are not limited to:

- **Scanner data for the Consumer Price Index.** All items being sold at the markets have a manufacturer Universal Product Code (UPC) printed on the product to be read by a scanner. Consequently, the retailers create computerized records by UPC of the prices and number of units they have sold; records that are commonly known as scanner data. Geostat will cooperate with the largest retail chains (those that have computerised system of goods inventory) to gain access to their scanned data for its subsequent use in CPI.

- **Web scraping.** Web scraping is automatically retrieving (and processing) information from websites. Websites contain detailed and frequently updated information that may be useful to official statistics. Geostat will consider the possibilities of using the web scraping for CPI through the observation of online prices for goods. Prices for real estate are already web scraped for use during the Residential Property Price Index's pilot calculations. Web scraping is also suitable for job vacancy surveys as a complementary source of data. Web scraping can help to significantly reduce respondents' burden and to have ability to observe changes in prices sooner than using the traditional methods.
- **Other possibilities of using Big data will be also explored within the strategy time frame.**

In this regard, Geostat staff needs to have a proper command of new methodologies to identify, evaluate and access new data sources. This requires skills and training capacity in the field of data science. Additionally, the possibility of international cooperation and learning from experienced international partners will also be explored.

Geostat will aim to modernise its existing practices of data collection. On top of exploring the possibility of benefiting from the data revolution, Geostat will continue its introduction of electronic data collection system. Specifically, special importance is given to the use of CAPI in most surveys, and could also potentially be used during the upcoming Population and Agricultural Censuses. CAPI will reduce the probability of errors during the collection phase and will significantly reduce the amount of human resources (work load) needed. Moreover, the use of CAPI for the main surveys will allow for the processing and publishing of the results to occur sooner than if traditional, paper-based methods were used.

As a result of these efforts Geostat sets an ambitious target to have up to a 90% share of surveys that are conducted by using modern data collection methods.

Besides this, Geostat should work on the improvement of existing questionnaires to reduce respondents' burden. As expressed by several users during the situation analysis, there is much room for improvement of the questionnaires in terms of reducing the burden on respondents. Business and tourism statistics-related surveys were mentioned specifically as those that should be improved in terms of respondents' burden.

However, the most cost effective and accurate way of producing statistics is still the use of administrative data sources. Regarding the administrative data, although Geostat is making increasing use of data from administrative sources and right of access to administrative data is included in the LoS, it is not always easy to obtain the data in practice, particularly micro-data. In most cases, Geostat does not have access to the administrative databases that affect the quality and timing of the data. There is a need to develop and implement a strategy for achieving full access to all relevant administrative data at the micro level and for developing the use of such data for statistical purposes in all relevant statistical domains. To overcome the difficulties surrounding the use of administrative data, it is required that co-operation agreements be signed with administrative data holders to ensure the quality of the basic

data and to introduce appropriate structures for managing and co-ordinating the use of administrative data in a uniform manner throughout the organisation. Another way to improve the quality of administrative data and establish stronger working links with administrative data keepers is through planning a series of capacity building workshops on data processing and analysis (Objective 1.4, Chapter 6.1) to be organized by Geostat for state organisations.

Geostat should strengthen its role as the coordinator of the GSS and establish a platform for dialogue with the state agencies that are holders of administrative data. Regular meetings with state organisations, including local self-governments, will allow Geostat to identify the new sources of administrative data and continuously update the GSS mapping.

As a result of these efforts, the share of statistics based on administrative data will be increased from 28% in 2019 to 40% by 2023.

Direction 2.2.1.

Improvement of survey questionnaires

Activity	Result in 2023
Improve the quality of questionnaires and reduce the respondent burden	All survey questionnaires have been aligned to international standards; Respondent burden is measured, ways to reduce it are stipulated in the road map and implemented

Direction 2.2.1.

Active cooperation with owners of administrative data

Activity	Result in 2023
Playing a more active central role in coordinating official statistics	Appropriate amendments to the LoS entered into the force; Memoranda of Understanding with other statistics producing agencies are signed; Regular meetings with state agencies and local self-governments are organized to discuss statistics related issues.
Establish criteria for clearly and systematically identifying other producers of statistics and their outputs	Procedures for the coordination of other producers of statistics and administrative data keepers are introduced

Direction 2.2.3.

Developing and testing the use of new data sources and modern technologies

Activity	Result in 2023
Develop software platform for use of modern technologies in data collection	Established platform for using new data sources (big data) and modern technologies (e.g. web scraping and data scanning)
Study the possibilities of production of statistical information on job vacancies	Possibilities of using the data from the internet for producing statistics on job vacancies have been analysed (web scraping); IT platform is developed to ensure easy monitoring of job vacancies
Introduce the use of modern technologies for data collection such as web scraping, scanner data and use of Big Data for consumer price statistics	Cooperation with data keepers is established (e.g. retail chains to provide access to scanner data); Big data, scanner data and web scraping data is integrated in the CPI survey

Objective 2.3.

Improvement of practices for dissemination and communication processes

The First Principle of UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics states clearly the responsibility of releasing information to the public:

> **"Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information."**

The improvement of data dissemination is the ultimate objective of the statistical system in Georgia. There are two aspects that are considered under this objective: official dissemination and dissemination at large. Geostat is responsible for dissemination of official statistics and is doing so in accordance with the pre-defined release calendar. Additionally, NBG is publishing statistics that it produces according to its own release calendar.

Geostat has the policies and procedures in place to ensure adherence to the requirements of impartiality and objectivity and to the set timelines for statistical production and dissemination. However, external assessment results indicated a need to codify its current practices and prepare and publish guidelines for assuring impartiality and objectivity in the production and dissemination of official statistics. The development of a policy on the treatment of errors, their correction and marking the dates of major revisions is therefore required in advance of the release calendar.

