

National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics of Georgia

2024-2027

Reliable Data for Right Decisions!

DRAFT VERSION 04 | TBILISI, 2024



Prepared and published by the National Statistics Office of Georgia with the assistance from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Government of Sweden. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP and Sweden.

Foreword

Statistics are a reflective tool for decision-makers, playing a crucial role in planning and assessing progress. Reliable data forms the basis for making informed decisions and implementing effective policies. The robust future of official statistics relies on professional independence and the public's trust, priorities that Geostat upholds.

The National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics (NSDS) 2024–2027 focuses on these priorities. It outlines the primary directions for the production of official statistics in the country and underscores the significance of reliable data in facilitating sound decision-making and the implementation of evidence-based policies.

The production of high-quality user-oriented statistics, alongside the objectives of increasing trust towards Geostat, improving its image, and promoting the use of data, are the priority areas upon which the activities of Geostat and the entire Georgian National Statistical System (NSS) will be based for the next four years.

Throughout the strategy period, our plan encompasses the modernization and streamlining of data production processes. This includes the introduction of new standards and the generation of high-quality disaggregated indicators. These efforts are crucial for fostering evidence-based decision-making and facilitating EU integration.

In the initial year of the strategy's implementation, we plan conducting population and agricultural censuses. These censuses will serve as a crucial foundation for the implementation of the system of administrative registers and their subsequent development.

Our plan also involves enhancing data quality, diversifying alternative data sources, modernizing information technology (IT) infrastructure, and investing more in data protection capabilities. Without robust and sustainable information technologies, utilizing alternative data sources and implementing modern data collection technologies, such as Big Data, scanner data and web scrapping is challenging. Several planned activities during the strategy period aim to further develop these technologies.

One of our priorities is enhancing the role of Geostat in the official statistics production process, fostering deeper international cooperation, actively participating in the advancement of global statistics, and positioning Geostat as a reliable partner in the statistical community of the European Union.

Though the production of high quality statistics is our top priority, our major objective is to facilitate the utilization of data, foster an analytical perspective, and enhance access to official statistics.

In line with the above, this strategy envisions employing international standards and modern technologies for the production of high-quality statistics tailored to the user's needs. The goal of the strategy is to promote the utilization of data and provide a framework for various types of decision-making and the implementation of evidence-based policies.

Gogita Todradze

Executive Director of Geostat

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AA	Association Agreement
AGRIS	Agricultural Integrated Survey
AoG	Administration of Government of Georgia
BoP	Balance of Payments
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing
CAWI	Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose
DESAP	Generic checklist for a systematic quality assessment of surveys
DMM	Data Management Maturity
DMM	Data Management Maturity model
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ESCOP	European Statistics Code of Practice
EUROSTAT	Statistical office of the European Union situated in Luxembourg
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GA	Global Assessment
GAMSO	Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEOSTAT	National Statistics Office of Georgia
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GLOS	Generic Law on Official Statistics
GoG	Government of Georgia
GSBPM	Generic Statistical Business Process Model
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
LOS	Law on Official Statistics
MEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MRDI	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
NBG	National Bank of Georgia
NCDC	National Center for Disease Control and Public Health
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSS	National Statistical System
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st century
SCMI	The State Commission on Migration Issues
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIMS	Single Integrated Metadata Structure
SMART	acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time Bound
SWOT	acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TUS	Time use survey
UN Women	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAW	Violence Against Women

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1. Introduction

This document represents the National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics (hereinafter referred to as NSDS) for the period 2024-2027 as well as its implementation plan. This is a national policy document elaborated in accordance with the National Rule for Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation¹ (hereinafter the national guidelines) and best practices from NSDS Guidelines 3.0 developed by PARIS21².

The goal of this document is to define a vision for the development of the national statistical system (NSS) of Georgia considering the country's development priorities and needs. It seeks to fulfill the requirements of the EU-Georgia Association and other international agreements, addressing the growing demand for high quality reliable data to support evidence-based decision making. The document aims at identifying the priority areas for development of official statistics to support ongoing sectoral reforms and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), rationalizing the conduct of statistical activities and allocation of financial resources to implement the EU acquis in statistics and support integration of Georgian NSS into the European statistical system. This strategy serves as a framework for international cooperation and includes a full value chain of official statistics production in accordance with the latest international standards.

As the main producer of official statistics and the coordinating body of the NSS, Geostat is committed to maintaining public trust and confidence in official statistics. Over recent years, Geostat has made substantial progress in developing Georgia's statistical capacity and aligning statistical production methods and standards with international norms. The previous NSDS (2020-2023) created a well-defined framework for development of the NSS and implementation of international recommendations from the previous Global Assessment. The successful implementation of the previous NSDS, confirmed by the preliminary results of the NSDS 2020-2023 evaluation and the latest GA (2023), provided a solid basis for further advancement of national official statistics and supporting Georgia's EU integration process. Recent progress made by the NSS is also recognized in international evaluation reports. The latest Annual Implementation Report³ by the Energy Community secretariat evaluates compliance of energy statistics with EU standards as 97% which is the highest rank compared to other sectors. Additionally, the 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement policy report prepared by the European Commission, mentions the progress made to align national legislation with respective EU standards. However, at the same time the assessment mentioned concerns regarding adequacy of resources, specifically at Geostat, including number of staff and salary levels.

Building upon these achievements, the NSDS 2024-2027 aims to further elevate the capabilities of the NSS. It emphasizes the importance of harmonizing with the EU Statistical Requirements Compendium, which becomes even more important in the light of recent granting of EU candidate status to Georgia and contributing to the long-term objectives outlined in the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. The focus on sustainability, efficiency, and professional independence positions the NSS to provide reliable statistical

¹ GoG Ordinance # 629

² The Guidelines for National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) provide knowledge and landmarks for the NSDS preparation for the first strategic plan or for the update of an existing one. The NSDS guidelines help governments to design strategies, drawing lessons from statistical systems across the world. The NSDS Guidelines 3.0 are the latest version produced in 2020.

³ <https://www.energy-community.org/implementation/report/Georgia.html>

data that meets the information needs of citizens, businesses, international partners and decision-makers in Georgia.

The document was created in close collaboration with the members of the NSS and in consultation with the key international organizations and key user categories through a series of public and stakeholder consultation meetings. Involving the international expert in the NSDS elaboration process, as well as the extensive integration of recommendations from the latest GA, ensures the incorporation of the best international practices in the development of official statistics in Georgia. In addition to the global trends of official statistics development, the best practices from countries with well-developed statistical systems were considered.

1.1 Legal Framework

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 law of Georgia on Official Statistics (LOS) and based on the Decree №375 of the Government of Georgia “On the Establishment of Statute of LEPL - National Statistics Office of Georgia”, dated September 27, 2023. 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.

The National Bank of Georgia (NBG) is responsible for producing the country’s monetary 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 the Organic Law of Georgia on the National Bank, the NBG is responsible for the production of financial, monetary, and external sectors’ official statistics in accordance with international standards. Data produced by the NBG is published on its official website in accordance with a statistical release calendar.

A new law of Georgia on Official Statistics was adopted on 31st May, 2023. Elaboration of this law, which is compliant with the GLOS, was one of the key recommendations of the previous GA and was included in the NSDS 2020-2023 as one of the strategic objectives. Its elaboration was a significant achievement in aligning the Georgian legal framework with EU standards. The goal of the law is to ensure the production of independent, objective, and reliable official statistics in the country, in accordance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the European Statistics Code of Practice, and internationally recognized methodologies.

The Law recognizes Geostat and the NBG as official statistics producers, while criteria and rules for determining other producers of official statistics shall be approved by the Government of Georgia in compliance with the LOS. While the list of other producers of official statistics has not been finalized, criteria for official statistics producer status have been formulated and approved by the government.

According to the LOS Geostat is entitled to develop a unified policy in the field of official statistics and ensure coordinated work with other bodies producing statistics. The LOS acknowledges Geostat's role in coordinating the NSS and extends its responsibilities to all organizations involved in producing official statistics. These responsibilities encompass the development, production, and dissemination of official statistics in accordance with the statistical program. According to paragraph 2 of Article 24, the LOS provides Geostat with the authority to request and receive from administrative bodies, physical and legal persons, all kinds of statistical data and other information, including confidential information and/or

information containing personal data, in line with the “Law on Personal Data Protection”. Additionally, Article 26 specifically states that upon the request of Geostat, the administrative body shall be obliged to provide available information on physical persons and legal entities of private law to Geostat, including confidential information and/or information containing personal data in line with the “Law on Personal Data Protection”. This ensures the proper legal basis for Geostat to have access to all types of administrative data and to use it for statistical purposes.

To ensure the political independence and impartiality of Geostat, the LOS defines the transparent procedure for selection of Executive Director of Geostat. The candidate for the position of Executive Director is selected by an independent Competition Commission established by ordinance of the government, based on a publicly announced open competition. Another important element ensuring transparency and independence of Geostat is the Governing Board⁴ that consists of 9 members. The majority of members (5 out of 9) are not public servants and are representatives of academia, private sector, and independent experts.

1.2 Rationale for NSDS development

Chapter 4 of the Title V of the Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia is dedicated to statistical cooperation. As stated in the Agreement, 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.

The EU-Georgia Association Agenda for the period 2021-2027 identifies statistics as one of the priority directions and specifically defines the key medium-term priorities:

- Ensure approximation to the relevant EU acquis;
- Establish a population register in Georgia;
- Produce regional statistics in line with the NUTS classification;
- Increase access to and use of administrative data for statistical purposes.

The 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement policy report developed by the European Commission, which is the Commission’s first annual enlargement report on Georgia, replacing the previous annual Association Implementation Reports, sets the following priorities for the development of the NSS:

- Strengthen coordination and cooperation between Geostat and the Administration of Government, as well as with line ministries and agencies;
- Improve the human and technical capacity of the statistical office;
- Increase production and transmission of timely and high-quality data to Eurostat.

Considering the importance of addressing the above-mentioned priorities for Georgia’s EU integration process and the country’s development, the NSDS is the best place to design strategic objectives and activities to ensure high level of implementation of these recommendations.

In September 2022 GoG adopted Vision 2030 - Development Strategy of Georgia which is a supreme nation-wide policy document and covers the key priorities of the nation-wide development by 2030. The document heavily relied on official statistics both in terms of setting priorities as well as for monitoring and evaluation. Considering the hierarchy of national strategic documents, Vision 2030 created a base

⁴ <https://www.geostat.ge/en/page/saqstatis-sabtcho>

and rational for the development of a national strategy that focuses on production of high quality reliable and timely statistics. Similarly, all sectoral strategies that are developed in accordance with national guidelines, which require results-based management principles and use of SMART indicators, rely on statistics to design, implement and monitor sectoral policy documents. Therefore, the NSDS and its implementation plays an important role in ensuring effective good governance and implementation of national and sectoral key strategic documents.

