STRATEGIC PLAN

2025/2026 – 2029/2030

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

stats sa

Department:
Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

G20
SOUTH AFRICA 2025

2030 NDP

Strategic Plan
2025/2026–2029/2030

Statistics South Africa
Risenga Maluleke, Statistician-General

Strategic Plan 2025/2026–2029/2030

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Contents

Glossary

No.	Word or Phrase	Definition
i.	Bimodal	A bimodal approach is the practice of managing two separate but coherent improvement initiatives towards digital transformation. One is focused on predictable methods of improving efficiencies and systems, and it is less risky. While the other is exploratory, riskier and is about finding new solutions.
ii.	Big data	Big data refers to large and complex data sets that are difficult to process using traditional methods. It is characterised by high volume, velocity, and variety of data.
iii.	Data ecosystem	The data ecosystem is defined as a complex network or interconnected system. It is an evolving system where emerging digital technologies have given rise to new and non-traditional data sources and new analytical methods which were previously not possible. This community of interacting entities, as well as the policy environment in which new data users and producers operate, creates an extended data ecosystem of many new actors with new capabilities.
iv.	Data science	Data science is a multidisciplinary field that uses scientific methods, processes, algorithms, and systems to extract knowledge and insights from structured and unstructured data.
v.	Digital transformation	Digital transformation is the integration of digital technology into all areas of an organisation, changing the business model and delivering value to users, while staying relevant in an ever-changing digital economy.
vi.	Disruptions	Disruption refers to a situation in which emerging methodologies, technologies or approaches in data collection, analysis, or reporting significantly challenge and potentially divert stakeholders or data users from traditional statistical processes and established practices.
vii.	Integrated Indicator Framework	The Integrated Indicator Framework consists of development indicators from the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and the National Development Plan.
viii.	National Statistics System	The National Statistics System (NSS) is the ensemble of statistical organisations and units within the Republic of South Africa that jointly collect, process and disseminate official and other statistics.
ix.	Stakeholders	Stakeholders of Statistics South Africa include suppliers of data, producers and users of statistical information.
x.	Work Programme	The Work Programme, as captured in the Statistics Act, refers to the Annual Performance Plan of Statistics South Africa.

Foreword by the Minister

"Good policy is grounded in evidence and informed by data." – Justin Parkhurst

It is my privilege to present Statistics South Africa's (Stats SA) 5-year strategic plan, knowing it stems from deep thought and forward-looking vision from our institution's leaders and staff in response to the increasing demand for statistical information to guide policy- and decision-making. This blueprint continues the work initiated by the previous strategy (2020/21–2024/25), maintaining the same strategic direction of enhancing the lives of South African citizens through the data ecosystem.

The state has outlined three strategic priorities in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), these are: (1) Inclusive growth and job creation; (2) Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living; and (3) Build a capable, ethical and developmental state. The President, in the February 2025 State of the Nation Address, emphasised the goal of building a capable state, essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and our National Development Plan (NDP).

There are several global political collaborations that provide South Africa with opportunities to strengthen its economy through increased trade, investment, and regional integration. Among them we have BRICS membership, G20 Presidency, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) initiatives. These collaborations come at a crucial time, as the world faces multiple overlapping crises such as climate change, underdevelopment, inequality, and geopolitical instability. South Africa aims to address these challenges by fostering partnerships and promoting the spirit of Ubuntu, which emphasises interconnectedness and collective well-being.

Accurate data and statistics are essential for policy- and decision-makers, as they offer a factual basis that enables policymakers to comprehend the scope and impact of issues before implementing solutions. By designing sustainable policies and programmes, we can enhance our economy, society, and environment, ultimately improving the lives of our citizens.

Reliable data attract investors by offering a clear picture of the business environment, aiding in investment decisions. Additionally, statistics allow for international comparisons, helping South Africa adopt best practices and improve competitiveness. They guide resource allocation to areas of greatest need and promote public accountability by providing evidence of government performance.

The role of statistics in policy and decision-making must therefore be elevated in society. By integrating statistics into these processes, we can ensure that policies are based on reality, effectively addressing actual needs and challenges in society.

The President signed the amendments to the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999) into law in December 2024. The Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999), as amended (Act No. 29 of 2024) aims to advance statistical production and coordination in the country.

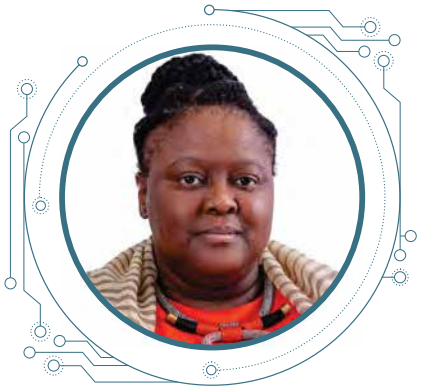
Over the next five years, Stats SA aims to expand its statistical coverage to respond to the growing demand as well as to help the state pinpoint its achievements and challenges, particularly at local government level, to deliver on the District Development Model. This approach will foster innovation through an agile operating model, allowing society to benefit from insightful data, envisioned as the foundation for success. The strategic plan serves as a valuable tool for government to utilise statistical data to track the progress of the NDP's goals, which have set higher standards for achieving a national democratic society.

Given the significant pressure on the fiscus, which may persist into the next decade, it is crucial to engage all relevant stakeholders, including suppliers, producers, and users. Through these collaborations, Stats SA can harness the necessary capabilities across data ecosystems to enhance statistical outputs. This collaborative effort will lead to a more effective statistical production model, where stakeholders coexist and generate value through the statistical system.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Ms Nonceba Mhlauli, for the continued role in providing support to Stats SA. I also extend my gratitude to the Statistician-General and the leadership team at Stats SA for developing a well-considered strategic roadmap. Additionally, I acknowledge the South African Statistics Council, under the chairmanship of Dr Nompumelelo Mbele, for their consistent and valuable guidance.

Hon. Khumbudzo Ntshavheni
Minister in the Presidency

Foreword by the Chairperson of the Statistics Council



South Africa requires quality statistics to achieve evidence-based planning and monitor the effectiveness of its policies over time. This strategic plan shows how Stats SA is innovating to meet the data demands and maintain the production of quality official statistics. However, there is a finite limit to what is possible when the funding restrictions placed on Stats SA by the government have resulted in a 21,3% vacancy rate as of December 31, 2024. While the nation's economic climate is generally constrained, it is critical to note that Stats SA is a vital source of information for governments, businesses, and the public, enabling evidence-based decision-making and informed policy-making across various sectors and spheres of government.

The South African Statistics Council recognizes that Stats SA is a critical government organisation that, through its adherence to international best practices in statistics, still manages to reinforce high levels of trust locally and internationally. This is through continuous production of high-quality products that reflect the nation's demographic, economic, and social conditions. The current financial challenges facing Stats SA put constraints on its operation and ability to maintain its reputation for statistical excellence. It is against this backdrop that the Council applauds Stats SA's decision to alter its medium- and short-term plans to positively respond to its challenges – necessity has driven innovation, but innovation has its limits. Therefore, if the standard of quality statistical products that the nation and international community hail South Africa for are to be maintained, Stats SA requires funding.

Council fully agrees with Stats SA's new vision of "Improving lives through data ecosystems" and the mission to "transform the production, coordination and use of statistics through optimisation, partnerships and innovation". Data innovation is crucial for national statistical agencies as it enables them to collect, analyse, and disseminate data more effectively, leading to enhanced insights, and better resource allocation for achieving sustainable development goals and other public policy objectives. This requires empowered ICT governance, cybersecurity, and risk management systems, which the strategic plan identifies as key areas of focus.

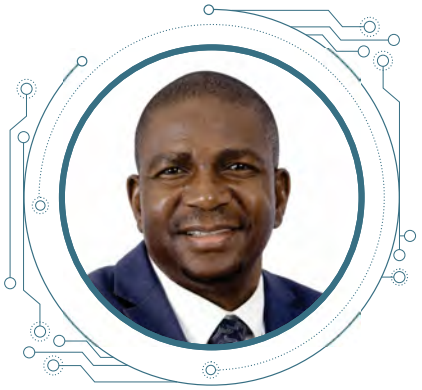
In the new vision, four strategic outcomes are key:

- Insightful data;
- An agile operating model;
- Interconnected statistical systems; and
- Transformed capabilities.

The council will fulfil its mandate of overseeing the work of Stats SA in these areas. The strategic priorities of sustaining the quality of national indicators, driving statistical reform, and driving a transformation and change agenda to optimise, innovate, and diversify the operations and capability of the organisation in the data ecosystem are supported by the Council.

Dr Nompumelelo Mbele
Chairperson of the South African Statistics Council

Introduction by the Statistician-General



"The best strategies are those that are adaptable, flexible and responsive to change circumstances." – Henry Mintzberg

In today's rapidly evolving world, it is imperative that we adapt our business model to respond effectively to disruptions and changes in the environment, ensuring we stay ahead of the curve and are not left behind. Our five-year strategic plan is designed to guide us in this endeavour, with a vision of *Improving lives through data ecosystems*. To achieve this, our core capabilities must be adaptable, enabling us to respond swiftly and effectively to the ever-changing landscape.

National statistics organisations (NSOs) globally are focusing on several strategic developments to enhance their capabilities and meet ever-evolving statistical demands. Most NSOs are strengthening their National Statistical Systems (NSS) to improve governance and data quality, embracing digital transformation using big data and artificial intelligence (AI), and investing in capacity building for staff. They are also working on integrating various data sources to provide comprehensive statistics, improving data accessibility through open data initiatives, and fostering international collaboration to share best practices.

At a continental level, African countries are implementing the African Charter on Statistics and the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA). These initiatives aim to improve the quality and comparability of statistics across the continent, supporting evidence-based policy-making and integration. Additionally, the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (CTGAP) provides a framework for enhancing statistical capacity and data quality to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requirements, improving the country's progress towards sustainable development.

At the SADC level, the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) and the SADC Protocol on Statistics are key frameworks guiding statistical development. These frameworks focus on harmonising statistical methodologies, improving data quality, and fostering regional cooperation. The region emphasises the development of sector-specific statistics, such as poverty, agriculture, and infrastructure, to support regional development goals. These efforts at the global, continental, and SADC levels aim to strengthen statistical systems, enhance data quality, and support sustainable development across all nations.

South Africa has assumed the G20 Presidency, five years away from 2030. The theme for South Africa's presidency is "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability." Like other countries, South Africa will report on its progress on the SDGs, led by Stats SA,

which harnesses available data for use as official statistics. The signing of the Statistics Amendment Act, 2024 (Act No. 29 of 2024) requires the organisation to elevate its capability to deliver on its mandate despite funding constraints.

We are continuing with our strategic direction that we have set in 2020, having crafted a robust path to achieve an agile operating model that is responsive to a changing landscape. We will forge new partnerships within the data ecosystem to source diverse data and capabilities, enhancing the country's statistical information system. Our commitment includes investing in research and conducting in-depth data analysis for new and improved insights. We aim to revolutionise our business operations by exploring innovative methods, technologies, and systems, including building robust technical capabilities. Adapting to these changes will necessitate a new mindset from both leadership and staff, facilitated by a comprehensive culture-shift programme.

The organisation has identified three key strategic priorities:

- sustaining and protecting the quality of national indicators to inform evidence-based decisions and bringing new insights to users;
- driving statistical reform through strengthening statistical coordination and the National Statistics System (NSS) in the country; and
- driving a transformation and change agenda to optimize, innovate, and diversify the operations and capability of the organisation in the data ecosystem.

Sustainable funding of the statistical function in the country remains a challenge. Stats SA is in a race for survival, but advancements in technology, such as AI and digital transformation, can significantly enhance efficiency and create new opportunities. We will be reviewing and adapting our business model and operating model over the next five years to increase and enhance the experience of our stakeholders.

Despite all these challenges, we have successfully delivered on our mandate over the past few years. I extend my gratitude to the Stats SA staff for their dedication and hard work. I also thank the Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Ms Nonceba Mhlauli, for her unrelenting guidance to Stats SA. Additionally, I wish to thank the Minister in the Presidency, Honourable Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, for her leadership in sustaining the work of Stats SA and preserving our independence. Lastly, I appreciate the support of the South African Statistics Council, chaired by Dr Nompumelelo Mbele, for their essential advisory role on official statistics in our country.

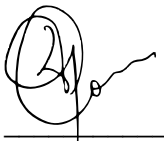
We will continue to challenge ourselves, broadening our horizons and expanding our perspectives to elevate this organisation to new heights, even in the face of challenging circumstances, disruptions and fiscal constraints.

Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General of South Africa

Official Sign-Off

It is hereby certified that this Strategic Plan:

- Was developed by the management of Statistics South Africa under the guidance of the Minister in the Presidency, Honourable Khumbudzo Ntshavheni.
- Considers all the relevant policies, legislation and other mandates for which Statistics South Africa is responsible.
- Accurately reflects the impact, outcomes and outputs which Statistics South Africa will endeavour to achieve over the period 2025/2026–2029/2030.