In 2019, Geostat launched a new, modern website. The website is the main platform for the dissemination of official statistics, as well as information on applied methodologies, annual publications (yearbooks), international cooperation and other important news. The website is being maintained and continuously improved by Geostat. Its functionality and accessibility for various user groups will be further improved within the strategy timeframe. Publication of statistical information produced by other producers of statistics on the official website is also planned to create a "one-stop shop" of official statistics for any user group.

Disseminating data to the public-at-large requires the development of a data dissemination strategy. Figure 3 below provides a reference to help define the various user groups and the demand for data they need. The strategy will define the specific user groups as well as specific means of communication with which to inform them. The effectiveness of communication tools, such as the website, will be regularly measured to allow for continuous improvement in delivering the right data in the right format at the right time. Additionally, efforts will be made to increase the number of statistics that are visualized using modern tools, such as Infographic. NBG publishes monetary and external sector statistics on its website. To improve the usability of its statistics for a wider circle of users, it will publish external sector statistics in interactive tables.

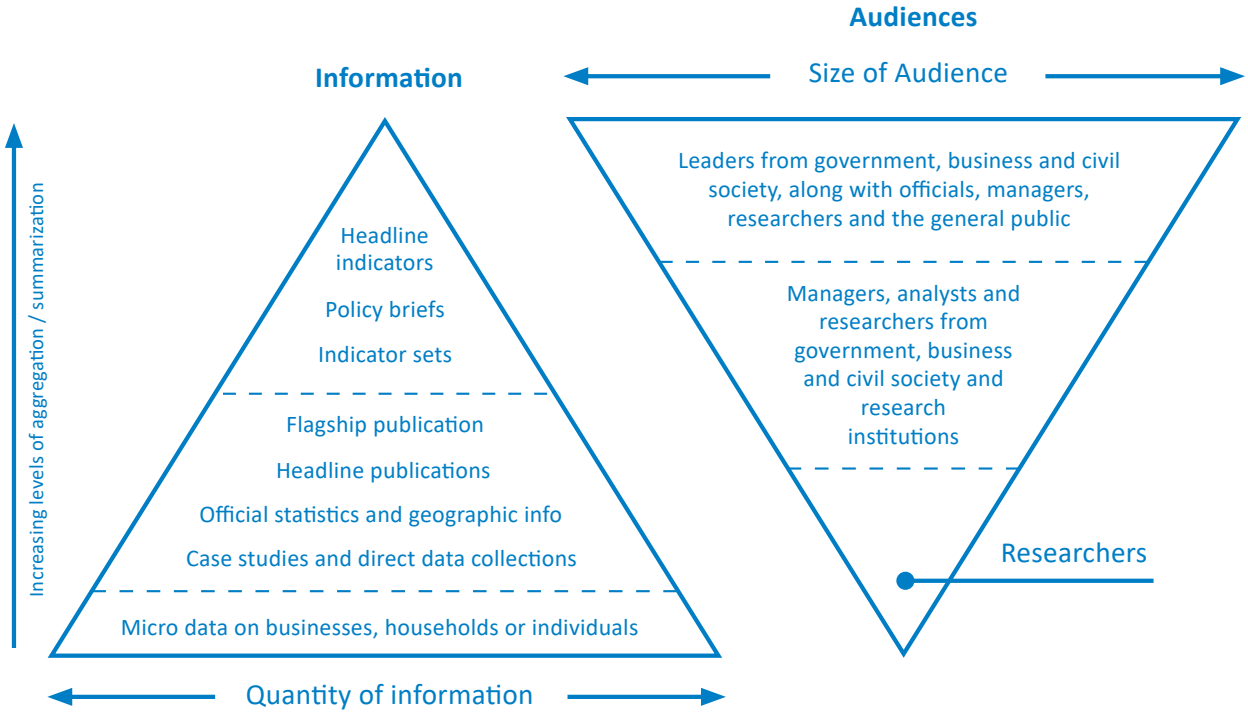


Figure 3. **Information and audience model for the ECA data and related information. Source: UNECA**

Both Geostat and NBG are participants and subscribers to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). MoF is also part of the SDDS system. The SDDS is provided and monitored by IMF. SDDS is a global benchmark for disseminating macroeconomic statistics to the public. SDDS subscription indicates that a country meets the test of "good statistical citizenship". Upgrading to SDDS plus is planned within the strategy timeframe. The SDDS Plus[4] is the highest tier in the IMF's Data Standards Initiatives and builds on the progress achieved under the SDDS. NBG will apply the SDMX format for data sharing with IMF, namely MFSCBS - Central Bank survey and MFSODC - Other Depository Corporations will be shared in the SDMX format.

Another challenge related to the dissemination practices of the GSS is to optimise the process for preparing responses to requests for statistical information. This will ensure that response time to the users' letters is reduced.

By 2023 Geostat aims to have 10% more individual visitors to the website annually and increase its number of followers and engagements across social networks by 20%.

[4] As of end-February 2019, out of all IMF member countries there are 112 participants in the e-GDDS (General Data Dissemination Standard), 57 SDDS subscribers, and 18 SDDS Plus adherents.

Direction 2.3.1.

Development of a policy on data dissemination

Activity	Result in 2023
Development of the strategy for data dissemination and communication	New version of the communication and dissemination strategy is approved
Preparing the policy/guidelines for assuring impartiality and objectivity in the production and dissemination of official statistics	Published a policy on the treatment of errors, their corrections. Dissemination is performed in accordance with the new policy. The document is available at Geostat website

Direction 2.3.2.

Improving the content system of website

Activity	Result in 2023
Further development of Geostat website	New services are being added regularly to the website (quarterly); Number of multimedia instruments is increased
Expanding sources and publishing new statistical information produced by other state institutions	Geostat website has covered the statistical information produced by other producers of statistics
Publish external sector statistics interactive (visualized) tables	Published tables on the NBG website

Direction 2.3.3.