Since NSDS 2020-2023 expired at the end of 2023, and in accordance with Resolution #629, there is a pressing need to develop an up-to-date strategy for the period 2024-2027. This new strategy is accompanied by a two-year action plan outlining specific activities, indicators, and budget allocations to achieve the policy document's strategic goals as well as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan to support its implementation. **The NSDS 2024-2027 is best placed to accommodate specific plans to address the requirements of EU-Georgia Association Agenda as well as other international agreements, at the same time aligning with the national development priorities outlined in country's main strategic document "Vision 2030".**

The recently adopted new Law on Official Statistics and NSDS 2024-2027 are expected to serve as the main instruments in bringing the NSS of Georgia closer to international standards of statistics production considering the latest edition of statistical requirements compendium⁵. Building upon the accomplishments and elaboration processes of NSDS 2020-2023, the four-year strategy aims to establish a unified and comprehensive NSS for the collection, management, dissemination, and utilization of official statistics in the country. Emphasizing results-oriented policy planning in priority areas and addressing identified challenges from the situation analysis and latest round of Global Assessment, are key priorities, as well as development of gender, regional, agricultural, and other SDG related statistics.

1.3 Methodology

The NSDS elaboration process was supported by SIDA through UNDP by forming a team of experts to support Geostat. The work process described in figure 1 is aligned with the requirements of the national guideline and follows the recommendations of NSDS guidelines developed by Paris21. The strategy preparation followed an inclusive approach involving all elements of the Georgian NSS. The applied approach implies harmonizing and coordinating the activities and objectives among the NSS, and the development of a common programming tool.

The elaboration process started with stakeholder mapping and analysis using the Power and Interest matrix method. This method is recommended by national guideline (attachment 11) and helped to design the proper stakeholder engagement strategy. Situation analysis of the NSS in Georgia included a set of stakeholder consultations as well as public discussions. Geostat, supported by UNDP experts, organized a series of meetings with different stakeholders. In total more than 30 individual meetings were conducted with all Geostat departments (including the top management) and all government entities⁶ that represent

⁵ The Statistical requirements compendium (SRC), published by Eurostat, is a well-established reference document for the EU acquis in statistics.

⁶ The following entities were consulted: All departments of Geostat and top management, National Bank of Georgia, Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia, Education Management Information System, National Center for Disease Control NCDC, State Services Development Agency, Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, State Commission on Migration Issues, National Agency of

either the official statistics providers or the key administrative data keepers and data users. In addition, consultation meetings were conducted with the key international organizations⁷ and data users (researchers, academia, etc.) to capture the key challenges of NSS from the perspective of the main statistics users beyond the public sector.

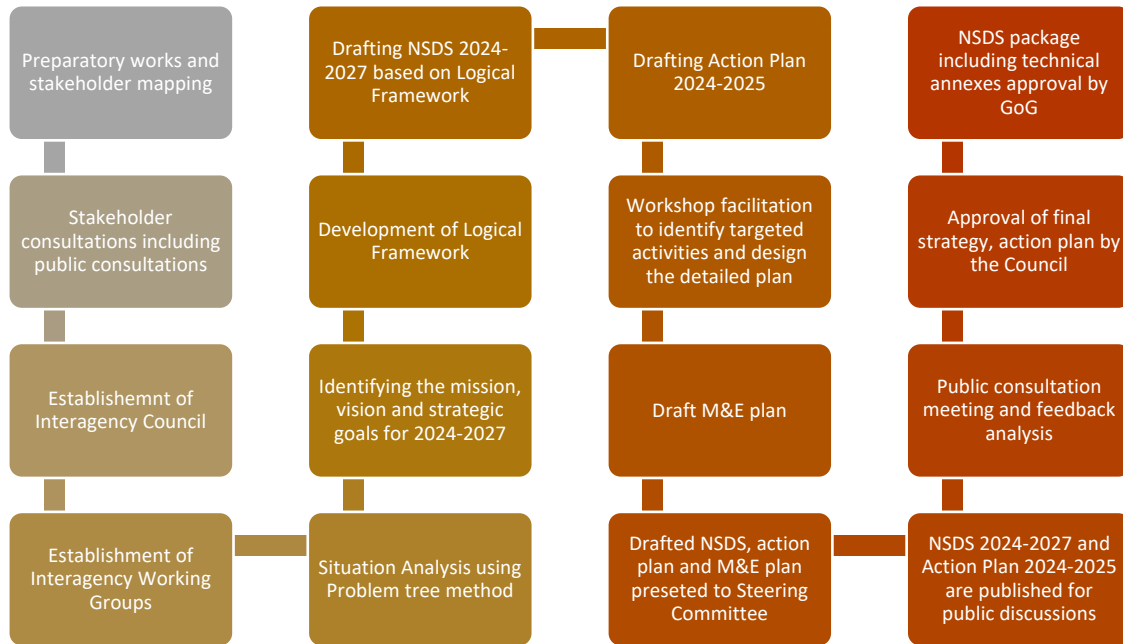


Figure 1 Process of elaboration of NSDS 2024-2027 and its implementation plan for 2024-2025

A list of organizations involved in the public consultation process is available in the Stakeholder Consultation report (Annex IV). An invitation to join the public discussion process during the very first stage of strategy elaboration was posted on Geostat website and official social media accounts to collect contact details of all interested participants. Participation was open not only to organizations but to any interested individuals (citizens). To ensure public engagement at various stages of strategy development, a list of interested people and organizations was created. Those were contacted not only through public discussion meetings, but also, they were updated on the progress and some intermediate materials were shared with them. A separate section was created on the Geostat website dedicated to public discussion where all relevant materials were uploaded and available for all interested parties. The page also included contact details of the responsible person from Geostat to ensure dialogue between interested parties and NSDS elaboration team.

Public consultation This part will be filled once we conduct final public consultation meeting.

To ensure a high-level support for strategy elaboration and active involvement of NSS members, a coordination mechanism was applied. The Interagency Council was established by GoG Ordinance # 308. The role of the Council was to support the elaboration of the NSDS and its implementation plan, and to ensure coordination and monitoring of the process. The members of the Council are First Deputy Ministers

Public Registry, Ministry of Finance of Georgia, Revenue Service, Ministry of IDPs from Occupied Regions, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, Administration of Government of Georgia, Ministry of Internal Affairs.

⁷ The following organizations participated in individual consultations: UN Women, USDA, UNFPA, UNICEF, GA team

or Deputy Ministers of all relevant line ministries representing the NSS as well as the National Bank of Georgia and the Administration of Government. At the first meeting of the Council, Interagency Working Groups were created to ensure involvement of NSS members in the elaboration process.

The following working groups were created:

- Working group 1 on statistical production processes and data quality
- Working group 2 on data usage and NSS capacity development.

It is important to mention that working groups were created for the whole strategy period including the elaboration process: October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2027. Maintaining these groups for the whole period supports NSDS implementation and monitoring as well as creating a good basis for use-producer dialogue within the NSS.

Drafting of the NSDS and its implementation plan was conducted simultaneously. There was continuous communication with working groups, including two major cycles of revisions of drafted documents and one physical two-day workshop to identify targeted activities and design the detailed plan. Drafted documents were reviewed by the international expert as well.

The Draft Strategy and its implementation plans were discussed during the public consultation and, considering the received feedback, the final version was approved by the Council.

2. Situation Analysis

The situation analysis was conducted using SWOT and Problem Tree analysis methods. At the initial phase the SWOT method was selected because it offers a structured, comprehensive, and balanced assessment of the official statistics sector's current state and its future prospects. In contrast to a Problem Tree analysis, SWOT analysis focuses on identifying and analyzing opportunities, and these opportunities are incorporated in the planned strategic objectives and activities. It provides a more holistic view that includes not only problem areas but also areas for potential growth and improvement. Problems identified during the SWOT analysis were ranked based on their impact and importance. The most complex and important problems were analyzed using Problem Tree analysis to identify their root causes, which is crucial for understanding and addressing the most challenging problems effectively.

To support the analysis the following data was used:

- **Desk review** of relevant national strategies and international agreements considering the hierarchy of strategic documents. The reviewed documents include but are not limited to: EU-Georgia Association Agenda 2021-2027⁸, Vision 2030 - Development Strategy of Georgia, Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021-2030, Strategy for Gender Statistics 2021-2023, Harmonization Plan for Gradual Introduction of the Eurostat NUTS Classification of Regional Statistics in Georgia,⁹ Sector Review of the Implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) in the Geostat conducted in February 2023 by the UNECE, and others. Desk review also included progress reports on implementation of National Strategy for Development of Official Statistics 2020-2023.

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022PC0103>

⁹ [https://mrds.gov.ge/files/1/Harmonization%20Plan%20for%20NUTS%20_ENG%20\(05.04.2023\)-FINAL!.pdf](https://mrds.gov.ge/files/1/Harmonization%20Plan%20for%20NUTS%20_ENG%20(05.04.2023)-FINAL!.pdf)

- **Stakeholder consultation** meetings¹⁰ were one of the main sources of information on the current state and problems in the NSS. More than 30 consultation meetings were conducted with the key stakeholders, including the Geostat sectoral departments, members of the NSS and key international Donors. Additionally, a public consultation meeting was conducted during the situation analysis stage to get the perceptions of various data users' groups and discuss with them the draft SWOT to get their inputs and feedback.
- **Global Assessment** recommendations were another important source of information as the latest GA (officially called a "Strategic Assessment") was conducted in parallel with the NSDS 2024-2027 preparation, which allowed inclusion of the main recommendations in the situation analysis as well as addressing them in planned objectives and activities. The Strategic Assessment of the NSS of Georgia was conducted in September 2023 by UNECE, in cooperation with Eurostat and EFTA.
- **Evaluation of NSDS 2020-2023** served as a base for the situation analysis, as it provided key insights, results, and lessons learned from the previous strategy implementation. The stakeholder consultation phase was structured to ensure that it comprehensively captured both the evaluation of the previous strategy and the requirements for the planned NSDS 2024-2027.

2.1 Recent developments and current trends

Georgia is part of several international agreements, including the ones supporting Georgia's EU integration, where need for development of official national statistics is specifically emphasized. Additionally, evidence-based policy designing requires high-quality, reliable, and timely official statistics, which is an essential tool for making informed decisions.

In 2018-2019, to evaluate the level of conformity with European Statistical Standards, with reference to compliance with the ESCoP, the Global Assessment of the NSS of Georgia was conducted. GA recommendations, along with an NSS local assessment, served as a base for development of the NSDS 2020-2023. Implementation of the NSDS 2020-2023 facilitated implementation of the GA recommendations, which made a significant contribution to the advancement of statistics and alignment with EU standards. The NSDS was developed in compliance with national guidelines. Geostat initiated the NSDS development, which was supported by UNDP¹¹ and the Government of Sweden. A High-Level Interagency Council was established by GoG to coordinate the process of NSDS development. Those serving on the Council included representatives of line ministries (at the level of First Deputy Ministers), NBG (represented by Vice President), and the Administration of the Government of Georgia (AoG). After adoption of the NSDS 2020-2023 the Council served as a high-level monitoring body, discussing and approving progress monitoring reports. This approach ensured high level support for the strategy implementation and engagement of NSS members in the implementation process.

Key achievements of NSDS 2020-2023 implementation:

- Harmonization of Legal framework with EU standards. A new Law on Official Statistics was elaborated in compliance with GLOS and adopted in 2023 (more detailed information is provided in section 2.2).

¹⁰ Detailed description of the conducted meetings is presented in ANNEX IV Stakeholder Consultation Report

¹¹ 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.