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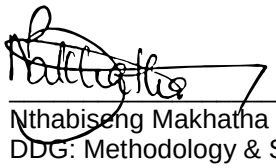

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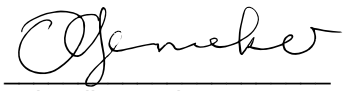

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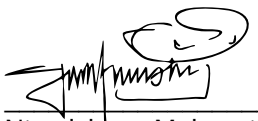

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Minister in the Presidency

Executive summary

The current statistical system is not aligned with the evolving data needs of society, and existing resources and capabilities are insufficient to meet these demands. This results in stakeholders lacking the necessary statistical information for evidence-based decision-making, policy development, and progress monitoring. Consequently, Stats SA's future relevance in the data ecosystem is at risk, potentially leading to negative social and economic impacts.

To address these challenges, the National Statistics System, through the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS), aims to close the information, quality, and capacity gaps. This will be achieved by leveraging alternative data sources, forming partnerships, and adopting new methodologies and technologies, requiring significant intervention and investment in the data ecosystem.

This strategy continues the work initiated by the previous strategy (2020/21–2024/25), maintaining the same strategic direction of Improving lives through data ecosystems.

The strategy aims to foster evidence-based decisions that enhance and inform policy development, planning, monitoring, and evaluation by increasing the supply and use of statistical information in the data ecosystem through optimisation, innovation, partnerships and diversification.

Stats SA will pursue the following four strategic outcomes to transform the country's statistical landscape:

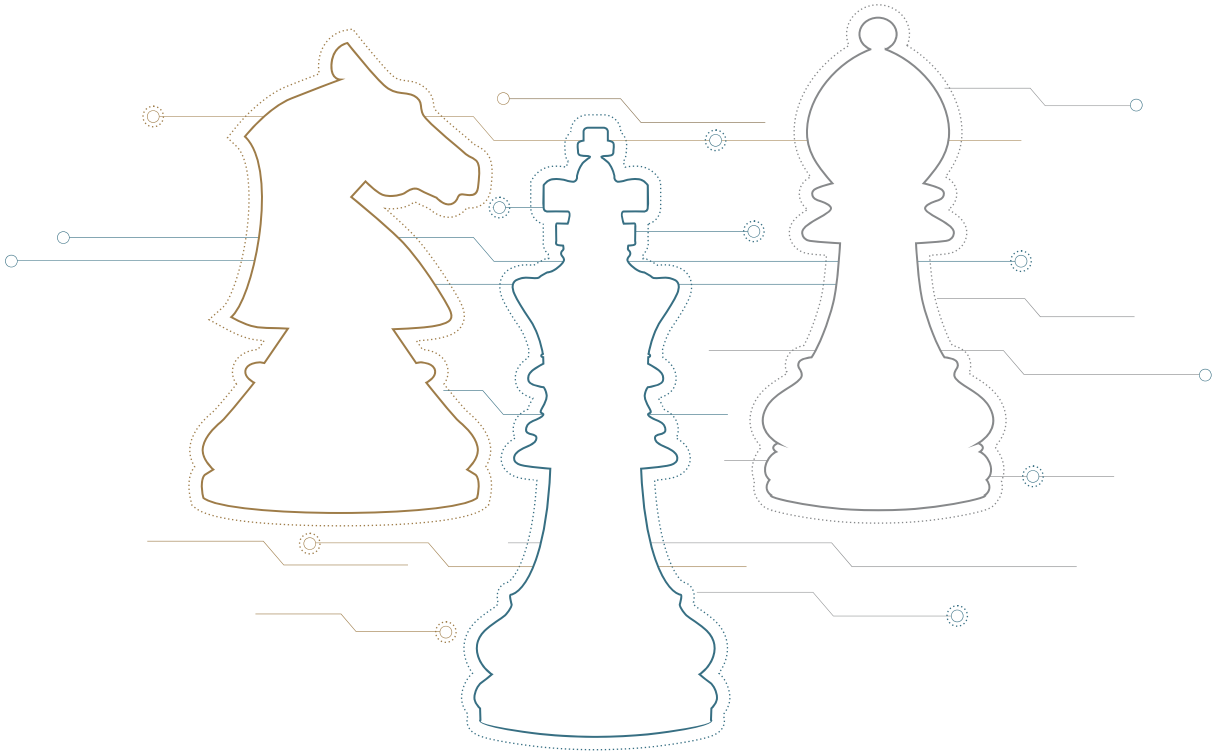
1. **Insightful Data**: Providing data and information that meet user demands, offering deeper insights for informed decision-making.
2. **Agile Operating Model**: Ensuring efficient and flexible business operations supported by robust methods and standards.
3. **Interconnected Statistical Systems**: Promoting collaboration and interconnectedness among people, data systems, institutions, and technology.
4. **Transformed Capability**: Enhancing the capabilities of the organisation's people, systems, technology, and the National Statistical System to be future-ready.

Stats SA will focus on the implementation of the strategy as follows:

1–2 years (Tactics & Strategy): We are optimising and innovating our business processes to provide high-quality basic statistics while fostering and strengthening strategic partnerships within the data ecosystem. We will invest in our research capabilities to allow for innovation, ensuring continuity without disrupting daily operations. We will continue to explore alternative data sources to expand our statistical information base. Additionally, we will begin developing statistical regulations and a national strategy for the development of statistics to implement the amended Statistics Act. We will also invest in our staff's capabilities to lead the digital transformation journey.

3–5 years (Strategy): During this period, we follow the bimodal approach in our methods of work, exploring transformative initiatives as we are looking for new ways of doing our work. Modernising our business processes will continue to reduce the cost of doing business. We will commence with the implementation of key building blocks in the NSS as we roll out the amended Statistics Act.

We will actively collaborate with external stakeholders in the data ecosystem to establish a capable national statistics system for the country and transform alternative data sources into official statistics. In this period, we continue taking significant steps to ensure that a vibrant end-to-end enterprise architecture is in place. We are taking bold steps to invest in the upskilling of our staff for the future.



Part A: Our mandate

Who are we?

1. Introduction

"Statistics: the mathematical science of making decisions based on uncertainty." – Wallis et al.

Making tough decisions in an uncertain and fast-changing world requires a steadfast commitment to statistics and evidence-based reasoning. By grounding decisions in empirical data and sound statistical analysis, leaders can navigate ambiguity and uncertainty with greater confidence. Statistics and evidence-based decisions provide a beacon of objectivity in uncertain times, enabling leaders to make informed, data-driven choices that drive progress, growth and sustainable development.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, in the 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA), said: "*Our most urgent task is to grow our economy so that we can create jobs, reduce poverty and improve the lives of all South Africans."* Leveraging data as an infrastructure enhances democracy by enabling the monitoring of progress, identifying areas that need improvement, and ensuring that development initiatives are both effective and inclusive. The country needs insightful data to guide better decision-making, fostering transparency, accountability, and equitable growth, enhancing the well-being of its citizens.

The importance of accurate and reliable data has never been more critical, especially in today's data-driven world. The statistical system in South Africa does not meet the country's diverse and emerging data needs. However, there are numerous opportunities within the data ecosystem to capitalise on, such as exploring the use of emerging technologies and alternative data sources to supplement official statistics.

National Statistics Offices (NSOs) across the globe are exploring the use of big data, using emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to identify patterns and trends that might not be visible through traditional methods and enhance timeliness and relevance of official statistics. The use of alternative data sources as well as geospatial data can reduce the burden on respondents and increase the depth and frequency of statistical outputs. These will require investments in new capabilities by NSOs and strengthened collaborations with both public and business partners in the data ecosystem.

The future of data and statistics enabled by technology is exciting. At the core of the strategy is the digital transformation of Stats SA to better achieve our mandate. This will enable us to redefine our business model, delivering more diverse product and service offerings to inform better policy-making and decision-making impacting the lives of South Africans.

To address the data and quality gap, and adapt to external changes and disruptions, Stats SA will focus on the following priorities over the next five years:

- sustaining the quality of national indicators to inform evidence-based decisions and bringing new insights to users;
- driving statistical reform through strengthening statistical coordination and the National Statistics System (NSS) of the country; and
- driving a transformation and change agenda to optimise, innovate and diversify the operations and capability of the organisation in the data ecosystem.

1.1 The purpose of the Strategic Plan 2025/2026–2029/2030

The 5-year Strategic Plan defines the direction of Stats SA, which is a continuation of the previous strategy, taking advantage of the data and digital revolution which provides a variety of alternative data sources and partners that can close the data, quality and skills gap.

The plan outlines the organisation's strategic direction in response to the external environment, including the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 and the renewed government priorities outlined in the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). The strategy will guide the annual Work Programme, the Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) and the Integrated Operational Plan as well as resource allocation over the next five years.

The 5-year strategy outlines:

- **Our mandate:** *'Who are we?'* It defines our legislative mandate and the strategic importance of Stats SA.
- **Our strategic focus:** *'Where do we want to be?'* It envisions the future and the impact of our efforts.
- **The situational analysis:** '*Where are we now?'* It discusses the current statistical production environment in the country, disruptions, global statistical developments, as well as achievements and challenges in Stats SA.
- **Measuring our performance:** *'How are we going to get there?'* It describes what we wish to achieve over the next five years, the strategic initiatives we intend to take and the key risks we are facing.
- **Monitoring our performance:** '*How do we measure our performance?*' It captures how we will monitor performance over the next five years, as outlined in the Technical Indicator Descriptions (TIDs).

2. Our mandate

2.1 The Statistics Act

Stats SA is a national government department accountable to the Minister in the Presidency. The activities of the Department are regulated by the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999), as amended (Act No. 29 of 2024), which ensures independence from political interference in the production, coordination and dissemination of official statistics. According to the Statistics Act, the purpose of official statistics is to assist organs of state, businesses, other organisations and the public in planning, decision-making, and monitoring or assessment of policies.

The Act makes provision for–

a) the Minister whose role is to prioritise the Work Programme of Stats SA and approve or disapprove the inception, variation or discontinuance of statistical collection, other than Stats SA;
b) the appointment of a Statistics Council whose role is to advise the Minister and the Statistician-General on any matter relating to official statistics and statistical coordination. It further has a responsibility to promote and safeguard official statistics in the country; and
c) the appointment of a Statistician-General (SG) whose role in statistical production in the country can be summarised as follows:

Firstly, as the National Statistical Authority, to inform stakeholders on the economy, society and environment by:

- administering the Act;
- determining and exercising final responsibility regarding the implementation of the Work Programme of Stats SA, including the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of official statistics;
- developing and maintaining databases for national statistics on businesses and enumeration areas;
- designating statistics as official, of entities within the NSS; and
- liaising with other countries and statistical agencies as well as representing Stats SA and South Africa in statistical activities internationally.

Secondly, as the National Statistical Coordinator, to promote coordination among producers of official and other statistics to advance quality, comparability and optimum use of official statistics and to avoid duplication by:

- formulating quality criteria and establishing standards, classifications and procedures;
- providing statistical advice;
- advancing the quality, consistency, comparability and optimum use of official statistics and avoid unnecessary duplication; and
- promote a public culture of measurement.

2.2 Other legislative and policy interdependencies

There are several legislative and policy frameworks governing the statistical system globally and nationally.

At a global level, the United Nations (UN) has adopted the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (see Annexure A) to safeguard and guide national statistics offices. The United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) annually discusses various work streams that lead to new frameworks and classifications, including updates to the System of National Accounts (SNA). Key focus areas include globalisation, digitalisation, and more.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030. Additionally, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) developed the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) to guide countries seeking access to international capital markets. This standard provides best practices for disseminating socio-economic and financial data. South Africa is a signatory to the SDDS.

The G20 (Group of 20) is the premier forum for global economic co-operation. It brings together leaders and policymakers from the world's major economies to discuss key economic, development and social issues. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides substantive and strategic support to G20 workstreams through evidence-based analysis, data, standards, and tools. This will inform the G20 action plan to address shared challenges, from tackling climate change and the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI), to strengthening the global tax system and supporting sustainable development.

During the BRICS summit held in South Africa in January 2024, new member states were admitted to form what is now referred to as the BRICS+, comprising the five original states, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) plus Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. The expanded BRICS is estimated to account for 37,3 % of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and could benefit South Africa with expanded market access and cooperation. This could boost the country's economic output, stimulate and grow new sectors, lead to more innovation, and enhance the country's competitiveness.

At a continental level, the African Union Commission has adopted the African Charter on Statistics to guide African Statistical Systems in relation to best statistical practices and principles (see Annexure B). In 2015, African leaders adopted the policy framework, Agenda 2063, as the continent's long-term vision that aims to optimise the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of the continent's people. This is implemented through various sectoral strategies.

The Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) II was drafted with the goal to further enhance the quality and reach of statistics across Africa. This will be achieved by creating high-quality comparable data; broadening the range of available statistical information; and standardise methods and practices across the statistical value chain (SVC). This involves overseeing the production of accurate statistics, setting up effective coordination and collaboration systems, and identifying key priorities to support regional integration and development.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has established the Statistics Protocol and the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) (2020–2030) to guide statistical developments. These frameworks aim to enhance statistical capacity and ensure reliable, comparable statistics for regional integration and development.