Upgrading the dissemination practices

Activity	Result in 2023
Optimise the process for preparing responses to requests for statistical information	Monitoring and analysis of users' data requests are introduced; Statistical content of the website is updated in accordance with results of users' data requests analysis
Upgrade existing SDDS standard to SDDS Plus	Macroeconomic statistics is published and disseminated in accordance with the highest available IMF standard - SDDS plus
Implementation of SDMX format for data sharing with international financial organizations	MFSCBS - Central Bank survey shared with IMF in SDMX format; MFSODC - Other Depository Corporations survey shared with IMF in SDMX format

6.3. STRATEGIC GOAL 3: BUILD THE STATISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The term "capacity" in statistics can be defined as the ability of NSSs to produce reliable, accurate, timely, relevant and internationally comparable data. Capacity development is the process used to create or strengthen this ability in statistical institutions, or in broader terms, to reform a country's statistical system as a whole to make it more efficient and effective. It has various aspects such as legal infrastructure, human resources, financial resources, infrastructure and technical resources, standards, coordination roles of NSOs, relations with stakeholders/users and building partnerships. Capacity development is a continuous effort in the age of information and globalization. Geostat and the whole GSS, therefore, need to reform and modernize the infrastructure and adopt new developments to build their capacities as core and essential elements of the NSDS. Full Government support, particularly in making additional justified resources available, will be critical to the achievement of this strategic goal.

The role of official statistics in developing countries needs to be based on the ESCoP which provides the basic principles and criteria for establishing sustainable and credible national systems of official statistics. Therefore, the legal basis should be in line with GLOS and the ESCoP to ensure the necessary legal arrangements concerning professional independence, mandate for data collection and confidentiality are in place. The necessary amendments to LoS are to be made to ensure that NSO as well as other official statistics providers have all legal instruments in place to be able to produce reliable, high quality and free from any influence statistics.

The development of an effective NSS is impossible without proper investment in IT and human resources. This is another important pillar in ensuring that the right conditions for development of statistics are in place. In the era of reforms, high demand for reliable statistics and changing needs of users represent a big challenge that GSS and NSO in particular need to cope with. In order to be able to do so, the IT system should be modernized to catch up with the recent digital era trends and human management systems should be redesigned in a way that allows the retention and attraction of qualified staff to the system.

Objective 3.1.

Improvement of legislative base in line with international standards

There should be a sound legal basis mandating NSOs to perform their duties to produce official statistics. It should include basic principles on data quality (relevance, accuracy, timeliness, comparability, coherence, accessibility and clarity) and precise division of labour among actors within the statistical system.

The legal basis for official statistics in Georgia is not in full compliance with the recommendations set out in the GLOS. Although the LoS has been amended several times since 2009 and continuously improved, the recent GA underlines a set of recommendations for its full alignment with the GLOS as per the respective principles of the ESCoP. Implementation of GA recommendations concerning the LoS will ensure the existence of a proper legal base for effective and efficient functioning of NSS and NSO in particular. LoS needs to be amended to explicitly address several issues such as the concept of "professional independence", the status and appointment of an Executive Director (ED) of Geostat, revision of the role and mandate of the Board of Geostat and access to relevant administrative data for statistical purposes in accordance with the internationally recognised statistical principles.

The status of the Executive Director of Geostat should be enhanced so that he/she is at the level of the highest (non-political) public servants in Georgia and should also be assigned sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures and on the content and timing of statistical releases. The tenure arrangements of the Executive Director should follow the relevant recommendations of the GLOS i.e. a fixed term renewable once. Besides, the grounds for the possible dismissal of the Executive Director, prior to the expiry of his/her term of office, should be set out in the LoS and should exclude any explicit reasons that could compromise the statistical principles.

The role and mandate of the Board of Geostat needs to be revised to align more closely with the statistical governance recommendations of the GLOS and to clarify the respective competences of the Board and the Executive Director. In particular, the Board of Geostat should not retain its current level of function with respect to the approval of statistical methodology as this should be the sole professional responsibility of the Executive Director.

Regarding the mandate for data collection, the LoS should be amended to grant Geostat access for statistical purposes to relevant administrative data. The current arrangements for imposing sanctions for non-compliance should be reviewed and streamlined with mandatory demands from Geostat for data for statistical purposes.

The LoS should be amended to exclude its current reference to the potential use of confidential data for non-statistical purposes i.e. delete "but for the exceptions envisaged under Georgian legislation". The article of the LoS related to access to the statistical data and their storage should be reviewed and any time restriction on the storage of confidential data in electronic form should be removed or qualified so that the ability to generate historical statistical analyses is not impaired. The LoS should be amended to permit access to confidential data for research and Geostat should develop appropriate rules and procedures in line with international best practice to guard against any unlawful disclosure of confidential returns in facilitating such access.

Direction 3.1.1.

Preparation of amended law in line with the international frameworks and recommendations

Activity	Result in 2023
Amending the Law on Official Statistics in line with the international requirements and Global Assessment recommendations	The professional independence of Geostat is in compliance with ESCoP; Articles on mandate for data collection are in line with the principle of ESCoP; Articles on statistical confidentiality are in line with the principle of ESCoP.

Objective 3.2.

Establishing sustainable IT and development of data protection systems

Effective use of modern information technologies is a core requirement for all statistical systems. The rapid changes and developments in the field of information technologies necessitate that statistical systems adapt quickly to the new environment. Continuing investment in information technology (staffing, hardware and software systems) must, therefore, be a strategic imperative. Geostat's approach prioritizes the productivity and quality in the processes of statistics production and dissemination by utilizing the existing IT infrastructure and applications. The GA raised concerns about the low level of investment in IT and, as a consequence, the sustainability of the current approach. In response, Geostat needs to prepare an IT Development Strategy in order to update the information technologies for the production of quality statistics and presentation of statistics to users in all processes from collection to dissemination of data, whilst also producing new solutions. Additionally, planned Population and Agricultural Censuses pose a great demand for strong IT both in the implementation phase (e.g. using CAPI) as well as for data processing, storage and dissemination. The implementation of the IT Strategy as part of the NSDS 2020-2023 must therefore be a core objective.