- Implementation of all main GA 2019 recommendations. GA recommendations were incorporated in NSDS 2020-2023 which enabled bringing the NSS closer to international and European guidelines and recommendations, including the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPs) and the ESCOP. The achieved progress was assessed and positively evaluated by the most recent GA 2023.
- Support to SDG implementation through provision of needed statistical indicators. Georgia nationalized 199 indicators, out of which 61 are to be produced by Geostat. Implementation of the NSDS 2020-2023 enabled Geostat to produce 90.2% of required indicators, while measures to ensure production of remaining ones will be covered by the NSDS 2024-2027.
- Share of administrative data in data sources for generated statistics increased significantly. Only 28% of statistics were produced using administrative data sources in 2019, while in 2023 this indicator was already 36%. Increase of administrative data improved data quality, enabled Geostat to produce new statistics, and significantly reduced inefficiency in the statistical production process.
- Geostat achieved significant progress in the areas of moving to electronic data collection modes and moved to paperless data production. There is a strong trend in official statistics to standardize processes and centralize similar statistical functions (e.g. dissemination) within NSOs in EU and globally. Moving to a process-oriented organisation has been shown in various countries to improve the efficiency of the NSO. As part of gradual introduction of GSBPM principles addressed by the previous NSDS, Geostat has already started a journey along this path by centralizing dissemination and communication activities in the Department of International and Public Relations some years ago.

As a result of the NSDS 2020-2023 implementation, in addition to moving to electronic data collection modes, Geostat achieved significant progress in the introduction of the GSBPM, and the modernisation of dissemination tools and portals. It should be noted that Geostat is one of only a handful of national statistical offices around the world that has completed the move to paperless data collection and processing. In February 2023, an international team of experts conducted a Sector Review of GSBPM in Georgia, with the aim of producing a roadmap for organizational change. The recommendations stated in the roadmap are fully incorporated in the NSDS 2024-2027 under Objective 1.3.

- Modernization of IT infrastructure and measures to ensure adequate IT staffing helped Geostat to significantly strengthen the IT department, reduce turnover of IT personnel, ensure smooth introduction and operation of statistical portals and improve data security. Specific recommendations to strengthen the IT department were developed by GA team and were included in NSDS 2020-2023.
- Geostat exploits modern data dissemination tools and promotes its website and thematic statistics portals. As a result of these activities the number of unique visitors to the official website steadily grows. In 2022, the number of unique users was 775 607 which is 17% higher than in 2020. Furthermore, given the popularity of social networks in Georgia, Geostat actively promotes up-to-date statistics, infographics, and related news through its official account. The number of followers of the official Geostat Facebook account increased by 37% in 2022 compared to 2020. These figures indicate that the number of official statistics users has increased.

Development of official statistics plays an essential role in the implementation of a country's strategic documents. The importance of official statistics is also emphasized by the presence of Geostat in the key interagency structures.

Geostat is a member of high-level council established by GoG to facilitate the implementation and monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and plays an important role in the progress tracking of nationalized SDGs. The expansion of SDG indicators and updating existing ones is the subject of planned measures under Objective 1.1.

Geostat is also a member of The State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI) that was set up on October 13, 2010 as a key platform for discussing migration-related issues, and is an instrument for coordinating competences falling under different bodies. The Migration Strategy of Georgia 2021-2030 clearly states the need for the development of official statistics focusing on migration statistics. The critical areas that are currently underdeveloped are: reintegration statistics, labor migration statistics, integration of foreign citizens in Georgia, and others. Georgia joined the European Migration Network as an observer and is obliged to submit regular reports. Availability of relevant official statistics is essential for fulfilling this commitment.

Official statistics produced by Geostat are widely used in the Vision 2030 strategy. **An intermediate evaluation of the strategy is planned for 2026, which means that line ministries will need data support for the evaluation of set indicators starting from 2025.**

Specific needs for expansion of official statistics and further development were discussed in a number of stakeholder consultation meetings. While specific needs are translated into specific measures under strategic objectives, the key NSS needs, discussed at consultation meetings, can be summarized as follows:

- Additional indicators are needed to support strategy planning and monitoring in specific sectors, as well as ongoing and planned reforms required for AA implementation.
- There is a need for disaggregated data by gender, region, and in some cases, municipalities for the key official statistics categories.
- Line ministries and key LEPLs need data support in fulfilment of reporting requirements (e.g. high-level official questionnaires) under international agreements.
- Need for better coordination and stronger cooperation within the NSS. During the meeting with international donors, many mentioned that Geostat is well-positioned to support donor coordination to ensure the efficient use of funding resources and to avoid overlaps.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective in official statistics.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective in statistics means that gender issues are systematically considered in the production of all official statistics and at all stages of data production (Hedman, Perucci and Sundström, 1996; United Nations-, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2006). The NSS needs to regularly collect, analyze, and disseminate data that address relevant gender issues. Geostat, as a key producer of official statistics, has a history of successful and productive cooperation with UN Women in advancing the work on production and dissemination of gender statistics. The 2018 country's gender assessment revealed critical data gaps and challenges in responding to the growing demand for relevant, timely and high-quality gender related indicators. The main findings and recommendations were integrated into National Strategy for Development of Statistics of Georgia 2020-2023 and set out the specific objectives and action-oriented

priorities for the first ever Gender Statistics Strategy 2021-2023. Geostat's commitment to developing gender statistics has led to a high level of implementation of the gender strategy. All key tasks have already been implemented. New surveys on gender priority issues such as TUS, VAW, MICS were conducted, which enhanced government's capacity to monitor and report on national policies on GEWE and SDG implementation. According to the Gender Data Compass assessment¹² conducted by Open Data Watch in 2023, GEOSTAT ranks 5 out of 185 countries globally regarding gender data availability and openness.

While GEOSTAT has expertise to implement and transpose international standards and guidelines when collecting and analyzing gender data, some other data providers lack in-house capacity to explore the potential of administrative data to generate comprehensive and readily available gender data for filling in specific gaps and performing informed decision making. Geostat is well positioned to develop a national quality assurance framework and set standards for mainstreaming gender into administrative data collection and analysis and expanding the gender data ecosystem. Effective gender mainstreaming in the data collection cycle requires close collaboration between GEOSTAT and NSS members. The absence of a formal mechanism for systematic coordination of gender statistics and a nationally agreed framework of a minimum set of gender indicators hinders the development and evaluation of gender-specific policies and programs in the country.

To better understand how gender statistics products meet the needs of users, Geostat conducted a survey on user satisfaction with gender statistics in 2021. The survey showed that the vast majority of users (80%) are satisfied with Geostat's gender statistics products such as the Gender Statistics Portal, the statistical publication "Women and Men in Georgia", and infographics. However, while being satisfied with available statistics, many mentioned the need for additional indicators, especially in the fields of crime, education, and social protection as well as data disaggregation by region, municipality, disability status, ethnicity, etc. The need for promotion of the Gender Statistics Portal was also stressed as many were unaware of its existence. The NSDS is a valuable tool for planning interconnected measures that reinforce each other. Considering the opportunities for expanding and disaggregating gender statistics, especially in the context of the planned Population Census, exploring the potential of new data sources and new methods to generate more granular data, a well-defined set of measures is being planned to further enhance gender mainstreaming in official statistics in line with international standards including EU Acquis on statistics. Investing in gender statistics improves the overall data system in the country and vice versa is also true.

Recognizing the invaluable support and expertise provided by UN Women in advancing gender statistics in Georgia, Geostat collaborated with UN Women experts to ensure the proper incorporation of gender statistics mainstreaming into NSDS 2024-2027.

2.3 NSS assessment

The SWOT analysis is presented in figure 2 below. It summarizes the key internal and external factors affecting the development of the NSS in Georgia. Weaknesses and opportunities identified by the SWOT analysis are being addressed by strategic goals and objectives, considering the measures needed to mitigate the identified risks.

In this SWOT analysis, several key aspects are highlighted. Geostat's strengths include a centralized statistics production system, highly qualified staff and experienced interviewers, alignment with international statistics standards, electronic data collection methods, strong international cooperation,

¹² <https://opendatawatch.com/?s=gender+data>

and a client-oriented approach that ensures user satisfaction. However, there are several weaknesses, such as limited control over data quality from public sector entities, challenges in talent acquisition and retention, increasing demands for high-quality statistics, especially in the light of recent progress in Georgia's EU integration and the need to enhance the data governance system.

The analysis also identifies several opportunities, including the EU-Georgia Association Agenda's focus on official statistics development, the implementation of the SDGs, forthcoming evaluations of Georgia's development strategy Vision 2030, and Population and Agriculture Censuses. These opportunities can provide venues for collaboration and data improvement as well as elevating the importance of official statistics development and increased investments in this direction.

On the other side, there are threats, such as reliance on a small group of skilled personnel, limited resources for salary and accommodation improvements, and competition for skilled statisticians in the local job market. These challenges, if not addressed and mitigated properly, can impede Geostat's ability to innovate and retain its qualified staff. To address these aspects effectively, Geostat needs to leverage its strengths, address weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and proactively mitigate potential threats.

STRENGTHS

Key advantages of NSS of Georgia that serve as a base for further advancements.



- + Centralized system of statistics production resulting in efficient use of limited resources.
- + Highly qualified staff and network of experienced interviewers at Geostat.
- + Law on Official Statistics aligned closely with Generic Law on Official Statistics and is compliant with ESCoP.
- + Electronic data collection mode (paperless data collection and processing) at Geostat.
- + Successful international cooperation enables NSS members to benefit from technical assistance and development projects.
- + Client orientation- users are satisfied with openness, transparency, and availability of data.

WEAKNESSES

Key areas that need improvement



- Geostat does not have enough control over the quality of the data provided by public sector entities.
- Limited financial resources and lack of efficient talent acquisition and retention schemes elevates the risk of inadequate human resources.
- The heavy reliance on a relatively small group of skilled and experienced personnel constrains Geostat's ability to innovate and introduce new statistical products.
- The efficiency of the data governance system is to be enhanced while reinforcing Geostat's coordination role within the NSS.
- Customer engagement with data is not sufficient.

OPPORTUNITIES

Main opportunities that should be capitalized on.



- + EU-Georgia Association Agenda addressing development of official statistics as one of the priorities.
- + Although progress in EU integration poses additional demand for high quality statistics at the same time it creates more opportunities for international collaboration.
- + The implementation of the SDGs and forthcoming intermediate evaluation of Vision 2030 Development Strategy of Georgia will heighten the need for high quality data.
- + Population and Agriculture Censuses will improve the quality and availability of data at national and local levels and ensure basis for population and farm registers development.

THREATS

The key risks that can hamper NSS development and therefore should be mitigated by NSDS.



- Limited resources to further improve the level of salaries and accommodation may challenge retention of qualified staff.
- Outflow of qualified personnel due to high demand for skilled statisticians on the local market.
- The increasing demand for high-quality statistics to support ongoing and planned reforms poses a significant challenge on the NSS

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Figure 2 SWOT analysis

The problem tree analysis method was applied to analyze the key problems identified in the SWOT analysis, to identify the root causes that should be addressed by strategic goals and objectives. The results of the problem tree analysis complement the results of the SWOT analysis effectively, allowing the addressing of key barriers hindering NSS development while also capitalizing on emerging opportunities. The key problems analyzed below are translated into strategic goals, while their root causes are being addressed through strategic objectives.