At a national level, South Africa has developed a long-term National Development Plan (NDP) towards 2030, which aims to address the triple threat of poverty, unemployment and inequality. The Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) serves as the 5-year medium-term plan for the 7th administration of government, which sets targets and goals to guide implementation of the NDP. At a district level, the country continues to facilitate service delivery through the District Development Model (DDM) to help Local Government Institutions better plan, budget and implement government priorities. These policy frameworks present a growing need for statistics that are comparable globally. Stats SA developed an integrated indicator framework (IIF) to align the demand for statistical information to these policy frameworks.

In South Africa, there are legislation and frameworks that may impact on the supply and use of statistical information, including:

- Deeds Registries Act No. 47 of 1937 (Deeds Act)
- Tax Administration Act No. 28 of 2011 (the TAA)
- National Health Act No. 61 of 2003
- Births and Deaths Registration Act No. 51 of 1992
- Tourism Act No. 3 of 2014
- The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, Act No. 16 of 2013 (SPLUMA)
- Just Transition (2023)
- Policy Framework for Integrated Planning (PFIP), 2022
- Energy Regulation Amendment Act (2024)

2.3 Institutional policies and strategies over the five-year planning period

Stats SA reviewed the statistical legislation in the country. The Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999), as amended (Act No. 29 of 2024) will be rolled out in phases over the next five years.

Stats SA will focus on the following strategies to enable implementation of the strategic plan:

- National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS)
- Digital transformation strategy
- Integrated Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy
- Integrated stakeholder management strategy
- Skills development strategy
- Transformation and change agenda
- Data strategy for South Africa

Part B: Our strategic focus

Where do we want to be?

Our strategic focus

"In strategy it is important to see distant things as if they were close and to take a distanced view of close things." – Miyamoto Musashi (1584 to 1645)

Stats SA's vision, mission and values form the basis of our strategy.

3. Vision

'Improving lives through data ecosystems.'

4. Mission

'To transform the production, coordination and use of statistics through optimisation, partnerships and innovation.'

5. Our culture and values

Our culture embraces innovation and accountability, empowering individuals with an 'It starts with me' mindset. This encourages ownership, creative problem-solving, and a commitment to excellence. By aligning our culture with strategy, we drive efficiency and foster a positive work environment through four core pillars: embracing change, fostering meaningful engagement, leading with integrity and decisiveness, and championing a people-first approach.

Our culture is shaped by the core values of the organisation, guiding behaviour and decision-making. These values create a cohesive culture that aligns everyone towards a common goal, influencing our policies, practices, and overall identity, including how we interact with both internal and external stakeholders. Our values are:

- *Integrity*: Integrity is at the heart of our organisation. We hold ourselves accountable for our actions and decisions, maintaining honesty, ethics, trustworthiness, and transparency in everything we do. Our professional conduct forms a strong foundation for all interactions and behaviours. We are committed to prompt and consistent consequence management
- *Empower & Partner:* We foster partnerships to enhance coordination and collaboration, ensuring meaningful engagement with our stakeholders. We cultivate a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing to drive both organisational and individual growth. By maintaining openness and transparency, we advance teamwork and create an environment where everyone feels valued.
- *Caring & Respect:* Mutual respect is fundamental to our organisation. We place great value on our staff, who are at the heart of our organisation. Our culture prioritizes helpfulness and kindness, fostering a supportive environment. We embrace diversity and mutual respect, guided by compassion and empathy, and celebrate everyone's unique contributions.

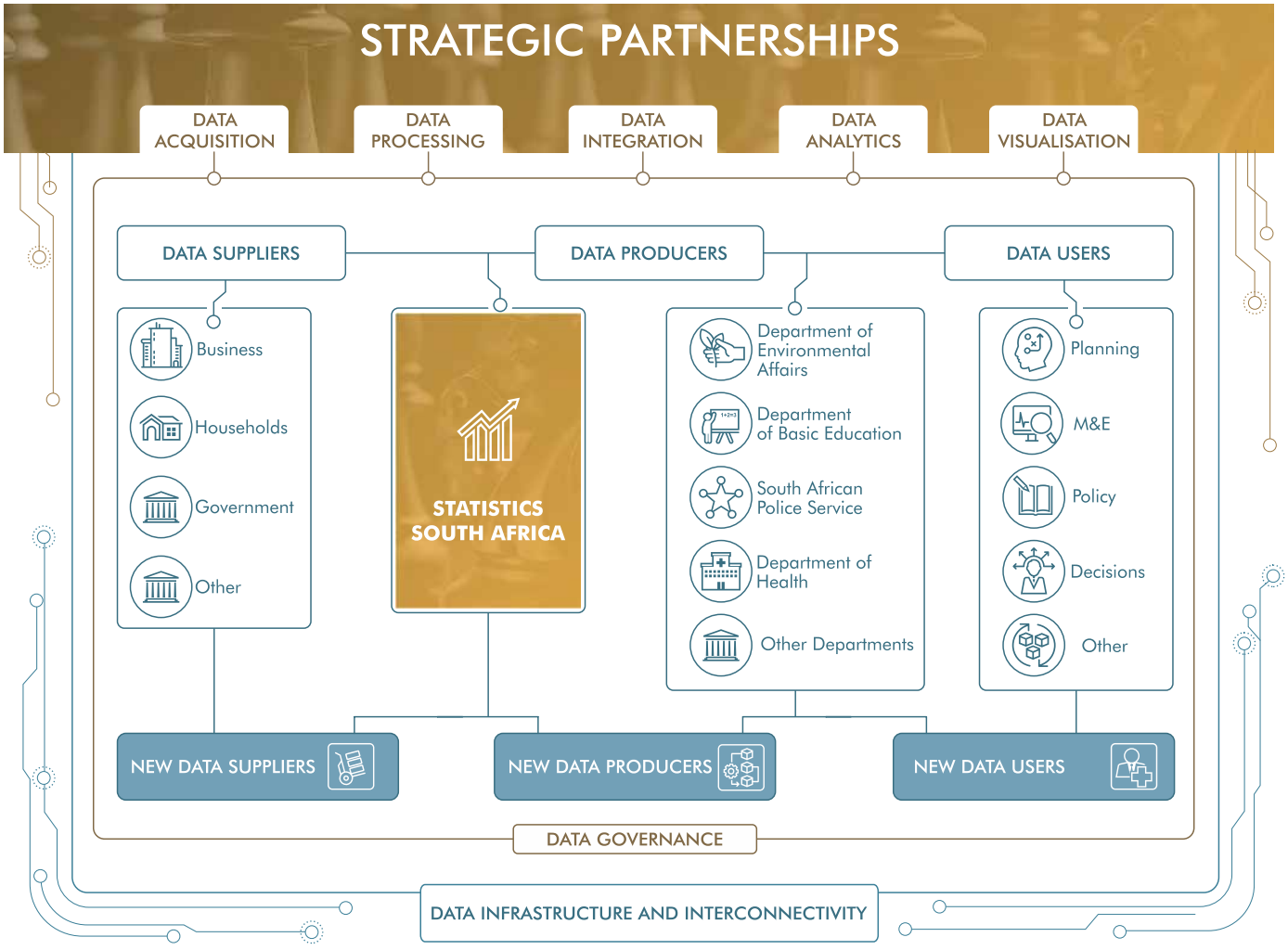
- *Serve & Innovate:* We are dedicated to serving our stakeholders by delivering products and services that meet their needs and expectations, in line with Batho Pele principles. We drive innovation to respond to disruptions, remaining adaptive and flexible. We are committed to deliver high-quality products and services that align with international best practices.

6. Data ecosystem

The data ecosystem is defined as a complex network or interconnected system that aims to connect people, systems and technology.

It is an evolving system where emerging technologies have given rise to new and non-traditional data sources and new analytical methods that were previously not possible. This community of interacting entities as well as the policy environment, in which new data users and producers operate, creates an extended data ecosystem of many new actors with new capabilities (adapted from Paris21).

Our vision will be realised if policy and development programmes are underpinned by a vibrant data ecosystem that provides information and insights for evidence-based decisions.



Part C: Situational Analysis

Where are we now?

7. Situational analysis

"Analysis is the critical starting point of all strategic thinking." – Brian Tracy

The situational analysis provides strategic insight that will inform the organisational strategic direction. It assisted the organisation to set realistic goals, allocate resources efficiently, and develop action plans that are aligned with both internal capabilities and external realities. It sets a strong foundation to ensure Stats SA remains relevant, effective, and capable of meeting the demands of stakeholders in a dynamic environment.

7.1 External environment

Stats SA, like many NSOs worldwide, is experiencing disruptions in the external environment that present opportunities as well as risks to the organisation. The environmental analysis enables Stats SA to understand the competitive landscape, guiding the creation of robust strategies that are proactive, resilient, and aligned with the external realities in the environment.

7.1.1 Political environment

The national elections that were held in 2024 gave birth to the establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in the 7th administration. This transformation has reshaped the structure and the influence of the political sphere.

A comprehensive 30-year review was conducted, reflecting on South Africa's democracy from 1994 to 2024. This review highlighted key milestones, ongoing challenges, and our collective efforts to build an inclusive and equitable society. Census 2022 revealed how much our country has changed, including an increase of approximately 21,4 million people since 1996. There have been major shifts due to migration patterns and immense potential in the youth population. Without official statistics, it would have been impossible to measure the development and progress the country has made.

Following numerous uncertainties that the country is facing, from economic fluctuations to natural disasters, government conducted scenario planning. Three future scenarios were developed to better understand potential risks and opportunities. Key Driving Forces (KDFs) as dynamic factors were identified, which sketched possibilities for numerous interconnected possible futures for the country. These KDFs formed a baseline towards the development of the 2024–2029 MTDP. The scenarios are defined as follows:

a) Hadeda Home defining the country as a recrimination nation. This scenario shows a South Africa where the state and society are in slow decline. No decisive action is taken to improve matters and, instead, blaming everyone for South Africa's ills has become common practice. Deep structural constraints in the economy and slow economic growth remain unresolved, and 70% of South Africans say they do not trust politicians.

b) Vulture Culture describing a nation in desperation. In this scenario, by 2030, and on to 2035, South Africa is governed by a populist coalition whose main objective is self-enrichment and patronage. Investor confidence has been eroded; the growth rate is low, unemployment is high (44% with youth unemployment at 63%), and poverty and inequality are extremely serious.

c) Weaver Culture refering to the country as a cooperation nation. This is a scenario where, after disruptions and protests, there is a coming together of the political parties, the state, private sector, and civil society in order to jointly identify priorities and, leveraging the strengths of each, change the forms of governance and reform the economy in a way that attracts greater investment and helps to reduce unemployment, inequality and poverty.

The GNU, to ensure focus on critical challenges and avoid dissipating effort across too many objectives, introduced a minimum programme prioritizing the most important and impactful actions through a programmatic approach. It adopted the revised MTDP, guided by the 5-year implementation and monitoring of the NDP, reducing strategic priorities from seven to three to foster a positive trajectory towards achieving the 2030 vision. The three priorities of the MTDP are:

Strategic Priority 1: Inclusive growth and job creation
Strategic Priority 2: Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living
Strategic Priority 3: Build a capable, ethical and developmental state

Society expects that leaders from various political affiliations within the GNU will be held accountable, leading to a heightened interest in statistics for planning and monitoring, thereby increasing the relevance of Stats SA.

Stats SA's primary mandate is to generate and share statistical data that will inform evidence-based decision-making to improve the lives of SA citizens, irrespective of the state of the economy and society. This includes measuring inclusive growth and job creation, poverty levels and the cost of living. The organisation publishes more than 270 statistical releases annually, mostly up to a provincial level. Stats SA developed an integrated indicator framework (IIF) that aims to align stakeholder needs at national, continental and global level. Linking policy (the demand) and supply of statistics highlighted the data gap that exists, especially at lower geographic levels. External stakeholder engagements supported the need to produce data at lower geographic levels.

In response, the organisation aims to introduce new social, economic, and environmental statistics by investing in alternative data sources and leveraging on partnerships, emerging technologies and methodologies within the data ecosystem, thereby increasing the stock of data for better insights.

7.1.2 Economic reality

"Given our difficult past, and some of the inevitable challenges we have faced as a young democracy trying to find its place in a world marked by a number of new and overlapping crises, it would be easy to indulge in extremes, either of blind optimism or crippling pessimism. We should resist both these extremes." – Enoch Godongwana, Minister of Finance: Budget Speech, 2024

South Africa has experienced over a decade of weak economic growth with GDP growth averaging 0,8% annually since 2012, entrenching high levels of unemployment and poverty. Energy and water disruptions, as well as operational constraints in freight rail and ports, continue to disrupt economic activity and the well-being of citizens. To reverse the trend and achieve sustainable economic growth, the government is focusing on energy and logistics reforms, as well as implementing measures to halt the decline in state capacity. These challenges imply that there is little scope for any significant fiscus stimulus in the national statistics system. Citizens and government sectors, including Stats SA, are therefore negatively affected as a result of continued budgetary cuts, which put the quality of basic statistics at risk.