In this context, the IT capacity of Geostat needs to be assessed by qualified international experts. The IT Development Strategy will be developed to address the needs identified by the assessment. A particular focus should be placed on building and tailoring the tools that are used in the data collection and the data processing phases as well as upgrading the technical infrastructure accordingly (e.g. servers, personal computers, etc.). Another important issue to address is the acquisition, updating and ongoing licencing of software products required by Geostat to deliver a modern statistical processing system. This is also a prerequisite for ability to address data confidentiality and security issues. The IT strategy should allow development of IT in such a way that it is able to support the implementation of strategic objectives under the NSDS, including, but not limited to, Censuses, the introduction of CAPI as a data collection tool, maintaining and upgrading the new website, etc. Geostat will also develop data protection systems to ensure data confidentiality. This is especially important in light of possible amendments to the LoS concerning provision of access to the databases storages for Geostat.

Another dimension in need of addressing is the strengthening of internal institutional communication by facilitating internal information sharing. To do this, one of the tasks is to install an intranet for the sharing and storing of information (including educational and work-related material) so as to improve communications and to foster greater sharing of knowledge within the organisation.

As a result of the efforts made under this objective, by 2023 an IT Development Strategy will be in place as well as IT policy on Data Protection and Security.

Direction 3.2.1.

Assessment of IT Systems

Activity	Result in 2023
Evaluation of the capacity and sustainability of current IT system by international experts	Needs assessment on the IT development performed by international experts

Direction 3.2.2.

Development of IT Systems

Activity	Result in 2023
Elaboration of IT development strategy	Strategy for the development of IT is adopted and published on the website; The infrastructure for networks, servers, hardware, software and databases is updated according to the IT strategy document

Direction 3.2.3

Development of data protection systems

Activity	Result in 2023
Development of data protection and security policy document	Adopted policy on data protection and security; IT audit is performed

Direction 3.2.4

Install the Geostat intranet

Activity	Result in 2023
Development and introduction of intranet at Geostat	Geostat's internal communication portal is designed and introduced

Objective 3.3.

Ensuring adequate staffing and the development of an Effective Human Resource Management System

The situation analysis showed that the human resources, in terms of both numbers and expertise, available to Geostat and the wider GSS were relatively low compared to other comparable national statistical systems. The capacity of the GSS to sustain the current statistical programme, not to mention its ability to respond to new and emerging needs, was questioned by the assessment team and the Government of Georgia was encouraged to recognise the problem and to respond in an appropriate manner by facilitating the recruitment and retention of adequate numbers of qualified and experience staff.

The concept of "Human Resources" does not only mean recruiting adequate staff, but also involves producing an appropriate human resource development plan that improves internal and external communications, makes the best use of scarce skills and expertise, and provides for regular upgrades through training and education. There should be comprehensive programmes to make the staff aware of what they are required to achieve, how goals are determined and what resources staff members can call upon to support their personal development. The human resources management in Geostat and other ministries in the GSS intend to cultivate a motivated, professional team, to focus on the needs of employees and to create a sustainable working environment.

One of the human resources-related challenges in the GSS is high staff turnover. This is problematic as the public entities in Georgia are in the process of building up their capabilities for statistical staff in their institution and developing capacity to take on full requirements of the international and EU standards. Loss of human capital can seriously hamper progress in the GSS. Considering the centralised nature of statistics production in Georgia and the fact that the largest share of official statistics is produced by Geostat, adequate human resources is an issue of particular importance for NSO. Outflow of qualified staff creates a serious risk for Geostat considering that it is currently functioning with already limited resources. In recent years, one of the main reasons for staff outflow, especially young permanent staff, was a significant difference in volume of remuneration between Geostat and other public entities. Although average salary levels have been increased recently to align more closely to the average salaries in other public entities, there is still much room for improvement both in regards to financial issues (e.g. remuneration) and accommodation. Currently neither the available working space per employee

nor the available technical equipment (in most of the cases outdated personal computers and laptops) provide comfortable working conditions. The issue of proper accommodation provision should be addressed within the strategy period, especially in light of the upcoming Population and Agricultural Censuses, which will create an additional demand for adequate conditions to accommodate the high volume of Census-related staff.

The general psychological welfare and attitude of staff should not be neglected in capacity development. Indeed, a positive attitude by staff towards reforms is indispensable to the success of programmes. Thus, Geostat will develop programmes to create an attractive working environment for its staff. Another important component to be addressed to improve the working environment is the development and introduction of a flexible working schedule.

A certain rate of staff turnover is inevitable in any organisation and is permissible to ensure continuous inflow of new knowledge and skills. Capacity building activities or a training strategy will be developed to effectively support the training of newcomers and knowledge sharing from the most experienced employees to the less experienced ones. In addition to an internal training system, employees should benefit from external trainings as well. Good knowledge and information about new methods and phenomena are important for the production of good quality statistics. Well targeted IT training is essential for the GSS for enhancing the production and dissemination of statistics. Management training is aimed at supporting the development of strategies, defining a statistical infrastructure, handling user requests, implementing new initiatives and achieving the mission and the vision of GSS. Management training should cover both top and middle level management.

Strengthening the strategic role of human resources and formalizing a human resources policy is a step forward and one that is likely to benefit Geostat and whole statistical system in numerous ways both in the medium and long term. Due to the fact that provisions of the Law on Public Service have become mandatory for all LEPLs, Geostat will need to introduce a staff performance evaluation system in accordance with the criteria stipulated in the law.

As a result of these activities, the rate of employee turnover, calculated as the number of leavers divided by total number of permanent staff for the same period, should be reduced to no more than 5% by 2023. Additionally, a staff satisfaction survey will be introduced in 2019 to constantly monitor staff satisfaction rate. Apart from rating their satisfaction in various aspects of the working environment, an employee will be able to provide suggestions and ideas for the improvement of staff well-being. By 2023, Geostat aims to have at least 80% positive feedback from the survey.

Direction 3.3.1.