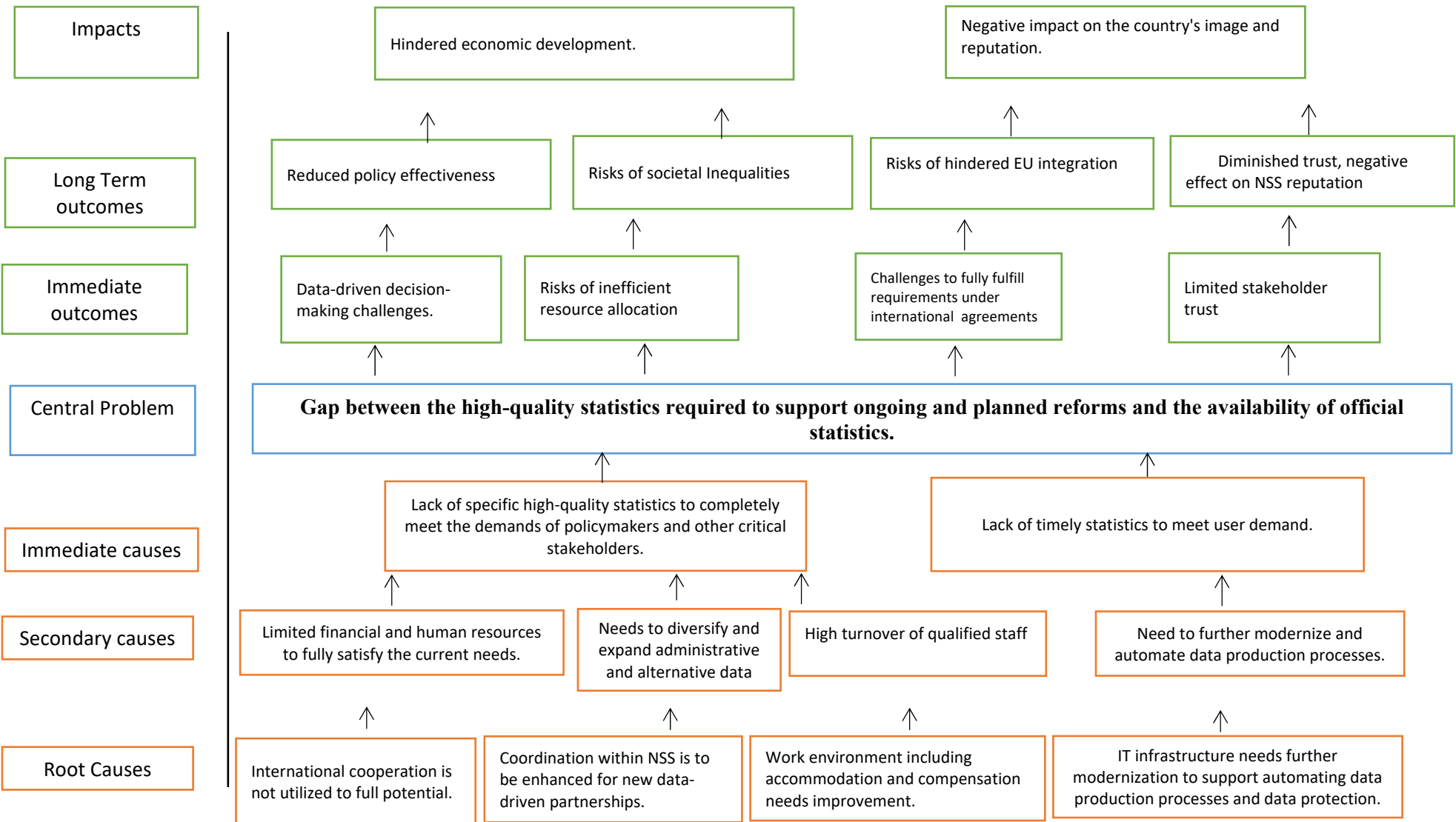


Figure 3 Problem tree analysis - Gap between the high-quality statistics required to support ongoing and planned reforms and the availability of official statistics.

Core problem 1 Gap between the high-quality statistics required to support ongoing and planned reforms and the availability of official statistics.

There is an increasing demand for high-quality statistics to support informed decision making, policy design and monitoring within ongoing and planned reforms, as well as Georgia's membership in EU and global agreements. Georgia is harmonizing its legal and regulatory framework with EU standards, which increases the need for quality data to monitor the progress and design effective policy interventions. Additionally, in the framework of the decentralisation strategy implementation, MRDI is supporting municipalities in the development of quality strategic documents that poses an additional demand for high quality official statistics disaggregated by regions and municipalities. To meet the evolving needs of users and adapt to a rapidly changing environment, the NSS should aim to transform into a modern data production system. While existing resources may not be sufficient to fully bridge the gap between user demand and available statistics, the NSS should prioritize investment in the production of high-priority indicators to empower users with tools for evidence-based decision-making.

The gap between the required statistics and available ones results in negative effects, and the severity of these effects is strongly correlated with the magnitude of the gap.

Negative effects

- Evidence based decision-making challenges are a direct and immediate effect of the lack of required statistics. Lack of quality data makes it difficult to assess the impact of reforms, design strategic policy documents, monitor and evaluate policy interventions. This problem was mentioned very frequently during the public sector consultation meetings, where a long list of statistics that are currently not available was mentioned. This is especially relevant for new regulations that recently came into force and need new statistics to be able to monitor them effectively. One of the examples is ongoing reform to support Georgia's commitment to ensure sustainable waste management and circular economy principles. MEPA introduced producers' extended responsibility regulation and needs additional data on local production of specific categories of products¹³, that produce harmful waste. Other examples include difficulties with selection of proper target indicators once designing sectoral strategic documents, as for some of them data is not available or is not in the required format.
 - In the long run these challenges lead to reduced policy effectiveness which imposes risks for economic development.
- Challenges to fully fulfill requirements under international agreements were frequently raised during the stakeholder consultation process. Primarily, these challenges are associated with difficulties in completing international high-level questionnaires as part of the national reporting obligations to EU and global bodies. Examples include but are not limited to: regular reporting to European Migration Network, FAO, UNESCO, WHO and others. In some cases, once official statistics were not available for certain indicators, responsible agencies were trying to collect data on their own, however, only data generated by official statistics providers can guarantee the quality and adherence to the international methodologies.
 - The challenges in meeting reporting requirements to demonstrate the progress of reforms pose risks of hindering Georgia's integration into the EU. If not mitigated, these challenges could also have a long-term negative impact on the country's image and reputation.

¹³ For example: Battery, Accumulators, lubricants, electronics, tires.

- Risk of inefficient Resource Allocation is another negative effect of the lack of data for informed decision making. Without effective policy analysis and monitoring there is a risk for misdirected efforts and programs. One of the examples mentioned during stakeholder consultation related to regional development programs focusing on specific pilot regions. Without proper data, it is challenging to evaluate the effectiveness of the support programs.
 - Without proper evidence-based analysis existing reforms and support programs may not adequately target marginalized and vulnerable groups leading to risks of societal inequalities and reduced policy effectiveness.
- If they persist over a long time, data gaps can limit stakeholder trust in official statistics. However, it should also be noted that traditionally all members of the NSS demonstrate commitment and invest considerable efforts in the production of required data, continuously supporting evidence-based decision making. This commitment shows the stakeholders dedication for the NSS to use available resources to the maximum extent to comply with steadily growing demand for quality data.
 - If not addressed, this will negatively affect trust in official statistics and negatively impact NSS reputation which in the long-run will negatively impact the country's image and reputation.

Causes

- The absence of specific high-quality statistics to fully meet the demands of policymakers and other critical stakeholders. As was already mentioned above, available resources within the NSS do not allow to fully produce the large volume of all the required data. The main goal of the situation analysis and stakeholder engagement was identification of **the highest priority indicators** to be produced within the strategy period.
 - Limited financial and human resources to fully satisfy the current needs. International assessment reports, including the recent report published by EU Commission identifies limited human and financial resources as one of the main concerns in the development of official statistics. Increased demand for data in the light of recent progress in the EU integration process needs strong financial support to be provided to Geostat both by GoG and international partners.
 - Needs to diversify and expand administrative and alternative data sources. Conducting surveys is a very costly and time-consuming activity. Modern best practices in statistics recommend maximizing the use of administrative data sources, registers, and alternative sources, reserving surveys for data types not readily available in administrative records. The best examples are Scandinavian countries which heavily rely on population registers for demographic information. They often do not conduct traditional censuses and use registers, that are considered as more efficient and accurate for maintaining up-to-date demographic information. Geostat has already achieved significant progress in expansion of use of administrative data reaching a 36% share of statistics produced from administrative sources. However, there is still a big potential to expand the share of administrative data sources to increase number of high-quality official statistical indicators.
 - High turnover of qualified staff still remains one of the biggest challenges within the NSS and especially in Geostat. Staff turnover increased in the post-pandemic period. The staff

turnover rate at Geostat remained at a steady 7% level in the previous years. In addition to that, talent acquisition is quite challenging. Currently (end of 2023) there are 19 open vacancies at Geostat, for some of them recruitment had to be repeated several times in a row due to lack of required qualifications among candidates or low number of applications. In certain departments, the impact of staff turnover is particularly noticeable, resulting in an overstretch of the remaining workforce. For instance, in the Department of National Account Statistics, out of the 12 staff positions, there are currently 4 vacant, with some remaining unfilled for as long as 8 months. Another problem is staff attrition, especially among the young personnel that are in high demand on the job market. In the mentioned department, for example, the average time stay is 3 years (excluding Head of Department). The issue of staff turnover is especially important in the light of the forthcoming Population and Agriculture Censuses.

- Work environment including accommodation and compensation needs improvement. Poor accommodation and current salary levels were mentioned as one of the main reasons for staff drain. During the capacity assessment and individual consultations with Geostat sectoral departments, workspace, salaries and potential for professional development were mentioned often.
- Lack of timely statistics to meet user demand. Many stakeholders mentioned the need to get timely official statistics and reduce the time lag in the key publications. The key statistical products need to be produced sooner, some need to be produced on a quarterly basis in addition to annual data. An example that can be considered is the national energy balance, which is being published with a 1 year time lag.
 - Potential to further modernize and automate data production processes. Transition towards the GSBPM is considered as one of the main options to improve the efficiency of data production processes. Geostat needs to work on the necessary changes to ensure a smooth transition to the GSBPM.
 - IT infrastructure needs further modernization to support automating data production processes and data protection. Although Geostat and the NBG achieved great progress in the modernization and digitalization of data production processes, there is still a big potential for improvement in this domain. An emphasis should be made on moving to the GSBPM, which provides resource savings and a more streamlined production process. The GSBPM roadmap, which followed an international assessment of statistics production process, clearly indicates the areas that need improvement both in terms of optimization of production processes and effective human resource management.
 - Needs to diversify and expand administrative and alternative data sources. In addition to the reasons stated above, expansion of the use of administrative sources brings sufficient efficiency gains. Currently up 19 statistics are based on surveys which are time consuming resulting in time lags of publications. Furthermore, the underutilization of alternative data sources, such as big data and web scraping, which enable real-time data access, represents missed opportunities for efficiency gains.