The need for accurate and reliable economic data has never been more critical, especially in today's economic climate. Stats SA is responsible for measuring key national economic indicators such as the gross domestic product, various price indices such as the consumer price index (CPI) and producer price index (PPI), financial statistics of the private and public sectors, and unemployment statistics, to mention a few. To sustain the quality of national indicators, Stats SA will need to re-assess the frequency, coverage and affordability of statistical series. Although emerging technologies and alternative data sources offer future opportunities to augment official statistics, it will require an investment in the short term to develop the necessary capability and capacity in the national statistics system.

Stats SA aims to sustain the production of official statistics that provide an evidence base for policy and decision-making, informing government's policy and planning response to the declining economy, albeit a declining budget.

7.1.3 Societal changes

"Despite all the challenges, despite our differences, despite all the headwinds, as South Africans we are called upon to remain firmly committed to pursue the path of cooperation, growth and inclusion." – SONA, 2024

South Africa introduced the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2012, aiming to tackle poverty and social inequality. Unfortunately, more than half of the population still lives below the national poverty line, with the black population being the most affected. The situation has worsened due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising prices of raw materials, energy and food.

South Africa made significant progress in gender equality, particularly in political representation, with women holding nearly 45% and youth (younger than 30 years) nearly 2,8% of parliamentary seats as of 2024. Education access for girls improved over the years, though economic disparities persist, with higher unemployment rates for women (35,8%) and youth aged 25–34 (41,7%) as at the end June 2024 (*Stats SA, Labour Statistics).*

Stats SA hosted the 9th United Nations Global Forum on Gender Statistics (9GFGS) during 2023/24, which shone the spotlight on gender equality, the care economy, and the mainstreaming of gender data. "The world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030," said the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Mr Stefan Schweinfest, who described the slow progress as a 'distressing reality'. Stats SA publishes

a special statistical report on gender statistics annually as part of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS). The organisation also chairs the South African discourse on gender statistics in the country.

Stats SA plays a crucial role in providing accurate data on social issues, which is essential for developing effective social policies. Given South Africa's diverse population, with its various ethnic groups, languages, and cultures, Stats SA must ensure that its statistical methods are inclusive and representative.

Stats SA is re-engineering its household survey programme. This programme will introduce a modular theme approach in its survey programme to respond to emerging social measurement needs.

7.1.4 Technology changes

"Technology is the engine that drives innovation." – Bill Gates

The advent of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) has caused organisations to operate in a volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world. The African Union developed a digital transformation strategy for Africa (2020–2030) with the objective of harnessing digital technologies and innovation to transform African societies and economies. This will promote Africa's integration, generate inclusive economic growth, stimulate job creation, break the digital divide, and eradicate poverty for the continent's socio-economic development and ensure Africa's ownership of modern tools of digital management.

South Africa published a National Digital and Future Skills Strategy, which aims to build digital awareness through funding, research, and coordination. The strategy focuses on several key areas, including digital infrastructure development; digital skills development; digital innovation and entrepreneurship; digital governance and cybersecurity. The strategy emphasises the importance of collaboration between government, private sector, and civil society to drive digital transformation in South Africa.

Stats SA's current technology and infrastructure are dated, inadequate, and obsolete. Technological advancements have significantly impacted cybersecurity and societal accessibility, posing a threat to the organisation. Additionally, reliance on other state entities presents challenges in progressing towards digital growth.

Digital transformation is no longer a choice, it has become a necessity. Stats SA will be developing a digital business transformation strategy that will guide digitalisation, automation and innovation. The digital transformation journey will require an investment in a flexible and robust ICT infrastructure to create a secure, agile, interoperable and interconnected statistical system and platform that will enable business growth. In addition, harnessing new emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) will require investment in research capability, training, and a willingness to adapt to new methodologies. At present, Stats SA does not have the required resources to fully implement the required digital transformation programme.

7.1.5 Environmental changes

Around the world, statistics agencies and various organisations have been keeping a close eye on the effects of environmental changes. These are associated with industrial revolution, driven by humanity, which has led to severe climate change and continuous natural disasters. The impact is severe, encompassing loss of human lives, biodiversity impacts, and destroyed infrastructure. This results in significant economic losses and damage to vital ecosystems, ultimately hindering progress towards sustainable development. These changes are also jeopardizing food security and migration patterns, requiring relevant data that, when analysed, can offer better insights for policymakers.

National economic accounts measure the gross domestic product (GDP) and track the performance of the economy whilst the population census and household surveys track social outcomes. The country needs a measurement system to track the natural environment. Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) allows key stakeholders to monitor how the natural environment is changing and what that means for people and the economy. NCA is a systematic approach to understanding the intricate relationship between natural resources, ecosystems, and society. It provides a lens through which society can recognise, understand, and integrate the value of nature into policy, planning, and decision-making processes.

Drawing from the internationally recognised System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), NCA provides a robust measurement framework for assessing our natural capital. In South Africa, where the importance of ecosystems and ecological infrastructure is increasingly acknowledged, NCA adds to the rich evidence base available to decision-makers.

Stats SA aims to expand its NCA series as captured in the national strategy for NCA, through partnerships and collaborations. Combined with other information, NCA and other natural capital approaches have the potential to disrupt conventional thinking and help to forge new pathways towards sustainable futures.

7.1.6 Industry changes

Data are often regarded as currency because of its value and versatility in the digital age. Various businesses use data strategically to gain more insights into market trends, to optimise their operations and enhance customer experiences. It therefore remains a crucial resource for organisations, especially government, as it helps them make better decisions and spark innovations that can drive positive change in countries. With the rapid advancements in the data revolution, NSOs worldwide are seeking innovative methods to adapt and stay current with these developments. These advancements require that organisations enhance data privacy regulations and implement robust data governance and compliance measures.

The following captures some of the trends in the statistics sector globally:

- *Data acquisition & processing:* NSOs are investigating the use of alternative data sources, including those from the private sector and adoption of multimode approaches to data acquisition, by partnering with new players in the data ecosystem.
- *Data integration:* The integration of various data sources to obtain new insights is an emerging need. Geospatial capability offers countries opportunities to enhance statistical products by integrating information to geo-location.
- *Data analytics:* Exploring alternative methodologies and technologies to analyse big data and seeking data-driven analytical capabilities to give insight to data.
- *Data visualisation:* Innovating dissemination platforms to enhance user experience to allow users to explore data in more detail, enabling a deeper understanding of the underlying information.
- *Data governance:* The focus is on creating frameworks to manage and protect data across borders. This emphasises the need for robust legal frameworks, ethical guidelines, and international cooperation to balance innovation with privacy and security.

Stats SA will invest in researching and adopting emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and large language models (LLMs) to enhance its business processes and capabilities. Quality will be embedded into all business processes to ensure that every aspect of our operations meets high standards and delivers value.

7.1.7 Legislative changes

Global legislations for statistical offices are designed to ensure the integrity, independence, and accountability of official statistics. Fit-for-purpose legal and regulatory frameworks are essential for the effective functioning of NSOs and NSS. These frameworks empower NSOs to steward the data ecosystem and ensure the delivery of quality data for informed policymaking.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has released helpful guidance aimed at assisting countries in updating their statistical legislation. This guidance emphasizes the importance of maintaining the independence and integrity of statistical systems. It also tackles current challenges like open data, data sharing and collaboration with other agencies. Additionally, it provides a legal framework that encourages the modernization of statistical systems, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in today's data-driven world.

PARIS21 developed the Statistical Capacity Monitor (SCM), which includes the Statistics Law Navigator. This tool is designed to improve access to and knowledge of statistical legislation, facilitating enhancements to statistical legal frameworks and contributing to the global discussion on modernizing national statistical systems.

The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) is South Africa's key legislation for safeguarding personal information and ensuring privacy. It represents a pivotal development in data protection in South Africa, particularly in the digital era where personal data collection and processing are integral to business activities. Stats SA is in compliance with POPIA.

Stats SA drafted an amendment bill to the statistics legislation, which is now signed into law. The Amendment Act will be rolled out over the next five years, impacting on Stats SA and other organs of state that are responsible for the production of official and other statistics. The Act makes provision for the development of regulations, which will enhance its implementation. To strengthen statistical coordination, the Act provides for establishing various coordination structures that will allow the organisation to partner with other data providers to ensure privacy and the use of emerging technology to gather information that is fit for purpose.

7.1.8 What external stakeholders are saying

Understanding the needs and expectations of stakeholders, including government institutions, non-government organisations (NGOs), businesses, and the public, helps in tailoring statistical products, services and improving the overall impact of Stats SA's work. Following the pandemic, exaggerated weather conditions and increasing crime, the response rates have generally dropped across all surveys, including for the population census that was conducted in 2022.

Stats SA collects user needs for the statistical products and services through an annual User Satisfaction Survey (USS), media perceptions monitored quarterly and focused product stakeholder consultations. The recent USS, conducted in 2023, revealed that only 53% of respondents felt Stats SA actively listens and provides feedback to stakeholders. However, it is encouraging that over 80% of them continue to trust Stats SA and consider its statistical products credible.

In response to the USS findings, Stats SA organised stakeholder consultation sessions that brought together various groups in the data ecosystem, ranging from academia, corporates such as banks, NGOs, government sectors and enterprises, etc. These sessions highlighted a strong and increasing demand for statistical information in South Africa. Through polls

conducted during these sessions, it was revealed that most participants rely on statistics for research, planning, decision-making and monitoring. When official statistics are unavailable, they often turn to alternative sources like their own administrative data or big data. Participants also pointed out key challenges with the current statistical system, highlighting the need for data at lower geographic levels, its timeliness, accessibility, and quality that respond to varying emerging needs.

Stats SA has introduced a multi-modal data collection approach to improve the coverage and response rate, providing alternative options for respondents to provide data and information to Stats SA. This approach will be piloted through a Continuous Population Survey, integrating most of the household surveys operations. Business survey areas are planning the use of Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) as an alternative mode of collection.

During stakeholder consultations, most of them indicated that Stats SA should take the lead in providing data stewardship and governance within the data ecosystem. They expect Stats SA to explore innovative methodologies and platforms in partnership with other participants in the data ecosystem. This will enhance statistical capability and data interoperability of various sources, in response to emerging service needs.

Stats SA on its own cannot respond to the data and/or statistical demands, and the plans to formulate partnerships in the data ecosystem will assist the country to better collate necessary data or statistics to close existing gaps. Stats SA has commenced with the use of alternative data sources from NSS partners, and this will be expanded to other participants in the data ecosystem. Development of a data strategy for South Africa will sharpen the role of Stats SA in the data ecosystem, including data governance.

7.2 Internal environment

"There is no question that the cultural environment within which we work has a profound impact on our energy and the way we choose to behave." – Kate Gately

The internal environmental analysis involved evaluating the organisation's internal resources, capabilities, and core competencies to identify strengths and weaknesses.

7.2.1 Inputs

Information and Technology Capital

Cutting-edge technologies and robust IT infrastructure while harnessing the power of data analytics are crucial for organisations to remain competitive. These innovations open new possibilities for the organisation, enabling smarter decision-making, automation, and predictive insights. It brings sophisticated cyber threats, including ransomware attacks and data breaches, which require organisations to invest heavily in advanced cybersecurity measures and threat detection systems.

Stats SA systems and processes are characterised by inefficiencies, fragmentation and duplications, leading to poor integration and security vulnerability. Some of the systems and technologies are considered obsolete while the technical debt on ICT infrastructure keeps growing. The changes in the organisational business model have not been afforded the modern technological support they require to thrive.

ICT human resources capacity – The ICT area experienced a significant exodus of skilled personnel due to the job market competition. This led to a high vacancy rate averaging 30% over the past three (3) financial years. The ICT current staff complement barely sustains the needed workforce to maintain the ICT services of the organisation. The government-wide austerity measures have exacerbated the decline in ICT funding. This curb in spending led to delayed upgrades and stabilisation of ICT infrastructure and discontinuation of use of certain software services, amongst others.

ICT governance, cybersecurity and risk management – the organisation's ICT governance and risk management landscape improved over time due to previous efforts and investments. However, these gains are at risk due to challenges like human resource shortages and inadequate funding. We are taking measures to update our ICT policies in line with the latest legislation and directives

Our ICT landscape is lagging behind our international counterparts, particularly in leveraging artificial intelligence (AI), networking infrastructure, and cloud computing technologies. Resource constraints are the primary factors contributing to this lag.

To address these challenges and harness the full potential of our information and technology capital, the organisation commenced with the establishment of an Enterprise Architecture (EA). The EA will facilitate the development of a robust and interconnected ICT platform designed to streamline data acquisition, integration, analytics, and visualization across the data ecosystem. The organisation prioritised the development of a digital transformation strategy that will outline a digital roadmap to guide investment in the ICT infrastructure, emerging technologies, security and an agile work environment. The strategy will be implemented over the medium term.