Development of motivated professional team in GSS

Activity	Result in 2023
Development and implementation of a policy for the recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced staff	Created HR Management Guidelines; Geostat is represented in all thematic employment forums
Introduction of a performance evaluation system in accordance with the national legislation	The system is implemented and all Geostat employees are evaluated with the new performance evaluation system

Direction 3.3.2.

Elaborate capacity development programmes for the personnel to create an attractive and sustainable environment

Activity	Result in 2023
Development of mechanisms for enhancing employee well-being	The staffing levels and accommodation needs are assessed and addressed by the respective actions to improve employee well-being; Remuneration increased by 10% and have been made more comparable with the officials in other areas of the public service; Accommodation conditions are improved and equipment is renewed; A flexible work schedule is introduced
Elaboration of GSS employees capacity development scheme	GSS Staff assessment conducted and capacity development needs are identified; Training strategy is elaborated and implemented bringing more systematic basis on skills development of GSS staff in general and Geostat staff in particular, and focusing on the IT skills of relevant staff

Objective 3.4.

Establishing modern and up-to-date system of classification and registers

Although the statistical business register held by Geostat is largely in line with international recommendations such as Eurostat's "Business registers – Recommendations manual" and UNECE's "Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers", there is a need to introduce a wider range of statistical units in the statistical business register, including local units.

A population register for statistical purposes should be established as a strategic issue and a matter of urgency. The Census of Population will have a key role in underpinning the quality of the register and it is vital, therefore, that this should be taken into account in planning the upcoming census (linked to Objective 1.1. Chapter 6.1).

Presently, Georgia does not have a farm register for statistical or administrative purposes. Geostat, however, created a Master Sample Frame (MSF) for agricultural surveys based on the 2014 Censuses of Agriculture and Population. The MSF would provide a good basis for developing a farm register for statistical purposes. In close cooperation with MEPA, Geostat will work on the development of a Farm Register and link it to the forthcoming Agricultural Census. MEPA, as the main stakeholder, will be responsible for the maintenance and updating of the register. Currently, approximately 16% of the register is completed, mainly based on the administrative source of MEPA, in the form of a list of farmers that are beneficiaries of any government farmers support programme. On top of creating Population and farm registers, the strategy targets further improving the compliance of the existing Business register with international standards and GA recommendations, so as by 2023 it is at least 95% aligned to the recent international requirements.

As the main coordinator of statistics production, Geostat will cooperate closely with the relevant GSS members to develop registers and classification systems. The Ministry of Justice, as the key stakeholder, will work with Geostat to build a Population register for statistical purposes. Additionally, introducing a Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) classification for Georgia will be studied to develop the procedures for the production of a wider range of relevant statistics at the regional level. MRDI, supported by international partners, will be responsible for studying the EU NUTS classification system and its potential implementation in Georgia. Geostat will be involved in the process to oversee the perspectives for NUTS classification use in the national context.

Direction 3.4.1.

Development of register systems in line with international recommendations

Activity	Result in 2023
Reduction of missing data in business register	Missing data in business registers are reduced by 5%
Preparation of roadmap for developing population register	Adopted and implemented strategic plan on the location of the registers, procedures for gaining full access and linking of the register to the next Census of Population returned to individual and household levels
Establishment of farm registers	Farm registers have been developed and introduced in close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture

Direction 3.4.2.

Establishing a classification system covering the whole GSS

Activity	Result in 2023
Introducing new and updating existing classifications	All classifications are in full alignment with the recent international methodologies
Conduct the Inception Study on the EU NUTS classification system and the related perspectives and needs of its gradual introduction in Georgia	Inception study prepared and published on the MRDI website

Objective 3.5.

Fostering a good image and reputation, increasing credibility and developing trust in official statistics

Establishing and ensuring the operability of a statistics system is a long-term task that requires strong coordination, cooperation and effort. Fostering a good image and developing trust in statistics is directly related with increasing the awareness, strengthening coordination and communication with users and relevant institutions, and enhancing cooperation with international organizations and partners. Since Geostat, as NSO, produces and disseminates official statistics on behalf of Georgia, coordinates the GSS and represents it at international events and committees, the national and international reputation of Geostat is directly linked to the perception of Georgia's official statistics among society and the international community. Therefore, an image of NSO as a reputable and credible institution is an important prerequisite for fostering credibility and trust in official statistics. The image and reputation of other official statistics providers, like NBG, extends well beyond just the provision of statistics, but rather being the main institution to ensure price stability and implement monetary policy according to the main directions of the monetary and foreign exchange policy defined by the Parliament of Georgia. Conversely, the image of Geostat is centred solely on official statistics.

Geostat has greatly benefited from international cooperation, both through twinning projects and other collaborations with national statistical offices from other countries, and through support from international organisations. However, a clear plan setting out strategic priorities would be useful for Geostat and the GSS in general. It would provide a framework against which offers of cooperation could be assessed to make sure that they would contribute to strategic objectives. The strategy itself can be considered as a planned approach or roadmap to seeking technical assistance and initiating projects, which are linked to medium- and long-term strategic objectives to be funded by developmental partners. International cooperation is especially important in light of plans for further implementation of international methodologies, standards and mastering the modern tools for statistics production. A successful example of international cooperation is the EU-funded twinning project "Strengthening the capacities of the Georgian statistical system", which is carried out by Statistics Denmark and Geostat. The project is supporting the implementation of strategy activities in the following domains: External Trade, National Accounts, Business statistics and Social Statistics. Other key international partners of the GSS include,

but are not limited to: IMF (partnering in the national accounts domain with Geostat, NBG and MoF); SIDA (provided long-term technical support to Geostat) and UNDP.

As a result of the planned activities, the strategy aims to increase the number of references to official statistics in local media by 5% annually. In terms of international cooperation, Geostat aims to be represented as either member or chairman in 15 international committees or councils by 2023.

Another important component for building a good image is social responsibility. Therefore, Geostat, as well as other official statistics providers, will participate in social campaigns. Additionally, efforts will be made to make official statistics and Geostat's website in general more accessible for people with disabilities.