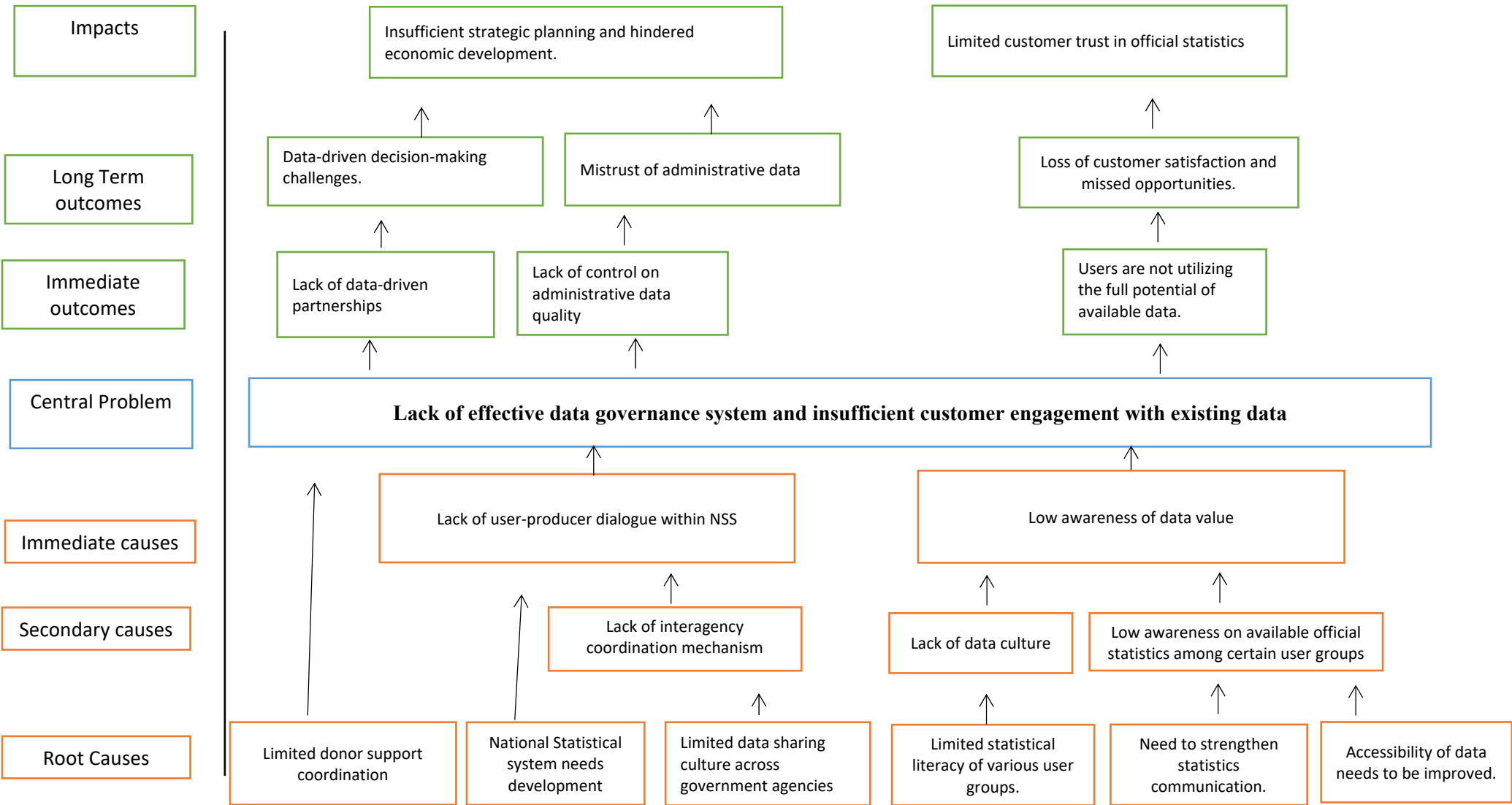


Figure 4 Problem tree analysis- Lack of effective data governance system and insufficient customer engagement with existing data

Core problem 2 Lack of effective data governance system and insufficient customer engagement with existing data

Without an effective data governance system and customer engagement, data loses its potential for providing insights and value. It hinders informed decision-making and limits the overall effectiveness of the available information. Data governance system is crucial for production of reliable, consistent and accurate statistics. By establishing standards and protocols for data collection, processing, and dissemination, data governance enhances the credibility of the official statistics, fostering confidence among policymakers, businesses, researchers, and the public. Moreover, a well-implemented data governance framework promotes consistency, standardization, and compliance with international statistical standards, enabling effective collaboration and coordination among different entities within the NSS.

Negative effects

- Users are not utilizing the full potential of available data. Without the necessary analytical skills, users may feel unsure about how to derive valuable conclusions from the micro data. This is especially true when context in which aggregated data was created is not available for users. Additionally, time constraint is important, as users, especially policy planners, are looking for timely data that responds to their decision-making needs.
 - Loss of customer satisfaction and missed opportunities. Underutilized data potential and limited awareness of available official statistics among certain user groups leads to loss of customer satisfaction and missed opportunities in various domains. Policymakers may struggle to formulate informed policies, businesses might face difficulties in strategic planning, and researchers may miss valuable data for their analytical reports. Availability of databases and micro data is also important for researchers that can derive new analysis and provide analytical reports to support informed decision making in the country.
 - Limited customer trust in official statistics. In the long-run, if not addressed, these obstacles limit customer trust in official statistics as the costumers may perceive the data as incomplete, unreliable or inaccessible.
- Lack of data-driven partnerships. Without a robust data governance framework in place, organizations may be reluctant to engage in collaborative data initiatives, leading to missed opportunities for innovation and evidence-based decision-making.
 - Data-driven decision-making challenges. Without collaborative efforts and partnerships access to a diverse range of data sources may be limited.
- Lack of control on administrative data quality. Without an effective data governance system and common standards within NSS, including quality assurance, and defined coordination mechanisms doesn't allow effective control on administrative data quality.
 - Mistrust of administrative data. Without established mechanisms and standards for quality control and assurance within NSS administrative data may be perceived as unreliable leading to lack of confidence in the data credibility. This may impede the increase of administrative data use for production of official statistics.
 - In the long run, if not addressed, these problems lead to insufficient strategic planning and hindered economic development.

Root causes

- Low awareness of data value. Due to limited statistical literacy and low awareness general public have limited understanding of the potential benefits that can be derived from data. While a lot of efforts are being placed for building informed decision making in public sector, less attention is paid to building data culture within other user groups. This is especially true for cross cutting issues such as gender statistics, vulnerable groups (e.g. peoples with disabilities), some SDG indicators, etc. There is limited understanding even within the public sector of the potential benefits of genders statistical data value and its role in policy planning. In addition to that, limited awareness of data value also includes misinterpretation of available data or irresponsible use of it.
 - Low awareness of available official statistics among certain user groups. Situation analysis revealed that there is limited awareness of available official statistics and some thematic portals among certain user groups. For instance, many municipalities are not aware of the existence of regional statistics portal and are not utilizing its data value. Raising awareness of municipalities on available official statistics and their responsible use is especially important to support municipalities in developing results oriented municipal development strategies and action plans.
 - Need to strengthen statistical communication. Geostat invests significant efforts in data dissemination via various channels, however, less attention has been paid to data communication so far. Although regular media briefings are being conducted and infographics are being produced, there is a lack of contextualization and storytelling in official statistics.
 - Accessibility of data needs to be improved. Customers might find it hard to use and understand the data because they're not engaged enough. This makes it less accessible and not as helpful. Additionally, some stakeholders mentioned that statistical thematic portals need to be promoted as many are unaware. One example is that many municipalities face challenges in searching for regional and municipal-level data. At the same time, many of them are not aware that there is a regional statistics portal with available data populated by Geostat. To support awareness raising about available statistical products international Donors in cooperation with MRDI are conducting capacity building of municipalities.
 - Lack of data culture refers to a limited understanding of the significance of evidence-based decision-making.
 - Limited statistical literacy is one of the main causes impeding data usability. This is true for various groups of users, including public sector, media, and general public. Statistical literacy involves the ability to interpret, evaluate, and apply statistical information in decision-making processes. Education and communication measures are crucial to overcoming this problem and maximizing the usability of official statistics.
- Lack of user-producer dialogue within NSS. Although Geostat has good bilateral relations with majority of NSS members, there is limited user-producer dialogue and a lack of a proper platform to regularly assess the most priority data needs, get update of available administrative data and discuss other data production issues. A similar process is conducted during the development of

NSDS, however, given the NSDS cycle of four years, such frequency is not sufficient to establish an effective data governance system and ensure coordination within the NSS.

- National statistical system needs development. Recently adopted LOS defines the NSS, Geostat as its coordinator generally provides solid grounds for establishment of NSS concept. However, proper secondary legislation is needed to ensure mechanisms for effective NSS, such as common standards for quality assessment, defined list of NSS members, etc.
- Lack of interagency coordination mechanism within NSS leads to lack of user-producer dialogue. There is a lack of thematic interagency working groups focused on statistical production. EU integration and forthcoming increased demand for data may serve as a catalyst for establishment of a working mechanism for interagency coordination. Such a mechanism should focus not only on data production issues, but also ensure feedback loop. Feedback from users helps in understanding their needs and expectations, contributing to the production of more relevant statistical products. Given the rapidly changing needs of users for official statistics, it is crucial to establish a regular and effective feedback mechanism so that all relevant needs and expectations are captured in a timely manner.
 - Limited data sharing culture across government agencies. Current practices of data sharing are based on long standing bilateral cooperation and legal provisions. However, establishment of effective data governance system is impossible without established standards and common rules with NSS. International best experience should be used to facilitate data sharing culture in accordance with principles of new LOS.
 - Limited donor support coordination. On the path to EU accession, effectively managing allocated assistance for development work and selecting donor projects that align with Geostat's main priorities is crucial. Another essential component is avoiding overlaps. Given the numerous donor-supported activities, without proper coordination, there is a risk of inefficient resource allocation and a loss of focus.

3. Vision and mission

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 goal is to empower decision-makers at all levels with robust and timely statistical data, enabling them to make informed decisions that drive progress and development. Through this vision, we endeavor to

position national official statistics as a catalyst for sustainable growth and integration within the European Union, ultimately benefiting our citizens and society as a whole.

Vision statement:

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 official statistics that drive informed decisions and support the EU integration process.

We are committed to continuously enhancing and expanding our data capabilities while valuing data from diverse sources. We strive to make sharing data with us effortless. As innovative leaders in the Georgian data landscape, we are dedicated to driving excellence in data management, dissemination, and utilization to benefit our economy and society as a whole.

Mission statement:

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 Statistical 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.

4. Values

The core values for the National Statistical System are aligned with the LOS as well as with the latest international set of Core values of official statistics¹⁴ that have been adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians in 2022.

- **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 are relevant to current societal and economic development needs.

¹⁴ https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/ECE_CES_2022_2-2211176E_0.pdf

- **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 processes 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 collected data and representation to accurately capture the various groups of society, leaving no one behind.

5. Strategic Goals

The main objective of NSDS 2024-2027 elaboration is to create a common vision for the development of official statistics and strengthen the resilience of the NSS to response to the emerging challenges. Geostat, as coordinator of the NSS, will strive to ensure fulfillment of the recommendations of high-level international assessments bringing the NSS into compliance with EU acquis and supporting Georgia's EU integration while at the same time ensuring production of high quality, timely and reliable official statistics addressing growing demand for data from various user groups, including public sector, research community, academia, civil society, international organizations, businesses and others.