Human Capital

Staff profile: Stats SA has 2 599 filled posts out of 3 301 funded posts, resulting in a vacancy rate of 21,3% as at 31 December 2024. This vacancy rate continues to increase due to a declining fiscus. A comprehensive reprioritisation process will continue to identify critical posts.

Employment equity: As at the end of December 2024, females represent more than 55,4% of the total staff complement, whilst at SMS level, women represent 45,0% of filled SMS positions. The inability to fill vacancies over the last few years continues to impact negatively on achieving employment equity targets. The number of youths employed in Stats SA is 184, which translates to 7,1% of the total staff complement, much less than the set government target of 30%. However, the organisation uses periodic surveys to appoint young people in contract positions as fieldworkers. Stats SA developed an Employment Equity Plan to address these gaps.

Skills and capability: Organisational capability to deliver on its mandate remains a challenge due to budget constraints. This has impacted the delivery of training programmes aimed at enhancing staff skills for future needs. Stats SA completed a skills development strategy aimed at preparing staff for the future digital landscape. This strategy, prioritised by Executive Management, is seen as a crucial element in driving organisational transformation and addressing the skills gap. Key initiatives over the next five years include developing employer-initiated training programmes and implementing online training programmes for the NSS.

Organisational capital

Strategy and performance: Stats SA is a high-performing organisation. During the 6th administration, the organisation consistently achieved on average more than 90% of its targets as set out in the annual performance plans despite a declining fiscus. The organisation also received unqualified audit opinions over the years, indicating effective administration and robust governance and accountability practices. We are mindful of matters of non-compliance raised by the Auditor-General and remain committed as an organisation to address these issues. 51 strategic initiatives were identified in the 2020/21 to 2024/25 strategy. Of these, 18% have been completed, 47% are in progress, and 35% remain unachieved, primarily due to the impact of COVID-19 and resource limitations. These initiatives are revised in response to the current resource constraints.

Organisational design: The modernisation of the statistical value chain initiated the redesign of organisational processes and systems with a major impact on the roles and responsibilities across branches, which in part led to the review of the organisational structure. The review found that the structure is plagued by duplications, inconsistencies, and is bloated with an uneven distribution of workload. Additionally, it highlighted inefficiencies in district boundaries that hinder effective data collection. The organisation commenced with phase 2 of the structure review, aiming to develop a structure that is fit-for-purpose and aligned to the new 5-year strategic plan.

Culture & Leadership style: The 2023 Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) findings show that the organisational culture hinders innovation and obstructs the implementation of the strategic direction. This issue is compounded by perceptions of the leadership style, which is seen as invisible, non-interactive and autocratic. Additionally, staff engagement highlighted very low morale and noted that inconsistencies in consequence management aggravate the problem. Leadership endorsed a culture-shift programme that embraces accountability and promotes an attitude of *'IT STARTS WITH ME'*, creating a conducive future working environment. The culture-shift programme will be rolled out over the medium term.

7.2.2 Service delivery and business operating model

Stats SA's service delivery model is based on the core mandate as outlined in the Statistics Act, namely the production and coordination of official and other statistics.

Stats SA's operating model is outdated, consisting of fragmented systems that are difficult to integrate, leading to inefficiencies and high operational costs. Additionally, our reliance on outdated ICT infrastructure is putting the organisation at risk of cyber-attacks. These issues collectively hinder the ability of the organisation to operate efficiently, adapt quickly, and innovate. Plans to research and adopt emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and large language models (LLMs) will enhance organisational business processes and decision-making capabilities. Quality will be embedded into all business processes to ensure that every aspect of our operations meets high standards and delivers value.

The modernisation of the statistical value chain (SVC) and the introduction of the EA will allow the organisation to operate more efficiently.

Governance processes: Governance processes are crucial for organisations as they enhance efficiency and productivity and ensure optimal use of resources. They foster accountability and transparency, building trust among stakeholders. Additionally, governance ensures compliance with legal and ethical standards, safeguarding the institution's reputation.

The insufficient staff complement that currently exists in the governance section opened a gap, hindering the responsibilities of the division to be carried out effectively. The 2023 Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) indicated that there is inconsistent application of organisational policies and consequence management. It is, therefore, essential that the organisation capacitates the division with skilled human capital to ensure that there is regular monitoring of compliance with policies and accountability for any misconduct and non-performance. Consequence management needs to be activated to minimise the recurrence of irregularities and misconduct in the organisation. By promoting continuous improvement and innovation, governance processes support sustainable growth and adaptability, ultimately ensuring well-managed and trustworthy institutions. The governance positions are among the prioritised posts to be filled.

Management processes: The business environment is rapidly evolving. Organisations should have management processes that can help them navigate complexities, seize opportunities, and achieve their goals more effectively. Stats SA's strategic direction is well captured and was compiled in collaboration with the leadership of the organisation. Key challenges with our management processes are visible during the strategy execution, where existing planning and reporting processes are disjointed, the morale of staff is low (SOS 2023), and the leadership is not communicating the upcoming change and transformation, which results in resistance to change.

In the face of evolving organisational dynamics and technological advancements, Stats SA is committed to enhancing operational efficiency and adapting to contemporary business needs. To encourage the development of a versatile and multi-skilled workforce, the organisation is reviewing its policies and procedures to embed knowledge management practices. An integrated planning and reporting system will be developed and implemented over the medium term, which will enhance strategic and operational monitoring and evaluation.

To create a conducive working environment that is agile and responds to disruptions, the organisational will be looking at creating strategies to align with the evolving work landscape, including hybrid and remote working setups.

Statistical production process: Stats SA's operating model, as reflected in the statistical value chain (SVC), has been effective over the years, enabling the publication of over 250 statistical products annually. The adoption of Computer-assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) for most statistical products improved data collection efficiency. However, the statistical production processes still face challenges due to a lack of innovation and agility. The reliance on outdated methods and standards hampers the organisation's ability to adapt to new challenges. This led to a costly collection model, exacerbated by dependencies and the centralisation of critical processes, which create bottlenecks and further reduce flexibility.

A key strategic focus area of the strategy is to optimise the efficiency of the statistical production process through the modernisation and innovation of business processes. This will include the digitalisation of data collection processes of economic surveys. In addition, plans to research new and emerging technologies and applications to further enhance the statistical production process are underway.

Statistical support processes

Statistical frames: Stats SA has two statistical frames that form the basis for drawing samples to conduct surveys. Firstly, the Geospatial Information Frame (GIF) consists of layers of georeferenced structures such as dwellings, businesses, place names, enumeration areas and small areas, and forms the base reference for the planning, operations and dissemination of censuses and household surveys. The challenge is to ensure that the GIF is maintained and updated to accurately reflect geographic changes in the country. Secondly, the Statistical Business Register (SBR) is a database containing selected information of all formal businesses in South Africa, irrespective of size and economic activity performed, that have registered their business with at least one of the following government authorities: the Department of Trade and Industry and the South African Revenue Service (SARS). The SBR serves as a basis for all economic sample surveys conducted by Stats SA. The maintenance of the SBR remains a challenge in a declining financial environment. The organisation will research the use of alternative data sources from public and private entities to augment the SBR.

Statistical standards and methods: Global standardisation frameworks on statistical practice and classifications are continuously developed and updated to enhance harmonisation of statistical information at a global level. The organisation adapted and adopted various international statistical standards and practices over the past years. However, there are some key standards that the organisation could not implement, e.g. ISIC5 due to budget constraints. Stats SA, as part of innovations, will embed the latest standards, frameworks and classifications across the statistical value chain.

Stakeholder management processes: Any organisation needs an effective stakeholder management system to build trust and credibility with its stakeholders. When stakeholders feel heard and valued, they are more likely to support the organisation's goals and initiatives.

Stats SA's marketing activities are only visible during big projects such as the Population Census, which takes place every 10 years. This is not sufficient, and it causes conflict with the brand of the organisation. The only marketing activities conducted in between are done within survey projects, duplicating efforts. Various survey areas strive to maintain good relationships with their stakeholders, establishing new partnerships to bring fresh perspectives and ideas to their outputs. Although these collaborations are underway, they often lack cohesion and structure, resulting in the organisation not fully benefiting from them. The organisation drafted an integrated stakeholder management strategy to enhance the coordination and integration of stakeholder management activities under a unified approach, aiming to enhance the experience of stakeholders in the use of statistical products and services.

Statistical coordination: Section 14 of the Statistics Act outlines the responsibility for statistical coordination in the country. Stats SA's goal to lead the development and coordination of the national statistical system in South Africa has been hindered by the slow progress on the approval of the Amendment Bill, as well as challenges around resource constraints experienced by the organisation. The revised Act makes provision for the participation of partners in the statistics system in the development of the NSDS. The implementation of the amended act will cover data sharing, access, storage and privacy.

The organisation developed an Integrated Indicator Framework (IIF) to align statistical information needs from the global level to the municipal level, with the National Development Plan at its core. The integrated indicators captured in the IIF form the basis of statistical needs and will enable Stats SA and NSS partners to outline the country's data gap. According to the Sustainable Development Goals report, the supply of data represents 83,9% of the SDG indicators. Stats SA is in the process of updating the IIF with other frameworks, including the DDM, to align data needs at the district level.

Stats SA will be developing an NSDS, in collaboration with key stakeholders, to address the data, quality and skills gap in the national statistics system.

7.3 Making the case for transformation and change

Artificial intelligence (AI), the use of satellite imagery and the rise of data as a result of the digital revolution, made it possible to disrupt the way data are gathered, processed, and analysed. These, with new statistical techniques and the availability of big data, make it possible to create granular estimates.

We are living in an era of disruption, in which powerful global forces are changing how we live and work. Entire industries are disrupted as new approaches are replacing the old ways of doing business.

The 7th administration approved the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) of South Africa (2024–2029) which outlines the country's development priorities, focusing on inclusive growth and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living, and improving the quality of life through better healthcare, education, and infrastructure. The MTDP supports the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP). The need for statistical information to inform the policy agendas at national and global levels is a key driver for change.

Other drivers for change include increasing demand for statistical services, fiscal constraints, the digital and data revolution, evolving skills and technologies, and other internal disruptions such as a need to review the organisational culture among others, making a compelling case for transformation and change at Stats SA. By addressing these, Stats SA can enhance its capabilities, improve service delivery, and ensure its continued relevance in a rapidly changing environment. Embracing these changes will position Stats SA as a leader in the data ecosystem, ready to meet the evolving needs of its stakeholders efficiently.

A new strategic direction: The organisation is grappling with crucial strategic questions as it charts its new direction: "How will we respond to disruption?" and "How will we disrupt the industry?" To stay relevant amidst change, we must radically rethink the future and transform our business model, seizing opportunities and addressing disruptions in the environment, or risk becoming obsolete.

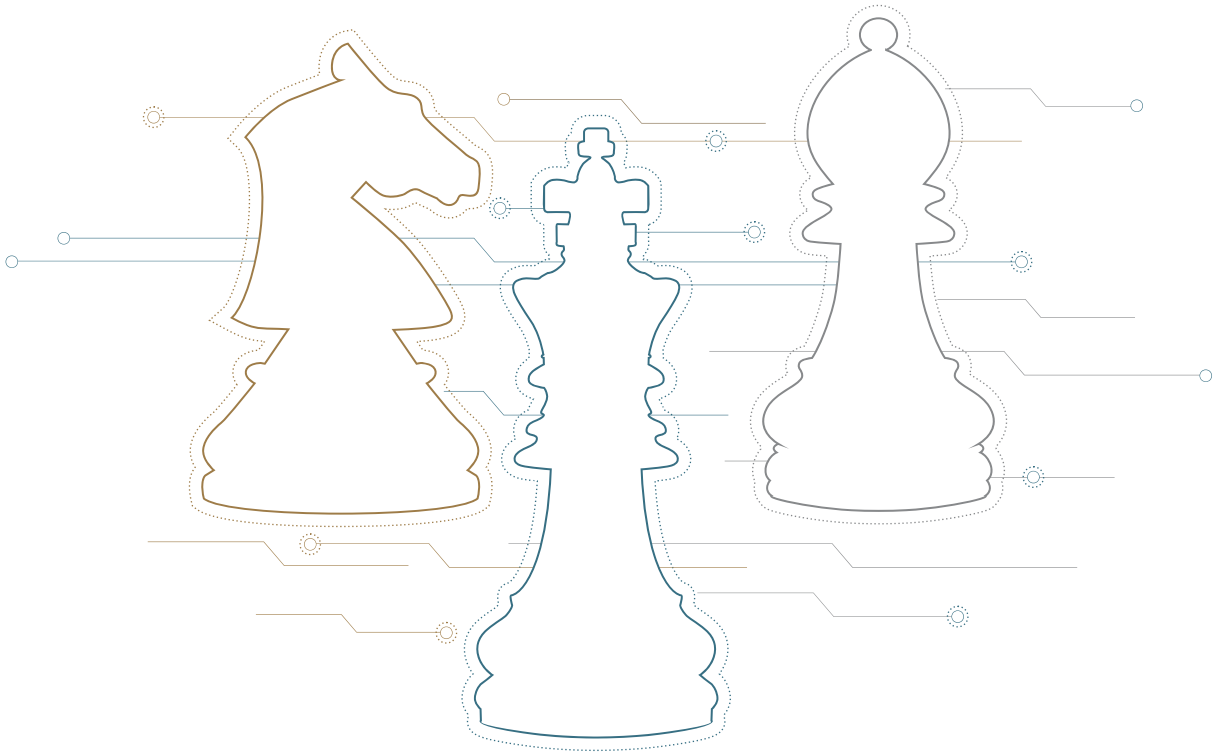
Adapting to change: Change and transformation may destabilise the organisation. Stats SA might struggle to adapt quickly due to entrenched business processes, legacy strategies and technologies. Adapting to the evolving external and internal environment will necessitate a mindset shift from both leadership and staff, fostering collaboration to create new experiences that yield more positive outcomes in the future.