Direction 3.5.1.

Increase awareness of Geostat and its services

Activity	Result in 2023
Strengthen relations with media and conduct awareness raising campaign on statistics	Number of meetings with media increased by 10% compared to 2019; 20 meetings have been organized with other targeted user groups per year; Number of references to Geostat in the media is significantly increased.

Direction 3.5.2.

Strengthening cooperation with international partners and improving international image

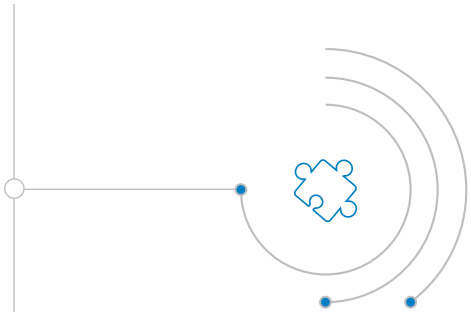
Activity	Result in 2023
Identify new partners and start negotiations with them to expand cooperation	New international partnership opportunities are identified and at least 4 new international projects are initiated

Direction 3.5.3.

Striving for social responsibility

Activity	Result in 2023
Striving for social responsibility	Geostat participates in at least two social or/and sport activities, such as blood donation, environment clean-up campaign, national marathons
Develop special services for users with disabilities	Adaptation of a particular part of the website to users with disabilities; Preparation of special leaflets with Braille transcription.

7. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK



GOAL 1:	**Produce high quality official statistics based on user needs**			**Link to SDGs**	The targets of 17.18 and 17.19 under SDG 17 (strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development) are directly related to NSDS Goal 1
IMPACT Indicator 1.1:	Satisfaction rate of users (according to user satisfaction surveys related to the statistical services of Geostat)		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Results of user satisfaction surveys
		Indicator data	Baseline indicator will be available in November, 2019	Baseline rate improved by 20%	
IMPACT Indicator 1.2:	Percentage of produced indicators for SDGs		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	1. Administration of Government assessment reports on SDGs 2. Data availability studies
		Indicator data	80%	95%	
OBJECTIVE 1.1:	**Production of statistical information to support evidence-based decision making**				
OUTCOME indicator 1.1.1	Satisfaction rate of public sector users		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Targeted user satisfaction survey to measure frequency of use of statistics for decision making, trust, confidence, relevance and timeliness of statistical data
		Indicator data	Baseline indicator will be available in November, 2019	At least 90%	

OUTCOME Indicator 1.1.2	Time needed to respond to public sector users data requests		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Strategic Planning, Coordination and Communication Department, Geostat
		Indicator data	7 working days	5 working days	
Risks	Insufficient involvement of other statistics providers in Georgia				
	Inadequate financial, human and IT resources				
OBJECTIVE 1.2:	**Production of official statistics in full compliance with international standards and guidelines**				
OUTCOME Indicator 1.2.1	Key indicators are produced in accordance to the recent international standards and guidelines		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Information on methodologies available at Geostat website; Methodology and Quality Management Division of Geostat
		Indicator data	77%	At least 90%	
Risks	Low support from international partners				
	Difficulties with interpretation and adaptation of international standards				
OBJECTIVE 1.3:	**Improvement of data quality**				
OUTCOME Indicator 1.3.1	Introduction of Quality self-assessment		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Data quality self-assessment reports
		Indicator data	N/A	Quality self-assessment is introduced in all subject matter departments	
OUTCOME Indicator 1.3.2	Satisfaction rate of users with the available metadata, as measured in user satisfaction surveys		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	User satisfaction survey reports
		Indicator data	Baseline indicator will be available by the end of November, 2019	Improved baseline indicator by 20%	
Risks	Inadequate human and IT resources				
	Weak cooperation with administrative data keepers				

<table>
<tr><td>OBJECTIVE 1.4:</td><td colspan="5">Promote the use of statistics</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">OUTCOME
Indicator 1.4.1</td><td rowspan="3">Established system for regular user satisfaction survey by different user groups</td><td></td><td>Baseline</td><td>Target</td><td>Sources of Verification</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year</td><td>2019</td><td>2023</td><td rowspan="2">Regular user satisfaction surveys of Geostat</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator data</td><td>No systematic user satisfaction surveys in place</td><td>Regular comprehensive user survey is conducted once in 2 years by the internet</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">OUTCOME
Indicator 1.4.2</td><td rowspan="3">Number of people with improved statistics literacy as a result of annual literacy development programmes</td><td></td><td>Baseline</td><td>Target</td><td>Sources of Verification</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year</td><td>2019</td><td>2023</td><td rowspan="2">Self-assessment forms filled by statistics literacy development programme participants</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator data</td><td>70 persons with post-test score at least 70%</td><td>At least 100 people with post-test score 70% or above</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Risks</td><td colspan="5">Insufficient involvement of other statistics providers in Georgia</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Inadequate financial, human and IT resources</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Unavailability of international partners</td></tr>
<tr><td>GOAL 2:</td><td colspan="3">Build effective, modern and sustainable statistical production processes</td><td>Link to SDGs</td><td>The targets of 17.18 and 17.19 under SDG 17 (strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development) are directly related to NSDS Goal 2</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">IMPACT
Indicator 2.1:</td><td rowspan="3">Assemsssment of efectiveness and sustainability of statistical production processes by the next round of Global Assessment</td><td></td><td>Baseline</td><td>Target</td><td>Sources of Verification</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year</td><td>2019</td><td>2023</td><td rowspan="2">Global Assesment Report</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator data</td><td>N/A</td><td>The next GA positively evaluates the progress achieved in terms of improved efficiency and sustainability of statistical production processes</td></tr>
</table>

