Draft of strategic priorities and objectives of the National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics (NSDS) 2024–2027

This draft concept document was prepared to provide an initial perspective for 2024-2027 NSDS of Georgia about **the mission, vision, values, strategic directions and objectives**.

Mission, Vision, Values, Strategic Directions and Objectives

- **Mission**

Our mission is to deliver high-quality, timely, and relevant official statistics that empower decision-makers and enhance public accountability. We aim to add significant value to the National Statistics System by ensuring that data serves as a catalyst for informed decision-making, aligning with user needs, and enabling our customers to unlock the full potential of the data they possess.

- **Vision**

The vision for the NSS describes a medium to long-term framework guiding the development of official statistics. It formulates the envisioned future of the NSS, serving as the fundamental reference for establishing strategic goals and objectives within the National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics.
In pursuit of further EU integration and alignment with global objectives, we aspire to harmonize our methodologies with international standards, ensuring the production of high-quality data that aligns with EU standards and contributes to the achievement of the SDGs. We envision active participation and collaboration in European statistical initiatives, fostering partnerships that strengthen the capacity of the National Statistics Office.

Our vision is to transform our National Statistical System into a model of data governance and stewardship excellence, fostering its evolution and enhancement. Through innovation and adaptation, we aim to lead in producing reliable, timely, and user-focused national statistics that drive informed decisions and support the EU integration process.

- **Values**

Our values are:
- **Professional independence and expertise** - maintaining a workforce that is recognized for its competence and commitment to quality. Professional independence is fundamental to the credibility and reliability of official statistics.
- **Relevance and reliability** -highest standards of precision, credibility, and trustworthiness in data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure accurate and reliable official statistics that is relevant to current societal and economic development needs.
- **Innovation** - enhance the efficiency, accuracy, and relevance of official statistics by continuously exploring and adopting innovative practices.
- **Data confidentiality and security** - ensuring confidentiality and data protection measures to maintain confidentiality and build public confidence in the use and handling of data.
- **User focus**- Prioritizing the needs of stakeholders, including policymakers, businesses, researchers, and the wider public and delivering statistical information that aligns with their specific needs and expectations.
- **Transparency and openness** - committing to transparent process of data production, sharing methodologies and providing open access to data to enhance data usability among different groups of stakeholders.
- **Inclusivity and diversity** - encouraging inclusivity and diversity in data collection and representation to accurately capture the various groups of society, leaving no one behind.

The core values for the National Statistical System are consisted with the international set of Core values of official statistics[1] that have been recently adopted at Conference of European Statisticians in 2022.

- **Strategic Goals and Objectives**

Three strategic goals have been identified in the NSDS 2024-2027 of Georgia. Strategic objectives are grouped under these three strategic goals. The strategic goals and related objectives are explained below:

Goal I: Provide high-quality, user-centred official statistics to maximize data value and enable informed decision-making.

Geostat and the other members of the Georgian National Statistical System (NSS) aim to meet all user needs for national and regional statistics, including municipal and sectoral sub-levels. Geostat and the other members of the NSS are committed to strengthening their capacity with an increased diversity of statistics to meet user needs, supporting the policy making for the national plans and programmes, and producing the existing statistics by considering international standards and quality criteria. During the strategy period of 2024-2027, Geostat and the other members of the NSS seek to respond to the user needs and support evidence-based decision making by cooperating with other data owners and the international statistical community.

Objective 1.1 Production of high-quality statistics to support evidence-based decision making and EU integration

High-quality statistics are essential for informed decision-making at all levels of government, in the private sector and civil society. Anticipated progress in European Union (EU) integration will pose additional demand for high quality statistics to support ongoing and planned reforms. The EU places a strong emphasis on data quality and comparability, as this is essential for harmonizing policies, regulations, and standards. Considering the user needs and the requirement of high-quality statistics, Geostat and the other members of the NSS will aim to expand official statistics, produce new indicators and develop disaggregation levels of existing key indicators (by regions, gender etc.). Other actions being undertaken by Geostat and other members of NSS, will include the further development of regional statistics, improving administrative data quality, mainstreaming gender statistics, production and updating of SDG indicators and adoption of self-assessment surveys based on the generic checklist for a systematic quality assessment (DESAP). Under this objective, another key component will be the production and further development of sectoral statistics, developing the NUTS geographical classification for Georgia, as well as population and agriculture censuses.