7.4 Problem statement

The current statistical system is out of sync with current and future data needs at all levels of society. Moreover, the existing resources and capabilities are only partially adequate to meet the demands of the statistical system.

The consequence is that stakeholders lack adequate statistical information to make evidence-based decisions to inform policy development and planning, and to monitor progress. The future relevance of Stats SA in the data ecosystem will be compromised with potential adverse social and economic impact.

However, the National Statistics System, through the implementation of the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS), aims to address the information, quality and capacity gaps. It aims to leverage alternative data sources, forge partnerships, and adopt emerging methodologies and technologies to meet the country's information needs through significant intervention and investment in the data ecosystem.



Part D: Measuring our performance

How are we going to get there?

8. Institutional Performance Information

"Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." – Sun Tzu, The Art of War

8.1 Strategic impact

The impact of the strategy is evidence-based decisions that promote citizenry and inform policy development, planning, monitoring and evaluation to create a better life for all.

8.2 Alignment to the MTDP strategic priorities and outcomes

The MTDP 2024–2029 has been developed to align with a broader sustainable development agenda, specifically the NDP and the GNU Statement of Intent. It emphasises three interrelated strategic priorities that are essential for achieving the nation's developmental objectives.

Stats SA plays a pivotal role in supporting the developmental agenda by offering accurate, timely, and relevant statistical information. This statistical information is essential for monitoring and evaluating the progress of various initiatives and policies aimed at achieving the goals set forth in the MTDP. By aligning its strategic plan with the MTDP, Stats SA ensures that its efforts are in sync with national priorities, thereby contributing to the overall socio-economic development of the country.

Stats SA developed an Integrated Indicator Framework (IIF) that serves as a comprehensive tool to measure and monitor progress toward specific goals, objectives, or sustainable development outcomes across various policy agendas and international frameworks. The primary purposes of the IIF are holistic monitoring and evaluating progress; interconnectedness of different sectors, themes, and outcomes; data-driven decision-making enabling policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to make informed choices and allocate resources effectively; and identifying data gaps and prioritising actions.

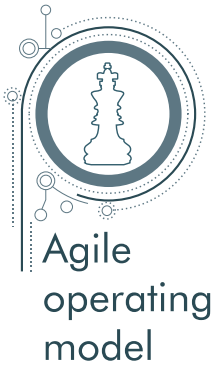
The table below demonstrates the alignment of statistical domains to the MTDP priorities and outcomes:

MTDP Priority	MTDP outcomes	Statistical domains
Strategic Priority 1: Drive inclusive growth and job creation	Increased employment and work opportunities	Demographic and social statistics (Labour)
	Accelerated growth of strategic industrial and labour-intensive sectors	Economic statistics (National Accounts)
	Enabling environment for investment and improved competitiveness through structural reforms	Economic statistics (Business cycle indicators (BCI), Structural Industry statistics (SIS), Private sector financial statistics (PSFS))
	Increased infrastructure investment, access and efficiency	Economic statistics (National accounts, SIS, PSFS, Government financial statistics (GFS))
	Improved energy security and a just energy transition	Economic statistics (National Accounts)
	Increased trade and investment	Economic statistics (National Accounts)

MTDP Priority	MTDP outcomes	Statistical domains
	A dynamic science, technology and innovation ecosystem for growth	Not measured by Stats SA
	Supportive and sustainable economic policy environment	Economic statistics (National Accounts)
	Economic transformation and equitable inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities for a just society	Economic statistics (SIS, Labour statistics)
Strategic Priority 2: Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living	Reduced poverty and improved livelihoods	Demographic and social statistics (Poverty and Inequality)
	Improved coverage of social protection	Demographic and social statistics(Living conditions and social protection)
	Improved access to affordable and quality healthcare	Demographic and social statistics (Health and vital)
	Improved education outcomes and skills	Demographic and social statistics (Education)
	Skills for the economy	Demographic and social statistics (Education and Labour)
	Social cohesion and nation-building	Demographic and social statistics (Living conditions)
Strategic Priority 3: Build a capable, ethical and developmental state	Improved service delivery in the local government sphere	Demographic and social statistics (Service delivery, GFS)
	Improved governance and performance of public entities;	Governance statistics
	An ethical, capable and professional public service	Governance statistics
	Digital transformation across the state	Not measured
	Mainstreaming of gender, empowerment of youth and persons with disabilities	Demographic and social statistics (Gender and marginalised groups)
	A reformed, integrated and modernised Criminal Justice System	Governance statistics
	Effective border security	Not measured by Stats SA
	Secured cyber space	Not measured by Stats SA
	Increased feelings of safety of women and children in communities	Demographic and social statistics (Crimes, violence and feelings of safety)
	Combat priority offences (economic, organised crime and corruption)	Demographic and social statistics (Crimes and corruption)
	Advance South African foreign policy for a better world	Not measured by Stats SA
	Enhanced peace and security in Africa	Not measured by Stats SA

8.3 Outcomes, indicators and targets

Stats SA is continuing with the four strategic outcomes outlined in the previous strategy, which the organisation aims to achieve to transform the statistical landscape in the country.



Insightful data – Data and information are responsive to user demands and bring deeper, more profound understanding and insight into informed decisions.

Agile operating model – The business operations are efficient and flexible, underpinned by robust methods and standards.

Interconnected statistical systems – People, data systems, institutions and technology are interconnected through collaboration, partnerships and platforms.

Transformed capability – The capability of the organisation's people, systems and technology and National Statistical System is transformed and fit for the future.

The next section outlines the:

- Strategic outcomes
- Outcome statements
- Strategic focus areas and initiatives
- Key outcome indicators

8.3.1 Strategic outcome 1: Insightful data

Insightful data provide user-centric information for informed decision-making that promotes *growth, stability, and sustainability*.

The demand for data covers many aspects of the economy, society, environment, and governance. The statistical system's ability to meet the growing demand for insightful data and information remains challenging in the current environment. However, the availability of alternative data sources is increasing. Stats SA, therefore, aims to adopt a new data culture that is more responsive, flexible and proactive by integrating various data sources to address the data gap.

Outcome statement: **By 2030,** we have narrowed the data gap through partnerships and creating value in the data ecosystem.

The Integrated Indicator Framework (IIF) defines the data gap. Stats SA, in collaboration with other data producers, will address both the data and quality gap. Creating value in the data ecosystem involves statistical development and strengthening partnerships within the national statistical system. The IIF will facilitate the rationalisation of statistical production to avoid duplication and maximise resource utilisation within the data ecosystem.

Outcome statement: **By 2035**, user needs are met through innovative solutions and platforms hosting integrated data sets in the data ecosystem.

The long-term goal is to integrate data in line with international best practices. Data will be accessible through self-service and interactive platforms that deliver value to users. Innovative solutions and platforms will enhance data sharing and data linkages as well as streamline the dissemination of statistical products and services, thereby, making data more accessible and informative.

The following strategic focus areas will guide the achievement of *Insightful data*:

Planned performance over the next five years

Stats SA acknowledges the growing demand for statistical information in the country, both from a statistical reporting and user-need perspective. Plans are underway to revamp our service delivery model to better cater to diverse data users. Over the next five years, the focus will be on both the demand and supply side of data. On the demand side, Stats SA commenced unpacking the specific needs of various stakeholders, this includes policymakers, businesses, researchers, and the public. On the supply side, projects are underway to increase the statistical information baseline to respond to the growing data gap.

Basic demand for statistical information: Stats SA will deliver key national indicators as specified in the IIF, serving as a solid evidence-base for policy- and decision-making across the economy, society, and environment. This effort aims to inform and monitor the progress and development achieved in the National Development Plan (NDP), Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), and other policy frameworks.

Emerging demand for statistical information: Stats SA intends to collaborate with other data producers to meet emerging needs. This will necessitate new data analytics capabilities to integrate various datasets. In addition, plans are in place to re-engineer the household survey programme and implement a Continuous Population Survey (CPS) to address some of these needs. Furthermore, Stats SA will engage with other organs of state to co-fund statistical series, aiming to bridge the data gap in the statistical information system.

Invest in alternative data sources: The quantity of digital data created, stored and processed has grown exponentially and can be considered immense data source for statistical purposes. Investing in alternative data sources will significantly enhance the quality and timeliness of statistical data in the country. Stats SA will explore the following initiatives:

- Leveraging big data from various sources such as social media, mobile phone usage, and online transactions that can provide insights into economic and social trends.
- Utilising data from government departments and agencies, such as health records, taxation and company registration data, and education statistics, which can reduce the need for extensive surveys and improve data accuracy in the long run.
- Incorporating satellite imagery and geographic information systems (GIS) to map and analyse spatial data.
- Engaging the public to contribute data through mobile apps or online platforms to gather information on a wide range of topics.
- Explore the use of the Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems (HDSS) for continuous data on population health and demographics.

These strategies will be explored by researching the quality and integration of alternative data sources, to enhance the provision of timely, accurate, and comprehensive statistics that support informed decision-making and policy development in South Africa. This holistic approach ensures that Stats SA remains a vital resource for policymakers, business and the public, adapting to the evolving landscape of data needs and technological advancements.

a) Sustain the quality of national indicators and broaden the statistical information base

Well-informed policy choices are crucial for the well-being of society. Reliable statistics provide the essential evidence base needed for informed decision-making and public debate, both within and outside of government. Despite the ongoing pressure to reduce public spending, the demand for accurate and comprehensive statistical information continues to rise. This underscores the importance of investing in robust statistical systems to support effective policy-making and societal progress. To achieve this, Stats SA will prioritise the review of statistical series to ensure alignment with the demand as

encapsulated in the Integrated Indicator Framework (IIF) and other policy frameworks, balancing the need for rationalisation and expansion of statistical data. The transformation of administrative data sources into official statistics remains a high priority in the national statistics system, especially the improvement of quality of data produced by other NSS entities.

Key strategic initiatives to sustain the quality of national indicators:

- Provide official statistics, in line with international practice and standards, as evidence for policy- and decision-making.
- Respond to emerging data needs by introducing new social, economic and environmental statistics.
- Invest in alternative data sources to augment or expand the statistical information base.

b) Enhance the experience of stakeholders

Several key challenges within the current statistical system were identified, emphasising the need for more granular data, improved timeliness, accessibility, and quality to meet emerging needs. Stats SA alone cannot meet the country's statistical demand. There is a need to collaborate and build strategic partnerships with both public and private partners within the data ecosystem. By embracing these stakeholders as data producers and strategic partners, Stats SA will earn their trust and build an inclusive brand.

To enhance stakeholder experience, Stats SA will develop and implement a comprehensive publicity and advocacy strategy, alongside a stakeholder management framework. This approach will transform respondents into collaborators and co-producers. Stats SA seeks to enhance stakeholder engagement by centralising data collection for business surveys. Additionally, efforts will be made to accelerate the website rollout and launch a data literacy program, to increase usage.

Stats SA seeks to enhance stakeholder engagement by centralizing data collection for business surveys.

Key strategic initiatives to increase usage and trust are to:

From a data provider perspective:

- Transform and innovate the publicity and advocacy approach.
- Streamline and strengthen stakeholder interaction and engagements.