IMPACT Indicator 2.2:	User satisfaction rate on dissemination of statistical data		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	User satisfaction surveys
		Indicator data	First results will be available in November, 2019	Baseline rate improved by 20%	
OBJECTIVE 2.1:	**Modernization and standardization of the statistical information production process**				
OUTCOME Indicator 2.1.1	Level of preparation of the basis for the transition to Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM)		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Road map is developed
		Indicator data	15%	100%	
OUTCOME Indicator 2.1.2	Reduced time needed for statistics production		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Annual Statistical work programme for 2023
		Indicator data	Annual statistical work programme for 2019	At least 2 annual survey results production will be reduced by minimum 5 days; at least 2 quarter survey results production will be reduced by minimum 1 day	
Risks	Lack of support from international partners in assessing the possibilities to GSBPM transition				
OBJECTIVE 2.2:	**Establishment of a modern and comprehensive data collection system**				
OUTCOME Indicator 2.2.1	Share of surveys conducted by modern data collection tools		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Geostat internal reports
		Indicator data	70%	Over 90%	

OUTCOME Indicator 2.2.2	Share of administrative sources for production of official statistics		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Geostat internal reports
		Indicator data	28%	40%	
Risks	Insufficient involvement of administrative data providers				
	Lack of cooperation with owners of big data (e.g. retail chains)				
	Technical difficulties with introduction of modern data collection tools				
OBJECTIVE 2.3:	**Improvement of practices for dissemination and communication processes**				
OUTCOME Indicator 2.3.1	Number of unique visitors of official website/number of downloads		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Website analytics
		Indicator data	562 thousand	10% higher than baseline	
OUTCOME Indicator 2.3.2	Number of the “followers” and "engagements" of in social networks		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Social network analytics
		Indicator data	15 thousand	20% higher than baseline	
Risks	Low interest towards official statistics.				
	Insufficient IT resources				
GOAL 3:	**Building the statistical infrastructure and capacity development**			**Link to SDGs**	The targets of 17.18 and 17.19 under SDG 17 (strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development) are directly related to NSDS Goal 3
IMPACT Indicator 3.1:	Compliance of LoS with GLOS and respective provisions of ESCoP		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Law on Official Statistics
		Indicator data	80-85% compliance with GLOS (as defined by GA)	At least 95% compliance with GLOS	

IMPACT Indicator 3.2:	Number of qualified staff with statistical background, foreign language and computer skills		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Strategic Planning, Coordination and Communication Department
		Indicator data	55%	At least 70%	
OBJECTIVE 3.1:	**Improvement of legislative base in line with international standards**				
OUTCOME Indicator 3.1.1	Level of implementation of Global Assessment recommendations in relation to legislative base		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	LoS amended and published
		Indicator data	N/a	Almost all GA recommendations related to statistical legislation are implemented	
Risks	Delay with adoption of amendments to the LoS				
	Low supprot from other entities to the LoS amendments				
OBJECTIVE 3.2:	**Establishing sustainable IT and development of data protection systems**				
OUTCOME Indicator 3.2.1	IT Development Strategy is in place		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	IT development strategy
		Indicator data	Strategy document doesn't exist	IT Development Strategy is in place	
OUTCOME Indicator 3.2.2	IT Policy on data protection and security is in place		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	IT Policy document of Geostat
		Indicator data	Policy document doesn't exist	IT Policy document is developed	
Risks	Insufficient financial resources for attraction and retention of highly qualified IT personnel				
	Unavailability of qualified firm to perform assessment of IT				
	Low support from international partners				

<table>
<tr><td>OBJECTIVE 3.3:</td><td colspan="5">Ensuring adequate staffing and the development of Effective Human Resource Management System</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">OUTCOME Indicator 3.3.1</td><td rowspan="3">Rate of employee turnover</td><td></td><td>Baseline</td><td>Target</td><td>Sources of Verification</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year</td><td>2019</td><td>2023</td><td rowspan="2">Strategic Planning, Coordination and Communication Department. Calculated as number of leavers divided by total number of employees at the same period of time (quarter/year)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator data</td><td>9%</td><td>5%</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">OUTCOME Indicator 3.3.3</td><td rowspan="3">Staff satisfaction rate</td><td></td><td>Baseline</td><td>Target</td><td>Sources of Verification</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year</td><td>2019</td><td>2023</td><td rowspan="2">Employee satisfaction surveys in Geostat</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator data</td><td>Baseline indicator will be available in December, 2019</td><td>At least 80%</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Risks</td><td colspan="5">Lack of financial resources to ensure continuous improvement of working conditions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Outflow of qualified staff caused by high demand for analytical staff in other state agencies</td></tr>
<tr><td>OBJECTIVE 3.4:</td><td colspan="5">Establishing modern and up-to-date system of classification and registers</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">OUTCOME Indicator 3.4.1</td><td rowspan="3">System of statistical registers (statistical business register (SBR), Population Register (PR), Farm Register (FR)) is in line with international standards and requirements (GA report)</td><td></td><td>Baseline</td><td>Target</td><td>Sources of Verification</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year</td><td>2019</td><td>2023</td><td rowspan="2">1. Updated Business Register System in Geostat;

2. Population census materials; road map</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator data</td><td>1. 90% SBR
2. 0% PR
3. 16% FR</td><td>1. At least 95% SBR
2. New population census is conducted; potential sources are identified; road map is developed</td></tr>
</table>

OUTCOME Indicator 3.4.2	Level of introduction of the latest versions of international statistical classifications and nomenclatures		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Methodology and Quality Management Division of Geostat
		Indicator data	70%	100%	
Risks	Insufficient involvement of other entities that are responsible for maintenance of registers (e.g MEPA, SDA)				
OBJECTIVE 3.5:	**Fostering a good image and reputation, increasing credibility and developing trust in official statistics**				
OUTCOME Indicator 3.5.1	Number of references to Geostat in local media		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Results of tracking of media mentions
		Indicator data	6000	5% annual growth	
OUTCOME Indicator 3.5.2	Number of memberships or chairing of international committees		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Sources of Verification**
		Year	2019	2023	Department of Strategic Planning, Coordination and Communication
		Indicator data	8	15	
Risks	Unavailability of international partners				

8. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The coordination mechanism used in the process of strategy development will be retained to ensure effective implementation of the strategy and associated action plan. The Interagency Council, established by the Government Resolution №189 dated 12 April 2019 for the strategy development, will continue to exist over the whole strategy period, 2020-2023, to oversee the implementation of the NSDS. The Council includes: the Executive Director of Geostat, who acts as chairman of the Council; Deputy Ministers from all line Ministries; the Vice President of the National Bank of Georgia; and representative from the Administration of Government. The Council will ensure high level support and commitment of NSS members towards effective and timely implementation of the strategy.