Objective 1.2 Diversifying and expanding administrative and alternative data sources

The production of official statistics is a comprehensive process requiring knowledge and experience as well as extensive planning. One of the most important criteria for reliable statistics is the availability and quality of administrative data. Expanding administrative data sources will allow production of new indicators, reduce the need for additional costly surveys and reduce the burden on existing survey respondents. One of the important activities under this objective will be preparation for using administrative data for establishing a population register in Georgia. Additionally, further improvement of the statistical business register as well as updating and developing new registers across various members of NSS is planned, and will strongly contribute to not only higher quality and accessibility of administrative data, but also to building data a national ecosystem, better data governance and coordination.

To ensure comprehensive data integration and access to up-to date information new alternative data collection tools will be explored, such as web scraping, the use of API's, Big Data, remote sensing in agricultural and environment statistics etc.

Objective 1.3 Modernizing and automating data production processes to ensure timely, accurate and efficiency data processing

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[1] https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/ECE_CES_2022_2-2211176E_0.pdf

Geostat has already for some years embraced the ideas and best practices of the international statistical community regarding the modernization of statistical production and products. One of the most important activities under this objective will be moving towards a more process-oriented organization structure and introduction of Generic Statistical Business Process Model[2] (GSBPM) at Geostat. Geostat will start to get familiar with the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations (GAMSO), which extends the GSBPM to cover other activities, particularly those of corporate support areas (e.g. IT, HR). The currently announced Twinning programme[3] financed by the EU aims to transition Geostat to the GSBPM. This will involve peer reviews and best practice sharing with successful EU statistical agencies that have implemented GSBPM and GAMSO.

Moving to a more process oriented organizational structure will lead to efficiency gains and faster production of statistics to meet users needs in a timely manner. Geostat will encourage other members of the NSS to also adopt these models as appropriate.

Objective 1.4 Modernizing IT infrastructure to ensure robust data protection measures

Strengthening IT infrastructure and data security was one of the priorities of current NSDS 2020-2023. Geostat, with support from international Donors, achieved a significant improvements including modernization of IT infrastructure, strengthening human capacity of the IT department, ensuring data protection and confidentiality. To achieve the ambitious goals of the 2024-2027 NSDS and keep pace with rapid technological progress while maintaining user and data owner trust, Geostat plans to modernize its IT infrastructure and enhance data security further. Planned measures will support flexible, transparent and secure management of data. Geostat will also consider replacing outdated databases with modern solutions that can handle large data submissions from respondents more quickly.

One of the expected results is achievement of ISO27001 compliance regarding information security management systems. A high level of data protection is one of the main prerequisites for gaining access to new data from administrative registers for statistical production purposes. Geostat will share experiences with other members of the NSS, and encourage them to modernize their statistical IT infrastructure, promoting the use, as far as possible, of common standards and tools across the NSS.

Objective 1.5 Creating a flexible and modern workplace

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. Implementation of the ambitious NSDS 2024-2027 plan, including the population and agriculture censuses, will not be possible without adequate human resources. High turnover of qualified staff remains one of the pressing challenges for Geostat, and other members of the NSS. To ensure adequate qualified resources are in place and organisational knowledge is maintained a set of measures will be introduced to create a flexible and modern workplace.

A skills mapping and HR strategy will be designed as part of the transition to GSBPM and GAMSO to ensure that Geostat has the appropriate personnel in place to implement the changes. International expertise to support this change is secured through the already announced EU funded Twinning Programme.

Goal II: Foster trust and mutual benefit through strong data-driven partnerships, improving access to data for official statistics and developing an effective data governance system

Fostering trust and mutual benefit is central to building strong data-driven partnerships that promote the development of an efficient and transparent data governance system. Fundamental principles like professional independence, enshrined in the Law on Official Statistics, make Geostat well qualified to develop a standard quality framework for all members of NSS involved in production of official statistics. These efforts ensure that

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[2] The GSBPM (Generic Statistical Business Process Model) standardizes official statistics production processes, facilitating modernization, knowledge sharing, data integration, process documentation, and quality assessment.

[3] https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/online-services/#/

data producers and users mutually trust the data ecosystem, collaborate and benefit from the accessibility, accuracy, and reliability of the official statistics.

The strategic goal II will focus on measures for enhancing dialogue within NSS and with data providers on a national level and with the international, and in particular EU, statistical community.

Objective 2.1 Enhancing the coordination and data stewardship role of Geostat in the production of official statistics

The recently adopted Law on Official Statistics is in a full compliance with the Generic Law on Official Statistics (GLOS) published by the United Nations. The Law recognizes Geostat as the main producer of official statistics and strengthens its role of coordinating NSS. Under this objective the planned measures will target strengthened cooperation with data producers and owners within the NSS, as well as the public and private sectors. Particularly, measures will target interagency cooperation, maintaining thematic working groups, adoption of common standards and adhering to them to foster interoperability, integration and rapid response in production of official statistics. An emphasis will be placed on creation of mutual benefit partnerships to incentivize private sector respondents to provide quality data and to create new partnerships to support the implementation of Objective 2.1.