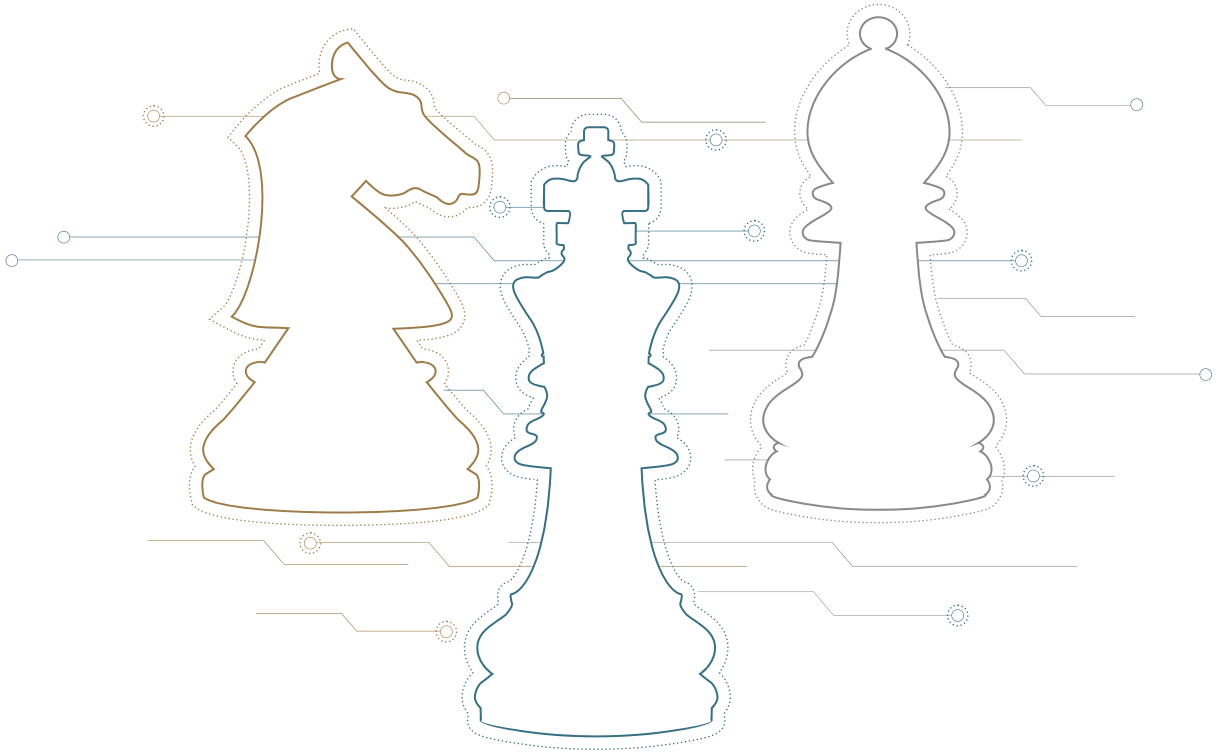
From a data user perspective:

- Transform and innovate user-centric statistical products, services and platforms.

Key indicators and targets for success:

Outcome indicator	Indicator baseline	Five-year target
Production of key statistical indicators to inform decision-making sustained	270 official statistical releases and reports published	280 official statistical releases and reports retained
Statistical products assessed against SASQAF in the NSS (protect the quality of key statistical series)	22 statistical products quality assessed through independent assessment	20 additional statistical products quality assessed through independent assessment

Outcome indicator	Indicator baseline	Five-year target
Percentage statistics responding to the IIF	50% of indicators reported on the IIF (IIF 2024/25 – SDGs, Agenda 2063 and NDP)	65% of indicators reported on the IIF
Use of statistics to inform evidence-based decisions	444 718 downloads (as at 31 March 2025)	10% increase in publications downloaded over 5 years
Social media presence	Number of users reached via social media: • Facebook: 96 200 • Twitter: 86 900	10% increase over 5 years
User satisfaction levels	77,6% user satisfaction levels (USS 2023)	80% user satisfaction levels



8.3.2 Strategic outcome 2: Agile operating model

"Agile enables organisations to master continuous change. It permits firms to flourish in a world that is increasing volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous." – Steve Denning, Forbes

An *Agile operating model* enables flexibility and responsiveness in delivering quality statistical products and services using innovative and efficient practices.

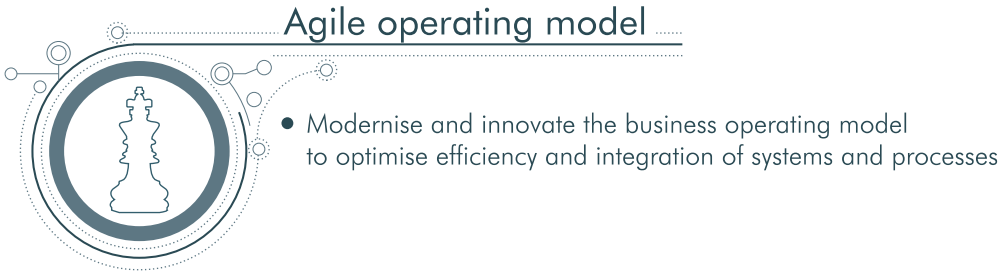
Outcome statement: **By 2030**, efficiencies in the business operating model are underpinned by innovative and robust methodologies and technologies.

The organisation reduced the cost of doing business by refining its operating model. We have optimised and innovated our business operations by adopting emerging methodologies and technologies, leveraging the statistical infrastructure within the data ecosystem. This strategic approach enabled us to streamline processes, enhance efficiency, and deliver quality, data-driven solutions. By continuously evolving and embracing new technologies, our operations remain aligned with international standards and best practices.

Outcome statement: **By 2035**, statistical operations and methodologies are agile in response to opportunities and disruptions in the data ecosystem.

Stats SA transformed its business operating model. The organisation is now agile and responsive to external opportunities, proactively anticipating disruptions.

The following strategic focus area will guide the achievement of an *Agile operating model*:



Planned performance over the next five years

At a global level: South Africa participates in the UN High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS), a collaborative platform dedicated to re-inventing statistical products and processes to adapt to a changing world. This group aims to modernize statistical organizations by developing innovative strategies and solutions in a flexible and agile manner. Key initiatives focus on big data, data integration, strategic communication, and machine learning. These areas drive the implementation of new technologies, methods, and capabilities in statistical organisations.

HLG-MOS is a unique platform that made several important contributions to the modernisation of official statistics, such as the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) and the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM). Due to its success, the HLG-MOS mode of working is now being replicated in other modernisation initiatives. Key initiatives at a global level include:

- Generative AI and official statistics, including large language models (LLM).
- The use of statistical open-source software.
- Applying data science and modern methods.
- ModernStats Carpentries aimed at developing skills and knowledge in statistical organisations.
- Data Governance for Interoperability Framework (DAFI) Project, focused on improving data governance and interoperability in statistical organisations.
- Cloud for Official Statistics: A project exploring the use of cloud technology in statistical organisations.

At a national level: Stats SA will continue to modernise the production of official statistics by adopting and adapting the statistical architecture for national statistical organisations such as the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), the Generic Statistical Information Model (GSIM), the Generic Activity Model and the Common Statistical Data Architecture, to mention a few.

The MTDP outlines that departments need to prioritise red tape reduction, including removing unnecessary administrative requirements, improving processes and reducing duplication to enhance efficiency. Organisational systems need to be reformed to improve delivery and execution and remove duplication. This includes review and re-engineering of business processes. The MTDP further states that digital transformation and innovation across government should be a key enabler to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

The key strategic focus area guiding the achievement of an *Agile operating model* is discussed below:

a) Modernise and innovate the business operating model to optimise efficiency and integration of systems and processes

Stats SA's systems and frames are deemed insufficient and costly, presenting a challenge to integrate with emerging technologies and adopt the latest methodologies, standards and frameworks in the statistical value chain.

Over the next five years, the organisation plans to continue modernising its operating model to address inefficiencies in processes and systems. This will be achieved through the institutionalisation of a Quality

Management System (QMS), underpinned by business process re-engineering to enhance efficiencies in the statistical value chain. The organisation will also review its provincial and district operating model to streamline statistical operations in the field. The latest standards, frameworks, and classifications will be embedded in the statistical value chain to enhance data quality, compliance, and interoperability. Stats SA plans to develop and implement a digital transformation strategy that will increase organisational agility, improve stakeholder engagement, and provide a competitive edge by streamlining operations and leveraging new technologies.

A key deliverable is the re-engineering of the household survey programme, where various statistical series are integrated into a single multimodal survey, using innovative methodologies and techniques to achieve better outcomes. In addition, the organisation will innovate data collection processes in business surveys.

The following key strategic initiatives will be implemented:

- Embed the latest standards, frameworks and classifications in the business operating model.
- Improve efficiencies in frames, systems and processes (including production and governance), by researching and using emerging technologies and methodologies.
- Invest in a digital transformation programme.

Key indicators and targets for success:

Performance indicator	Indicator baseline	Five-year target
Business operating model optimised	Digital data collection implemented for CPI, QLFS, GHS, GPSJS and DTS	• GSBPM modernised in household and business surveys • District offices rationalised • Red tape reduced in governance processes
Digital business transformation programme implemented	No strategy or programme in place	Digital transformation roadmap implemented

8.3.3 Strategic outcome 3: Interconnected statistical systems

An *Interconnected statistical system* is a network of various data systems, institutions, technologies, human resources and partnerships. Based on shared principles, these are interoperable and interconnected, working together to produce, share and utilize statistical data efficiently.

Outcome statement: **By 2030,** the national statistical system is implemented through the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).

The national statistics system is the ensemble of statistical organisations and units within the Republic of South Africa that jointly collect, process and disseminate official and other statistics. The NSDS is a planning approach aimed at developing the capacity to produce, disseminate and use statistics effectively. It focuses on building statistical systems that can support national development goals. Strengthening partnerships with all actors is essential to realise implementation of the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999), as amended (Act No. 29 of 2024).

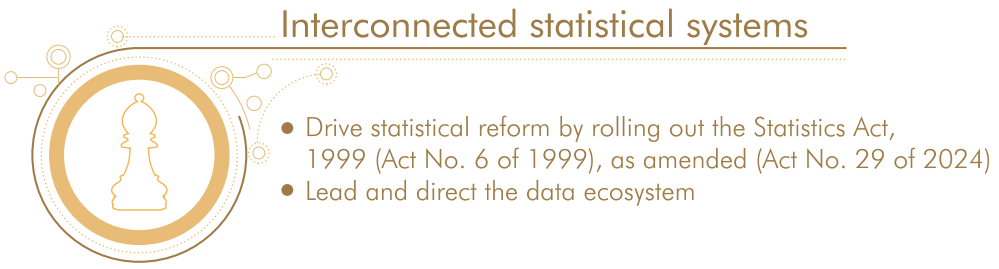
Statistical coordination aims to promote global and continental statistical principles (such as the United Nations Fundamental Principles on Official Statistics (UNFPOS) and the African Charter on Statistics), which facilitate participation in the statistical system of the country. Building blocks for quality statistics must be based on statistical principles and frameworks. In addition, the SG is mandated by the Statistics Act to declare statistics as official in line with the South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF).

Outcome statement: **By 2035**, the creation of interconnected statistical systems is coordinated through data governance frameworks and principles facilitated by interconnected platforms in the data ecosystem.

Stats SA envisions to be the key authority to facilitate the establishment of an interconnected statistical system by connecting people, systems and technology in the data ecosystem.

The data ecosystem brings together new partners, data sources, capabilities and methodologies to adhere to statistical principles, standards and frameworks in the creation, sharing and use of data.

The following strategic focus areas will guide the achievement of *Interconnected statistical systems*:



Planned performance over the next five years

The current statistical production environment is disrupted by multiple independent producers generating statistics of uncertain quality, which often disregard international standards. This results in non-comparable and unreliable data, hindering effective decision-making and policy development.

Establishing effective coordination mechanisms, structures and systems are crucial for effective statistical planning and reporting. Improved collaboration among data producers, along with the development of subsystems for the economy, environment, social, and governance sectors, will enhance data integration. Additionally, efforts to improve coordination at both national and provincial levels should be paired with a strategy for building capacity within the national statistics system (NSS). By working together, these NSS entities can produce high-quality statistics that fill existing data and quality gaps, providing a strong foundation for decision-making that supports the country's initiatives to improve the lives of citizens.

To effectively lead and direct the data ecosystem in South Africa, it's essential to develop and implement a comprehensive data strategy. Stats SA will establish a robust data governance framework to enhance the integrity and usability of data across the ecosystem. Investing in strategic partnerships both nationally and globally will further strengthen data initiatives and foster collaboration in the data ecosystem. Over the next five years, Stats SA will focus on:

a) Drive statistical reform by rolling out the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999), as amended (Act No. 29 of 2024)

The Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999), as amended (Act No. 29 of 2024), is a significant step towards improving statistical coordination in the country. The amended Act provides for the development of statistical regulations essential for ensuring the quality, reliability, and integrity of statistical data. It also includes provisions for the development of a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). The NSDS aims to enhance the national statistical system of South Africa by addressing the data, quality and statistical capacity gap, thereby improving evidence-based decision-making. Other new provisions in the amended Act include the establishment of coordination mechanisms, the creation of statistical units in other organs of state, and the coordination of statistical planning and reporting within the NSS. The key strategic intent over the next five years is to drive statistical reform in the NSS by rolling out the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999), as amended (Act No. 29 of 2024).

The following key strategic initiatives will be implemented:

- Develop and implement the NSDS.
- Develop statistical regulation and policies.

b) Lead and direct the data ecosystem

The data ecosystem is a complex network of individuals, organisations, technologies and processes involved in the creation, collection, storage, analysis, dissemination and use of data.

While the emergence of data ecosystems offers new opportunities for the different ecosystem participants, many social, environmental and organisational challenges must be addressed to pave the way for these opportunities to materialise. Among the most significant challenges in South Africa's data ecosystem are:

- *Trust:* New methods are needed to increase trust in data sharing so that more data would be available.
- *Data governance:* Data ecosystems highly depend on access to data and interactions of actors providing or using data. There is a lack of concepts and mechanisms to mandate responsibilities among participants of a data ecosystem.
- *Interoperability:* A technical architecture that is trusted, providing secure platforms and solutions that enable data sharing, integration and privacy.