The main pillars that the strategy is addressing can be summarized as follows:

- Enhanced mechanisms for dialogue within the NSS and with data providers.
- Support EU Accession through fulfilling requirements of the EU Association Agenda and the latest recommendations from 2023 Communication on EU Enlargement policy as well as adhering to the Statistical requirements compendium.
- Producing regional statistics in line with the NUTS classification.
- Enhancing the data stewardship role of Geostat.
- Strengthening IT and data security through achieving ISO27001 compliance at Geostat.
- Collaborating with GoG and international donors and partners to mobilize additional resources to prepare for EU accession, particularly in relation to the additional data requirements and the enhanced role for international cooperation.
- Enhance the data governance system.
- Strengthening international cooperation and increasing transmission of timely and high-quality data to Eurostat.

To address the complex variety of needs identified in the situation analysis and presented in the international assessments, strategic goals were formulated as well as specific objectives to achieve the targets associated with those goals.

The strategy is centered around three strategic goals:

1. Provide high-quality, user-centered official statistics to maximize data value and enable informed decision-making.

2. Foster trust and mutual benefits through strong data-driven partnerships, improving access to data for official statistics and developing an effective data governance system.
3. Promote data usage by enhancing data accessibility and expanding customer engagement with existing data.

Based on the situation analysis, GA preliminary recommendations and preliminary results of NSDS 2020-2023 evaluation, the mission, vision, and strategic priorities for 2024-2027 were drafted, presented and discussed with the Interagency Council and placed on the Geostat website for public consultation. The first public consultation meeting provided positive feedback concerning the defined strategic goals and objectives. Strategic priorities were further elaborated and translated into a Logical Framework that formed the skeleton of the NSDS.

5.1 Strategic Goal 1: Provide high-quality, user-centered 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 capacities with an increased diversity of statistics to meet user needs, supporting policy making for national plans and programs, and producing existing statistics in line with 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. This goal and its specific objectives are designed to address the core problem 1 identified in situation analysis. Additionally, it capitalizes on all the key opportunities defined in SWOT analysis.

Implementation of this strategic goal is directly linked to **SDG 17** “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development” and specifically to **targets 17.18** “enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts” and **17.19** “build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries”.

As a result of successful implementation of this goal by 2027 the share of nationalized SDG indicators produced by Geostat should have increased from 90% (2023 level) to 100%, ensuring that all relevant SDG indicators, that are calculated by Geostat, are in place and up-to date. Since the NSDS focuses on a user-centered approach, user satisfaction rate is another indicator to measure the implementation of this strategic goal. Currently Geostat conducts a user satisfaction survey, however, to avoid bias within the strategy period, it is planned to conduct such a survey by an external independent consultant or company. According to the latest user satisfaction survey the average satisfaction rate is 85.4%. The target is to maintain the high level of user satisfaction by 2027.

5.1.1 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. The recent progress in European Union (EU) integration poses additional demands 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.). This objective addresses the core problem 1 identified in situation analysis as well as its causes. Specifically, it addresses the challenge of increasing demand for high-quality statistics to support ongoing and planned reforms.

One of the major activities being planned under this objective is to conduct the Population and Agriculture Census. The Census will be conducted using CAPI and CAWI methods. The results of the Census will serve as a basis for the first population register. Within the strategic period a roadmap and strategy for development of population register will be developed. In cooperation with relevant NSS members Geostat will lead development of population register structure in 2026-2027. Geostat will also work on considering various sources for migration estimates production, including use of Big Data and administrative sources as well as production of new indicators in relation to migration. Other new indicators to be produced within the strategy period include, but are not limited to: import statistics in Free on Board (FOB) prices, R&D expenditures by business sector in accordance with UNESCO methodology, R&D expenditures as a share of GDP, detailed statistics on loans and deposits (to be produced by NBG), crypto assets statistics and its integration in BoP (to be produced by NBG), sector accounts, improved environment statistics including water and waste, and the use of ICT in households. In cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, assessment of non-observed economy is planned. Additionally, new indexes will be also produced such as: owner occupied housing price index, new HICP indexes in line with the EU requirements planned already for 2024, and increased coverage of services in PPI. In cooperation with the International Energy Agency, Geostat will continue to work on new energy efficiency indicators and disaggregation of statistics on renewable energy. Geostat will continue work on further development of short-term business statistics, tourism satellite accounts, and food balance sheets.

New surveys and activities will be piloted, such as a pilot survey on structure of earnings, and production of population projections which will be the very first official population growth projections in the country.

To ensure compliance with international standards, new classifications and methodologies will be adopted in the strategy period. This includes but is not limited to: developing the NUTS geographical classification for Georgia, HS2022 classification in external trade statistics, COICOP-2018 classification, NACE Rev. 2 use in Prodcom statistics and others. Additionally, Geostat will conduct preparatory works for updating from NACE 2 to NACE 2.1 classification of economic activities and improving classification of budgetary units. NBG and Geostat will prepare to move from the System of National Accounts 2010 to the European System of Accounts to ensure its adoption by 2029. NBG will continue preparation for adoption of a new manual of the Balance of Payments (BPM7). Geostat and NBG will also consider alignment of the timing of major national accounts and balance of payments revisions with the schedule for such revisions in the European Statistical System, in line with the Harmonized European revision policy (HERP).

Other actions being undertaken by Geostat and other members of the NSS, will include the further development of regional statistics, mainstreaming gender statistics including production of new gender indicators, and production and updating of SDG indicators.

With the financial support of EU a new Twinning project is being planned for 2024-2025, which will support the implementation of Objectives 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. Specifically, technical assistance will be

provided in the following key directions: introduction of EU NUTS classification, development of demographic and population statistics, strengthening capacity of the NSS for the production and use of official statistics, and supporting migration to the GSBPM for effective data production processes.

Another indicator for this objective is full introduction of the NUTS classification in Georgia and availability of at least 30 national indicators calculated in accordance with EU NUTS.

5.1.2 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 the NSS is planned, and will strongly contribute to not only higher quality and accessibility of administrative data, but also to building a national data ecosystem, better data governance and coordination. This objective addresses core problem 1 identified in situation analysis and specific causes related to the need for diversification of data sources. Additionally, it addresses the weakness identified in SWOT analysis concerning the lack of control over the quality of the data provided by public sector entities.

One of the reasons for enhancing administrative and alternative data use is not only improving time and resource efficiency, but also significantly reducing respondent burden. Geostat will implement a set of measures within the strategy period to ensure reduction of respondent burden. Geostat will consider use of mobile applications or other methods to simplify household reporting. As well as consider reducing sampling the same respondent multiple times. In general, Geostat will reconsider the frequency of the various surveys and give preference to those that are needed for EU accession. Also, Geostat will review how to utilize existing surveys to get additional indicators.

A key direction under this objective is the development of registers and databases across members of the NSS. A trauma register, reintegration (returned emigrants) database, social register that will unite several databases, database on persons with disability, improvement of electronic health records (EHR), and others are planned within the strategy period.

To ensure comprehensive data integration and access to up-to date information new alternative data collection tools will be explored, such as web scraping and scanner data for consumer price indices, the use of API's, Big Data and remote sensing in agricultural and environment statistics, etc. Use of Big Data will be tested for tourism statistics as well. Geostat will strengthen international cooperation (Objective 2.2) to learn and apply best practices on using alternative data collection methods and ways to reduce the respondent burden.

Another important direction is improvement of data quality of administrative sources. NCDC will ensure a reduction of the share of unknown reasons for death to 10%, MIA will improve the database on car accidents, MoF will improve the coverage of government finance statistics, LEPLs Civil Aviation Agency, Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia and United Airports of Georgia will bring sea and air transport administrative data in compliance with the EUROSTAT Compendium of requirements. Geostat, in

cooperation with MEPA, will assess the ways to improve the farm register and explore possibilities for its use in agriculture statistics. This is not the full list of planned activities to improve the quality of administrative data.

As a result of this objective, the share of administrative data sources for the production of official statistics will increase to at least 40%.

5.1.3 Objective 1.3 Modernizing and automating data production processes to ensure timely, accurate and efficient data processing.

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. It is already successfully using modern methods of data collection and is planning to continue developments in this area. Geostat will continue developing production systems that reduce manual work and increase automatization of data processing processes. This objective is designed to address the core problem 1 as well as specific causes related to the need for modernization of data production to ensure timeliness of statistics.

One of the most important activities under this objective will be moving towards a more process-oriented organization structure and introduction of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model¹⁵ (GSBPM) at Geostat. Geostat will start to get familiar with the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organizations (GAMSO), which extends the GSBPM to cover other activities, particularly those to corporate support areas (e.g. IT, HR). The currently announced Twinning program¹⁶, 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 the GSBPM and GAMSO. Geostat will cooperate with EUROSTAT to seek additional assistance for adoption of self-assessment surveys based on the generic checklist for a systematic quality assessment (DESAP) and introduction of Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) for areas that are not covered by the forthcoming twinning project.

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. **As a result of implementation of this objective, average time for production of official statistics from the data collection period by XX will be updated**

5.1.4 Objective 1.4 Modernizing IT infrastructure and ensuring robust data protection measures.

Strengthening IT infrastructure and data security was one of the priorities of the current NSDS 2020-2023. Geostat, with support from international donors, achieved a significant improvement including modernization of its IT infrastructure, strengthening the 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. Geostat will also replace outdated databases with modern solutions that can handle large data submissions from respondents more quickly. Other planned activities include replacement of outdated MySQL databases, updating and upgrading of registers, including the statistical business register, and development of new online questionnaires for enhanced data collection. This objective is designed to address core problem 1 and root causes related to

¹⁵ The GSBPM (Generic Statistical Business Process Model) standardizes official statistics production processes, facilitating modernization, knowledge sharing, data integration, process documentation, and quality assessment.

¹⁶ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/online-services/#/>

the need of modernization of IT resources to ensure support to automatization and modernization of data production as well as transition to GSBPM.

Another important direction of this objective is data confidentiality, protection and data security. IT measures will be further developed with integrated efficient mechanisms, including encryption and anonymization, to safeguard confidentiality of personal information. The data confidentiality policy will be updated to be in full compliance with recently adopted LOS. Geostat will continue the work of preparing and implementing procedures for systematically monitoring adherence to the confidentiality guidelines.

Planned measures will support flexible, transparent, and secure management of data. 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 infrastructures, promoting the use, as far as possible, of common standards and tools across the NSS.

5.1.5 Objective 1.5 Creating a flexible and modern workplace.

Implementation of the ambitious NSDS 2024-2027 plan, including the population and agriculture censuses, is not possible without adequate human resources. Limited human resources and a high turnover of qualified staff, especially young specialists, remains one of the pressing challenges for Geostat, and other members of the NSS. To ensure adequate qualified resources are in place and organizational knowledge is maintained, a set of measures is being introduced to create a flexible and modern workplace. This objective is designed to address core problem 1 and associated root cause. Additionally, it addresses identified weaknesses and threats related to potential risks of inadequate human resources to implement ambitious plans of NSDS 2024-2027 identified in SWOT analysis.

Limited human resources and salary levels were mentioned in international assessment reports, including the recent GA as well as in the situation analysis. GoG will cooperate with Geostat to ensure mobilization of financial resources to prepare for EU accession, particularly in relation to the additional data requirements. Geostat will ensure an increase in the salary level of its staff. In addition to an increased level of salaries, Geostat will consider adoption of hybrid work schedules to allow more flexibility and reduce transportation time and costs to its staff. This approach was piloted in the IT department and proved to be useful for improving the work conditions.