Objective 2.2 Strengthening international cooperation, positioning Geostat as a trusted partner in the EU statistics community and actively contributing to global statistical development.

Under this objective, one of the actions is to take a more strategic and planned approach to seeking technical assistance and initiating projects funded by developmental partners as well as increasing Geostat and other leading statistics producers participation in EU and global statistical development work. The National Bank and Ministry of Finance have a history of successful cooperation with the IMF, establishing themselves as trusted international partners in the production of financial and monetary statistics.

Currently Geostat is involved in the UN-ESCAP Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics which will allow to share experience and best practices for preparation for Population Census. Recently, a Geostat Deputy Director was elected as Deputy Chair of the UNECE Environmental Statistics Working Group which shows the recognition of Geostat professionalism at international arena. Participation in similar initiatives will enhance Georgia's reputation as a trusted international partner within the international statistical community, and strengthen capacity building for aligning with EU standards and producing high-quality statistics.

Goal III: Promote data usage and cultivate analytical perspectives by enhancing data accessibility and expanding customer engagement with existing data

This objective includes measures to make data more readily available through user-friendly platforms and tools, empowering a wider range of users to access and interpret data effectively. Conducting data literacy programs and outreach efforts will help users to interpret and analyse data effectively. To further foster stakeholder engagement, regular feedback from data users will be analysed to ensure capturing data related needs and adapting data formats based on their preferences.

The goal is to create a data-literate and engaged community that uses the data in a responsible way for making informed decisions.

Objective 3.1 Cultivating analytical perspectives to support responsible data use

Geostat and the other members of the NSS commit to adding value to data and statistics will go beyond just providing raw numbers. By offering accompanying information, such as the context in which the data were generated, they will help users to understand the circumstances and conditions that influenced those statistics. Considering the large volume of statistics currently being produced and the additional capacity needed to provide more analytical background information, the most critical indicators will be selected to pilot the approach. Additionally, analytical parts will be added to the key publications, such as Women and Men in Georgia, to support wider understanding and use of the data.

Modern data visualisation tools will be used to transform complex data sets into intuitive and user-friendly representations to increase accessibility of data for a wider public.

Objective 3.2 Strengthen statistical literacy and data competence, increase trust in official statistics, and expand customer engagement with existing data

Statistical literacy and data competence of citizens, authorities and decision-makers in society will be promoted. It is necessary to educate the users of statistical data to improve overall statistical literacy in addition to developing methods for continuously measuring the needs and expectations of users about statistics. To achieve this objective, it is essential to engage in close cooperation with the media, schools and universities; to foster active dialogues with diverse user groups to better understand their needs; to enhance relationships with data providers; to conduct regular user satisfaction surveys; to organize public lectures, training sessions, conferences; and to create educational materials such as video clips and infographics. The use of data by researchers will be promoted by enabling them to use micro data, whilst respecting data confidentiality.

Geostat will carry out public relations and promotion activities with a special focus on increasing the public recognition and trust of Geostat and the NSS, and to improve individual and social awareness about the importance of official statistics. Effective communication strategies will ensure that the public, policymakers, and stakeholders understand the value of statistics and how statistics are produced. This objective will be supported by implementation of objective 3.3.

To demonstrate objectivity and impartiality of results, an external body will be commissioned to measure trust in Geostat, the NSS, and official statistics in general.

Geostat and the other members of the NSS aim to enhance the capacity of government institutions to use official statistics in decision-making processes by strengthening their skills and promoting the use of official statistics in policy development, monitoring, and evaluation. This objective implementation will be supported by Objective 3.1 which aims at making statistics more "ready to use".

Objective 3.3 Fostering greater access to official statistics through new and improved dissemination tools.

The objective is to expand access to official statistics through the development and enhancement of modern dissemination tools to enhance communication on the national level as well as with international partners. The SDMX standard will be used across statistics producers to transmit data to international organisations. Following the latest Global Assessment recommendations and best modern practices in data dissemination a comprehensive strategic communication framework will be created as well as a formal protocol for communications during crises.

To further support engagement of users, data customization will be promoted, to allow users to customize data outputs based on their specific needs, enabling them to extract the information that is most relevant to their interests. This will be achieved through integration and automatization of available databases.