The strategy implementation and monitoring thereof will be coordinated by Geostat. Geostat will also coordinate the evaluation process. Geostat will organize regular, annual meetings with the Council to present the results of monitoring in the form of an annual monitoring report. The structure of the annual monitoring report will be in line with the national guidelines.

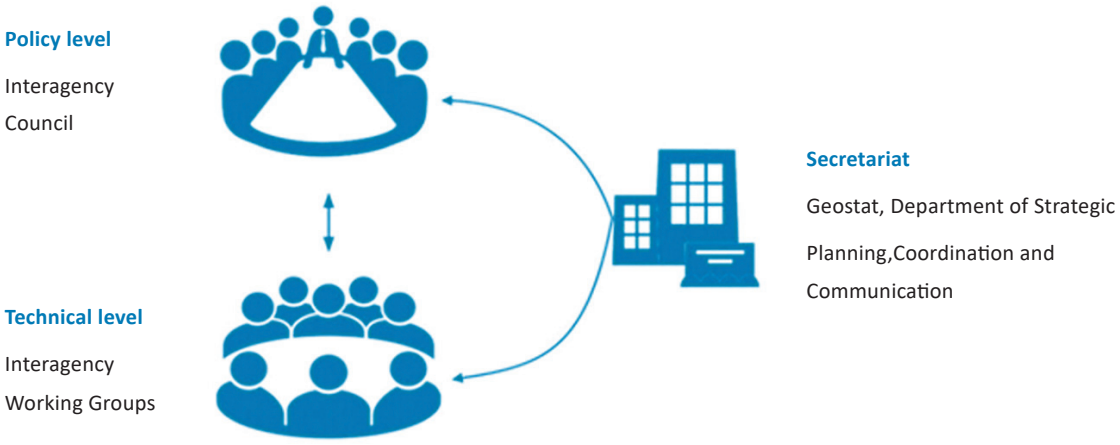


Figure 4. **Coordination mechanism**

The Secretariat, represented by the Department of Strategic Planning, Coordination and Communication of Geostat, will be responsible for the monitoring of the strategy and the action plan implementation process in accordance with an approved M&E plan. The monitoring will be conducted once every six months and will be presented in the form of a progress report. The structure of the progress report will strictly follow annex 6 of the national guidelines. The progress report will include the results of monitoring the action plan activities' implementation. Moreover, the annual monitoring report will summarize the key achievements at both strategic objective and activity indicator levels, with its main focus being on the achievement of the strategic objectives. This report will be presented by the Secretary to the Council for consideration and approval. All annual monitoring reports will also be distributed to the NSS member institutions and will be made public and uploaded to the appropriate section of the website no later than 60 calendar days after the reporting period.

The Interagency working groups will be preserved in the form of thematic groups/committees that will ensure effective communication, especially in the case of collaborative activities of the action plan, throughout the whole strategy period. Members of thematic groups will not be represented by the individuals but rather by the structural units (affiliations) and will determine official contact points for the strategy and action plan implementation process. The thematic groups will support the Secretariat in the monitoring process through provision of relevant information and status reports (where appropriate) and will be involved in respective activities implementation on behalf of partner entities.

Monitoring will be performed using the Advanced Data Planning Tool (ADAPT). ADAPT is a cloud based tool made available by PARIS21 to support NSDS development, monitoring and evaluation. ADAPT digitalizes the NSDS M&E framework and proposes several features to report on progress. It also offers different zooming into the actual content of the NSDS, to provide continuous monitoring of the progress status. By showing institutional responsibilities, it can help identify the potential delays and address them in a timely fashion. Geostat, as coordinator of M&E, will assign programme users and organize respective trainings on ADAPT for those members of working groups that are supposed to be involved in the monitoring process.

Once the strategy period has concluded, by the end of 2023, strategy evaluation will be performed. The evaluation will assess the impacts that the strategy had on the system of official statistics development and will serve as a base for the development of the next medium-term strategy. Impact indicators of strategic goals will be assessed and compared to the baseline (where applicable) and target values. The evaluation will follow the national guidelines, annex 6, and, in order to ensure objectivity and impartiality, will be performed by an independent consultant/subcontractor. The Secretariat will be responsible for the development of Terms of Reference and the conducting of a tender to select an appropriate sub-contractor. Evaluation results will be presented to the Council and final evaluation report will be uploaded at the respective section of Geostat website. The next round of the GA, which may coincide with the end of the strategy period, will serve as a comprehensive assessment tool to depict the

effect of the strategy implementation on the state of the NSS. The next GA will show the progress made to increase the level of compliance of the GSS with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPs) and the ESCoP. Additional complimentary sources of assessment of national statistical system development such as international external ratings and assessments can be considered, for example: World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicator[5] and Open Data Inventory rating[6]. However, these rating should not serve as a primary assessment tool or as the main reference as they do not fully assess the level and effectiveness of strategy implementation in addition to its impact on GSS development. Instead, they focus on the comparability of certain aspects of the NSS with those of other developing and developed countries.

[5] The World Bank's Statistical Capacity Indicator is a composite score assessing the capacity of a country's statistical system. It is based on a diagnostic framework assessing the following areas: methodology; data sources; and periodicity and timeliness. Indicator can be assessed online at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IQ.SCI.OVRL?locations=GE&view=chart

[6] The Open Data Inventory (ODIN) assesses the coverage and openness of official statistics. International raiting can be assessed online at: https://odin.opendatawatch.com