A skills mapping and HR strategy will be designed as part of the transition to GSBPM and GAMS0 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 Program.

Additionally, to ensure professional development opportunities for Geostat staff an employee professional development plan will be created and a series of professional development trainings to advance the qualification level of its staff will be conducted at Geostat. For example a special training workshop on energy statistics, energy accounts and climate change-related statistics will be conducted with the help of international partners. For effective internal communication an intranet will be created.

As a result of implementation of this objective Geostat aims to reduce the rate of employee turnover to 5% by 2027.

5.2 Strategic Goal 2: 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, stipulated in the LOS, make Geostat well qualified to develop a standard quality framework for all members of the NSS involved in production of official statistics. These efforts ensure that data producers and users mutually trust the data ecosystem, collaborate and benefit from the accessibility, accuracy, and reliability of the official statistics. This goal addresses core problem 2 identified in situation analysis.

Strategic goal 2 focuses on measures for enhancing dialogue within the NSS and with data providers on a national level and with the international, and in particular EU, statistical community.

As a result of this measure, Geostat's data governance maturity level will be increased by at least one step from "repeatable" to "defined". This will be assessed by Geostat using the Data Management Maturity Model (DMM) developed by the Data Management Association International (DAMA).

DMM model is often considered a comprehensive and widely used framework for assessment and development of data governance system. DMM model suggests the following levels of maturity:

- Initial: At this stage, data governance processes are ad-hoc, inconsistent, and often reactive. There is limited awareness of the importance of data governance, and no formal structures are in place.
- Repeatable: Basic data governance processes are established, but they may lack consistency and are not fully integrated into the overall strategy. Some documentation and guidelines exist.
- Defined: Data governance processes are well-documented, consistently applied, and integrated into the broader framework. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and there's a formalized governance structure.
- Managed: The organization actively monitors and measures the effectiveness of its data governance processes. Continuous improvement initiatives are in place, and there's a proactive approach to addressing issues and ensuring compliance.
- Optimized: Data governance processes are fully optimized, and the organization has achieved a high level of maturity. There is a culture of continuous improvement, and data governance is deeply ingrained in all aspects of the operations.

This goal, and especially Objective 2.2, is related to **SDG 16** "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions," specifically targeting **16.8**, which aims to "broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance".

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

The recently adopted LOS is in 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 the NSS. Under this objective the planned measures target strengthened cooperation with data producers and owners within the NSS, as well as the public and private sectors. Particularly, measures are centered around interagency cooperation, maintaining thematic working groups, adoption of common standards and adhering to them to foster interoperability, integration and rapid response in the production of official statistics. An emphasis is placed on creation

of mutually beneficial partnerships to incentivize private sector respondents to provide quality data and to create new partnerships to support the implementation of Objectives 1.2 and 1.1. Objective 2.1 is designed to address the core problem 2 and its specific root causes related to lack of interagency coordination within NSS as well as root cause of core problem 1.

Although the recently adopted LOS is in full compliance with GLOS, Geostat, as coordinator of NSS, will continue work to ensure development of proper regulatory base and implementation of international recommendations from the latest GA related to further advancement of the legislative framework for official statistics in Georgia.

One of the key measures under this objective is the establishment of an interagency group to coordinate preparations for EU accession in the area of official statistics. This group will create a platform for user-producer dialogue as it will include all respective members of the NSS. Under this group, thematic sub-groups will be developed including an interagency group on development of gender statistics. This platform will also serve as a user-producer dialogue platform and at least once a year user-producer meetings will be conducted within the interagency group to coordinate preparations for EU accession. In addition to this, and to support mobilization of financial and technical assistance resources for preparations for EU accession in the area of official statistics, regular, at least once a year, donor coordination meetings will be organized by Geostat. Geostat needs to be highly focused and strategic in selecting development projects and partners that support priorities outlined in NSDS. These meetings will allow Geostat to re-assess cooperation activities with other donors and focus more on EU accession activities as well as ensure effective use of resources provided by international partners.

To further support coordination within the NSS, Geostat will further formalize the relations with other members of the NSS, especially administrative data providers, through signing memoranda of cooperation with common basic criteria (calendar and timeliness for exchanging the data, accuracy) with them. Additionally, in partnership with MRDI, Geostat will strengthen relationships with municipalities to facilitate submission of data for statistical production. Geostat will also work to improve practical cooperation with NSS members. One example is cooperation with relevant entities while developing population register. Another example of planned measures is cooperation with NSS members to identify data that is repeatedly being requested from agencies by various users and define the mechanism to publish it on the Geostat website. Such type of activity not only strengthens cooperation within the NSS, but also increases efficiency of resources use.

Geostat, as a coordinator of the NSS, and in cooperation with NBG, will develop a common framework and mechanisms for data quality assurance within the NSS, and develop training materials for other NSS members in specific issues of this framework as well as international standards of official statistics, including on professional independence, the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the associated Core Values, and the European Statistics Code of Practice. Geostat will cooperate with international partners in the development of the training materials. Geostat will also continue regular promotion of the new law and the fundamental principles it is based on through trainings for other ministries and governmental agencies.

As a result, the number of interagency working groups to support coordination within the NSS will be at least 3 by 2027 with regular annual meetings on coordination and data quality.

5.2.2 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. NBG 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. This objective is designed to address the core problem 1 and specific root cause related to underutilized potential of international cooperation.

In 2019, Georgia became a member of the UN Statistical Commission, and between 2020-2022, Geostat's Executive Director chaired the Bureau of the Committee on Statistics of UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Currently Geostat is involved in the UN-ESCAP Regional Steering Group on Population and Social Statistics which allows 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 the 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.

As Georgia was granted EU candidate status, more opportunities for international cooperation are forthcoming. Geostat needs to capitalize this opportunity and strengthen its integration in the EU statistical community as well as enhance peer relations with other statistical offices for exchange of best practices and mutual support in statistical production modernization activities, alternative data collection methods, reduction of respondent burden, etc. Measures in this direction include participation in relevant statistical fora and global initiatives, strengthening participation of Geostat management and lead specialists in EUROSTAT structures and thematic working groups, identification of potential new international partners to support development of the priority areas of official statistics and others.

At the same time, the accumulated knowledge and experience at Geostat qualify it for sharing best practices and experiences in the most developed areas of official statistics in Georgia. With support from international partners, Geostat will organize an international conference in Georgia to share best practices and experiences in developing official statistics. One potential area that can be shared is the development of gender statistics, where Geostat has made significant progress. Another channel for sharing the best practices is joint twinning projects for developing countries where Geostat can participate as a partner of international consortia. Geostat will continue cooperation with international partners to identify such opportunities and participate in respective calls.

Measures under this objective will allow Geostat to increase its participation in relevant EU statistical structures and be represented in at least 6 statistical working groups and committees.

5.3 Strategic Goal 3: Promote data usage by enhancing data accessibility and expanding customer engagement with existing data.

This goal 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 analyze data effectively. To further foster stakeholder engagement, regular feedback from data users will be analyzed to ensure capturing data

related needs and adapting data formats based on their preferences. This goal is addressing core problem 2 identified in situation analysis as well as weakness related to insufficient customer engagement identified in SWOT analysis.

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

As a result, user engagement is anticipated to rise, with the number of unique visitors to the Geostat official website expected to reach 1,100,000 by 2027.

This goal is related to **SDG 16** “Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions” and specifically target **16.10** “Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”.

5.3.1 Objective 3.1: 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, Geostat will engage in active dialogues with diverse user groups to better understand their needs, enhance relationships with data providers, conduct regular user satisfaction surveys and training sessions. The use of data by researchers will be promoted by enabling them to use micro data, whilst respecting data confidentiality. Geostat will cooperate with the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth to use their Resource centers for statistics promotion activities for primary and secondary school students. This objective is designed to address the core problem 2 and root causes related to limited statistical literacy and lack of data culture among various user groups.

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. Training on gender statistics and their responsible use will be conducted by relevant public servants, while MRDI in cooperation with Geostat will conduct training in official statistics use for municipalities.

Additionally, capacity building of Geostat is planned to increase the professional qualifications of staff and build the necessary skills for strategic communication. Training for Geostat top and middle level management in media relations will be conducted.

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 3.2. 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. To maintain trust in official statistics it is important to maintain and demonstrate the independence of Geostat. A set of indicators to measure the independence of Geostat will be developed to ensure its periodic monitoring. At the initial stage Geostat will conduct self-assessment using the developed criteria.

As a result of this objective number of individuals participating in statistical literacy trainings or workshops organized by Geostat will increase by 50 to reach 150 participants per year. At least 2 surveys of trust in official statistics in Georgia will be conducted by an independent organization/consultant.

5.3.2 Objective 3.2: - 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 foster communication on the national level as well as with international partners. The SDMX standard will be used across official statistics producers (Geostat and NBG) to transmit data to international organizations. Following the latest GA 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. This objective is designed to address core problem 2 and specific root cause related to the need to strengthen statistics communication and address insufficient feedback loops.

Modern data visualization tools will be used to transform complex data sets into intuitive and user-friendly representations to increase accessibility of data for a wider public. To further support the 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 and increasing access to new databases. To support data accessibility new portals will be created, including an environment statistics portal, energy statistics portal and time use survey portal. Geostat will also increase availability on its website of some data that was previously available only on request. One example is adding the statistical business indicators for the category “small enterprises” on the business statistics section of the website.

User satisfaction will be measured by a user satisfaction survey.

Interest towards official statistics and data usage will be measured by number of downloads of official data from the official Geostat website, with the goal to have at least XXX (will be updated) increase compared to 2023 levels. Also, the number of followers of official accounts in social media will be monitored as official accounts in social media are often used by wider audience as a source of information. The aim is to have at least 30 000 followers by 2027.

6. Logical Framework

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.

Goal 1:	Provide high-quality, user-centered official statistics to maximize data value and enable informed decision-making	Link to SDG:	SDG 17, targets 17.18 and 17.19.		
IMPACT Indicator 1.1:	Share of produced nationalized SDG indicators		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification: Administration of the Government of Georgia
		Year	2023	2027	
		Indicator	90.20%	100%	
IMPACT Indicator 1.2:	User average satisfaction rate		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification: User satisfaction survey results
		Year	2023	2027	
		Indicator	85.4%	At least 85%	
OBJECTIVE 1.1:	Production of high-quality statistics to support evidence-based decision making and EU integration				
OUTCOME Indicator 1.1.1	Number of indicators calculated according to NUTS classification		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification: Geostat website
		Year	2023	2027	
		Indicator	0	30	
Risks:	Lack of human and financial resources to cope with increased demand for data.				
OBJECTIVE 1.2:	Diversifying and expanding administrative and alternative data sources				
OUTCOME Indicator 1.2.1	Share of administrative data sources for production of official statistics		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification: Geostat, Department of Strategic Planning and Coordination
		Year	2023	2027	
		Indicator	36%	40%	
Risks:	Quality of administrative data, weak cooperation from data owners.				
OBJECTIVE 1.3:	Modernizing and automating data production processes to ensure timely, accurate and efficient data processing				
OUTCOME Indicator 1.3.1	Average time taken to deliver official statistics from the data collection period.		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification: Geostat, Department of Strategic Planning and Coordination
		Year	2023	2027	
		Indicator	-	-	

Risks:	Low efficiency gains from introduction of modern and automated data processing models				
Objective 1.4:	Modernizing IT infrastructure and ensuring robust data protection measures				
OUTCOME Indicator 1.4.1	Compliance of Geostat ISMS (information security management system) with ISO/IEC 27001		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	ISO certification
		Indicator	Geostat ISMS is not compliant with ISO/IEC 27001	Geostat ISMS is compliant with ISO/IEC 27001	
Risks:	Lack of resources to introduce modern IT standards to obtain ISO certification				
OBJECTIVE 1.5:	Creating flexible and modern workplace				
OUTCOME Indicator 1.5.1	Rate of employee turnover		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	Geostat, Human Resource Management and Chancellery Division
		Indicator	7%	5%	
Risks:	High competition and deficit of qualified staff on the market may reduce effectiveness of planned measures under Objective 1.5				
Goal 2:	Foster trust and mutual benefit through strong data-driven partnerships, improving access to data for official statistics and developing an effective data governance system			Link to SDG:	SDG 16, target 16.8
IMPACT Indicator 2.1:	Data governance maturity level		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	Geostat, self assessment report
		Indicator	Repeatable	Defined	
OBJECTIVE 2.1:	Enhancing the coordination and data stewardship role of Geostat in the production of official statistics				
OUTCOME Indicator 2.1.1	Number of new interagency collaborations established by Geostat to enhance coordination in official statistics production.		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	Geostat, Department of International and Public Relations
		Indicator	1	3	
OUTCOME Indicator 2.1.2	Number of NSS meetings on data coordination and data quality per year		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	

		Indicator	0	2	Meeting reports; Geostat, Department of Strategic Planning and Coordination
Risks:	Lack of coordination within NSS to support data stewardship role of Geostat				
OBJECTIVE 2.2:	Strengthening international cooperation, positioning Geostat as a trusted partner in the EU statistics community and actively contributing to global statistical development				
OUTCOME Indicator 2.2.1	Participation of Geostat in EU statistical working groups and committees.		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	Geostat, Department of International and Public Relations
		Indicator	3	6	
Risks:	Potential eligibility restrictions for Georgia to participate in relevant thematic groups, lack of available thematic working groups coordinated by EUROSTAT				
Goal 3:	Promote data usage by enhancing data accessibility and expanding customer engagement with existing data			Link to SDG:	SDG 17, target 17.18
					SDG 16, target 16.10
IMPACT Indicator 3.1:	Number of unique visitors of Geostat website		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	Website analytics
		Indicator	775 607	1 100 000	
OBJECTIVE 3.1:	Strengthen statistical literacy and data competence, increase trust in official statistics, and expand customer engagement with existing data				
OUTCOME Indicator 3.1.1	Number of individuals participating in statistical literacy trainings or workshops organized by Geostat per year		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	Geostat, Department of International and Public Relations
		Indicator	100	150	
OUTCOME Indicator 3.1.2	Number of surveys of trust in official statistics in Georgia conducted by independent organization/consultant		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	Geostat, Department of Strategic Planning and Coordination
		Indicator	0	2	
Risks:	Low participation rate in statistical literacy trainings and workshops, lack of financial resources to conduct sufficient number of trainings.				
OBJECTIVE 3.2:	Fostering greater access to official statistics through new and improved dissemination tools.				
			Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:

OUTCOME Indicator 3.2.1	Number of followers of official accounts in social media	Year	2023	2027	Geostat, Department of International and Public Relations
		Indicator	24 000	30 000	
OUTCOME Indicator 3.2.2	Number of downloads of official data (excel files, databases, publications)		Baseline	Target	Sources of Verification:
		Year	2023	2027	Geostat, Information Technology Department
		Indicator			
Risks:	Limited engagement of users with the new tools, lack of human and financial capacity to develop and maintain sufficient number of new dissemination tools.				

Figure 5 Logical framework

7. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation

The coordination mechanism established for 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 № 308 dated 15 August 2023 for the strategy development, will continue to exist over the whole strategy period, 2024-2027, to monitor the implementation of the NSDS and ensure interagency coordination. The Council members are: the Executive Director of Geostat, as chairman of the Council; Deputy Ministers from all relevant line Ministries, the Vice President of the National Bank of Georgia, and a 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 Council will meet at least once a year to discuss the progress of NSDS implementation and any challenges associated with the process. Additionally, the Council will approve annual monitoring reports.

Similarly, Interagency working groups established by the Council for elaboration of the NSDS 2024-2027 and action plan will be maintained to ensure effective implementation of the NSDS and implementation plans at the technical level. In 2025 they will be involved in the elaboration of the NSDS Action Plan 2026-2027. The Interagency working groups will be preserved to 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 scope of work for working groups was approved by the Interagency Council.

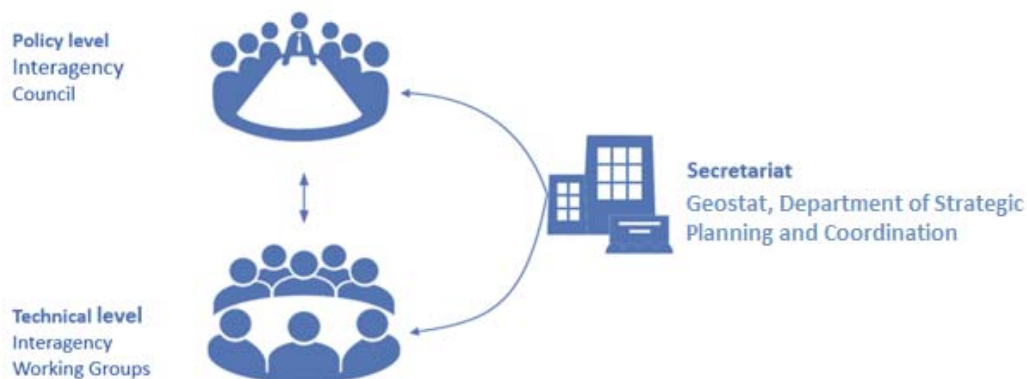


Figure 6 Coordination mechanism

NSDS 2024-2027 implementation and its monitoring will be coordinated by a Secretariat provided by the Geostat Department of Strategic Planning and Coordination. Geostat is also responsible for implementing all three strategic goals and associated objectives as well as monitoring their implementation using indicators defined by Logical Framework.

The estimated budget for NSDS implementation is **XX** – will be updated. The estimated budget for action plan 2024-2025 is 30,454,480 GEL, the largest share of which is expenses on Census related works. Out of this amount 10,000 GEL is deficit. Cooperation with international partners and donor coordination meetings will be used to mobilize the needed resources to fill the deficit. Considering the small volume of

the deficit amount, the realistic scenario assumes it is mobilized through Donor coordination activities or, in the most pessimistic case, this activity may be reconsidered for the next action plan for 2026-2027.

The following communication channels will be used to communicate the results and progress of NSDS implementation for interested parties and a wider audience. Geostat website with a dedicated section on NSDS (<https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/630/statistikis-ganvitarebis-strategia>) will be the main source of information on progress and results of NSDS and action plan implementation. The section will include approved NSDS 2024-2027, the implementation plan for 2024-2025 and 2026-2027 (once elaborated) as well as annual monitoring reports (approved by the Interagency Council) and evaluation report (to be elaborated within 6 months after strategic period is over). Additionally, the section will include contact information for the Geostat representative responsible for NSDS, enabling any interested party to send inquiries concerning additional information related to progress and results of NSDS. Updates will be also shared via official accounts in social media.

NSDS and associated implementation plan includes measures to ensure engagement of stakeholders in NSDS implementation. For example, donor coordination meetings will allow both strengthened coordination, coordination of ongoing and planned activities and feedback loop to ensure consideration of international partners views and suggestions.

Monitoring

The monitoring process will start in parallel with NSDS implementation. Responsible entities mentioned in the action plan will provide quarterly updates on activity implementation in the form of status reports to the Secretariat. The Secretariat is responsible for data collection, its processing and elaboration of progress reports. All activities will be monitored using output indicators as per the M&E plan. Two types of reports will be developed based on monitoring data:

- A progress report will be developed twice per year and will represent the measured progress of various activities implementation.
- An annual report will measure progress based on output and outcomes indicators considering the implementation rate of activities and objectives. The plan will be published on the Geostat website no later than 60 days after the reporting period. Additionally, the annual report will be presented to the Interagency Council and distributed within interagency working groups.

Table 1 Monitoring and Evaluation Calendar

Type of report	Due date	Comment
Progress report for I-IIQ 2024	July 2024	Shared with Interagency working groups
Progress report for III-IVQ 2024	January 2025	Shared with Interagency working groups
Annual report for 2024	February 2025	Approved by the Interagency Council and Published on Geostat website
Progress report for I-IIQ 2025	July 2025	Shared with Interagency working groups
Progress report for III-IVQ 2025	January 2026	Shared with Interagency working groups
Annual report for 2025	February 2026	Approved by the Interagency Council and Published on Geostat website
Progress report for I-IIQ 2026	July 2026	Shared with Interagency working groups
Progress report for III-IVQ 2026	January 2027	Shared with Interagency working groups

Annual report for 2026	February 2027	Approved by the Interagency Council and Published on Geostat website
Progress report for I-IIQ 2027	July 2027	Shared with Interagency working groups
Progress report for III-IVQ 2027	January 2028	Shared with Interagency working groups
Annual report for 2027	February 2028	Approved by the Interagency Council and Published on Geostat website
Evaluation report	June 2028	Developed by external consultant. Report will be approved by the Interagency Council and published on Geostat website.

The structure of progress and annual reports will follow Annex 7 of GoG ordinance # 629. Both reports will be developed considering the following principles: timeliness, conciseness (providing only the most important information), consistency (offering only relevant information), and user-centricity (using plain language and graphs to ensure user comprehension).

Based on monitoring results analysis and discussion a decision will be made concerning the need for any changes in NSDS. In case such decision is made, the Secretariat will be responsible for presenting the proposed amendments project to the Interagency Council where the final decision will be made. Once approved, amendments will be sent to GoG for approval. However, a more effective mechanism of integration of results of monitoring and lessons learned is elaboration of the next implementation action plan in 2025 for 2026-2027. The plan will define the specific activities to achieve the set strategic goals and will incorporate any activities that were not implemented in the previous plan but are still considered to be relevant and important for strategic goals and objectives implementation.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the NSDS 2024-2027 will be conducted by an external independent consultant at the end of the strategy period. The evaluation process will be conducted in accordance with Annex 8 of GoG ordinance # 629. The evaluation timeline will be aligned with the timeline of the next NSDS development to ensure timely consideration of its recommendations and lessons learned for the next strategy. The tentative timeframe is the second half of 2027. The evaluation will use the following criteria: Compliance of strategy goals and objectives with national development priorities and relevant policies, effectiveness (whether targets defined by the objectives are reached), cost efficiency of strategy achievements, sustainability and impact. The evaluation report will follow the same principles as annual monitoring reports, namely: timeliness, conciseness, consistency, and user-centricity. The evaluation report will be publicly available on the Geostat website. It will be also distributed to the Interagency Council and Interagency working groups.

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.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I – Action Plan 2024-2025

ANNEX II - Budget tool (detailed description of costs per each activity)

ANNEX III – Indicators passport

ANNEX IV - Stakeholder consultation report