Over the next five years, Stats SA will lead and direct the data ecosystem by developing and establishing key building blocks to advance data governance, data management, data platforms, data protection, and data use. The data ecosystem value chain, consisting of data acquisition, processing, integration, analytics, and visualisation, will drive interoperability and interconnectedness of various data systems to extract value and insights for better decision-making.

Stats SA, in collaboration with other government sectors such as the National Treasury (NT), is leading and hosting the implementation of a data lake. In addition, forging strategic partnerships with key national and international role players will improve data practices within the data ecosystem. An international statistical development strategy will guide Stats SA's participation in the international statistical landscape.

The following key strategic initiatives will be implemented:

- Develop and implement a data strategy for South Africa.
- Develop a data governance framework for the data ecosystem.
- Invest in strategic partnerships nationally and globally.

Key indicators and targets for success:

Performance indicator	Indicator baseline	Five-year target
National statistics system reformed	• The Statistics Act (No. 6 of 1999), as amended (No. 29 of 2024) • Statistical standards approved • SANSS branch established • Governance structures established	• NSDS strategy developed and adopted • Sectoral plans developed • Data strategy developed and adopted for South Africa • Data governance framework developed and adopted • Statistics Clearing House established
Cooperation and collaboration in the data ecosystem enhanced	38 MoUs are in place	20 additional strategic partnerships in the data ecosystem

8.3.4 Strategic outcome 4: Transformed capability

Transformed capability refers to a major shift in the organisation's strategic capabilities in terms of its human, technological and organisational capital so that it can drive business transformation and change.

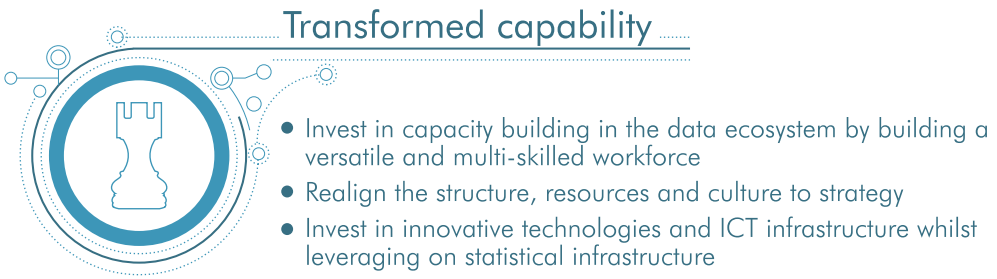
Outcome statement: **By 2030,** Stats SA has adopted agile practices and emerging technologies to build a professional, ethical, and versatile workforce that is flexible and capable of delivering innovative solutions.

For Stats SA to remain relevant and be a meaningful player in the environment in which it operates, it must adopt emerging technologies and methodologies by investing in the learning and growth of the workforce to foster modernisation and innovation in the business operating model.

Outcome statement: **By 2035,** Stats SA is leading a highly skilled, ethical and versatile workforce that is adaptive and capable of using interconnected systems and processes underpinned by seamless technologies to drive value in the data ecosystem.

Stats SA is recognised as one of the leading statistics agencies that have embraced digital transformation. We lead interconnected statistical systems that are agile and capable to deliver value to stakeholders. Stats SA adopts innovative capabilities such as technology, AI, big data, data analytics, data science, and geospatial analytics to promote collaboration and enhance value within the data ecosystem.

The following strategic focus areas will guide the achievement of *Transformed capability* as a strategic outcome:



Planned performance over the next five years

The digital revolution emphasises the importance of people-centred approaches, where technology and people skills complement each other. By focusing on the workforce, organisations can harness diverse talents and capabilities, fostering innovation and adaptability. This synergy between human creativity and advanced technologies like AI and machine learning can drive significant growth and resilience in the ever-evolving statistical landscape. Over the next five years, the organisation will focus on the following areas:

a) Invest in capacity building in the data ecosystem by building a versatile and multi-skilled workforce

The future of work requires a workforce that has mastered fundamental skills, such as creative thinking, problem-solving and negotiating and the competency to address the organisation's overall performance, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. Additionally, intensifying efforts to implement gender, disability, and youth agendas will ensure a more inclusive and diverse workforce, driving innovation and resilience. The implementation of the skills development strategy will be a key driving force to build a workforce fit for the future.

The following key strategic initiatives will be implemented:

- Identify and develop capacity-building programmes that respond to the future skills gap.
- Invest in 'leading change and transformation'.
- Intensify the implementation of gender, disability and youth agendas.

b) Realign the structure, resources and culture to strategy

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, organisations need to undergo significant transformation and change to succeed. This includes identifying and addressing systemic silos, streamlining processes to eliminate redundancies and inefficiencies, creating a conducive working environment and reallocating resources to high-priority areas.

To successfully implement its strategy, Stats SA will initiate the second phase of structural alignment, focusing on optimizing functional areas to enhance service delivery and execution, while eliminating redundancies.

A versatile and multiskilled workforce thrives in a culture of continuous learning and growth. This environment empowers employees to take calculated risks, innovate, and challenge traditional methods. Embracing an agile, adaptable, and people-centred culture is key to fostering innovation and ownership among employees. A culture-shift programme will be integrated into the organisation's activities, emphasising accountability with the mantra "IT STARTS WITH ME."

The following key strategic initiatives will be implemented to drive value in the data ecosystem:

- Review the organisational structure and establishment.
- Deploy and reskill staff to critical areas.
- Drive a culture-shift programme that empowers leadership and staff.
- Create a conducive future working environment.

c) Invest in innovative technologies and ICT infrastructure whilst leveraging on statistical infrastructure

Modernising and automating the current operating model will require investments in emerging technologies and infrastructure to enhance agility. By leveraging emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT), and investing in ICT infrastructure, Stats SA will accelerate its digital transformation to stay ahead in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) technology-driven work environment within the data ecosystem.

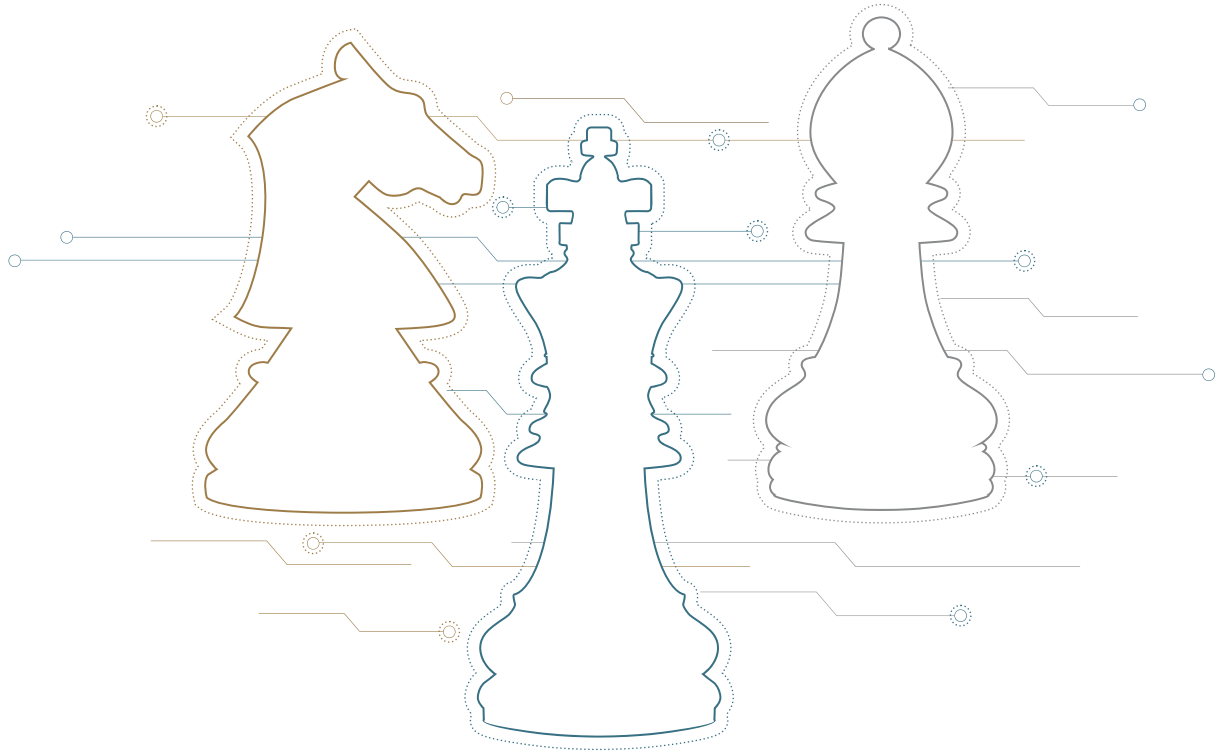
Stats SA built an enterprise architecture which outlines a digital transformation roadmap needed to support and enable the organisational business operating model. The aim of this digital transformation roadmap is to stabilise and align the current business and technology processes, grow and scale these processes and ultimately transform them through innovation to take full advantage of our business capabilities.

The digital transformation roadmap includes:

- Digitalisation and stakeholder alignment – digitalisation of business processes and stakeholder touch points. The end goal is to fully transform and digitalise the data ecosystem components.
- Statistical products and service enablement – ensure that all products and services are automated, including the delivery thereof.
- Technology enablement – drive technological innovation in all key business areas.
- Workforce skills and capabilities – transform our workforce into skilled and technology-proficient people.
- ICT governance and operations – transform governance and operations into well-governed and automated ICT services capable of supporting the business cost-effectively.

The following key strategic initiatives will be implemented to drive capacity building in the data ecosystem:

- Build an interconnected ICT platform that facilitates data acquisition, data integration, data analytics and visualisation in the data ecosystem.
- Invest in an ICT infrastructure that enables emerging technologies, interconnectivity and agility of data networks within the data ecosystem.



Key indicators and targets for success:

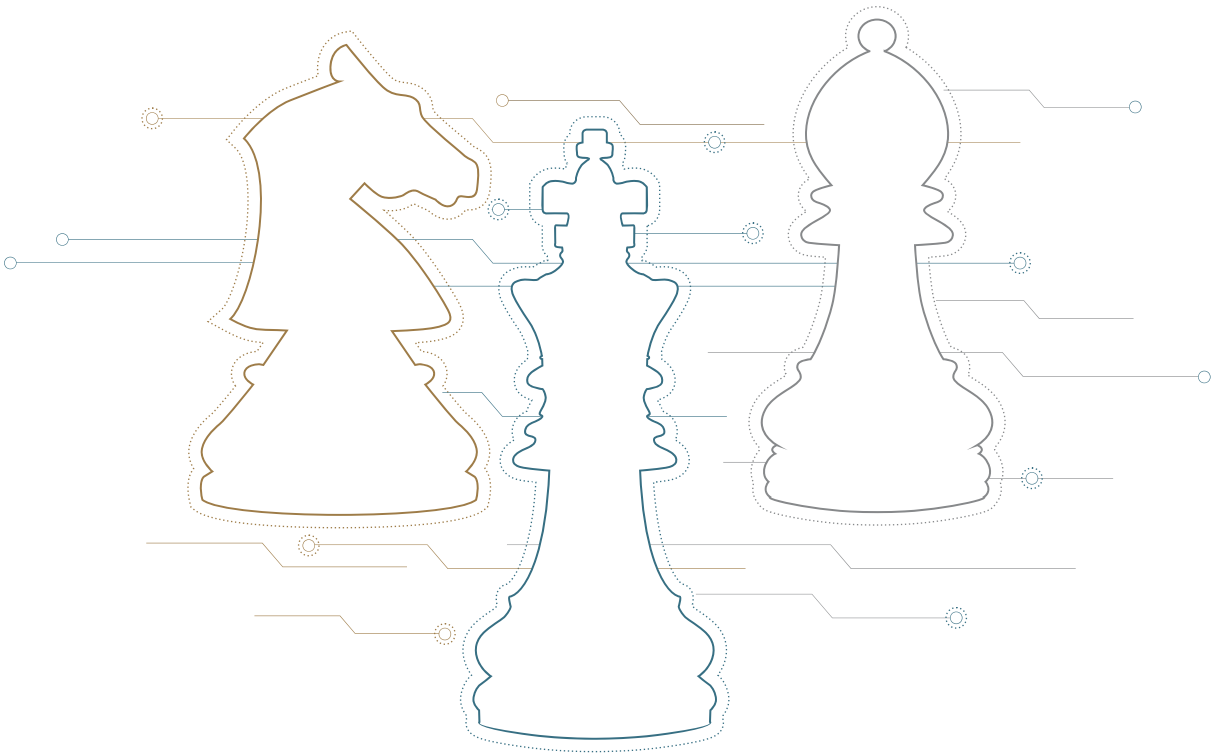
Performance indicator	Indicator baseline	Five-year target
Percentage spent on skills development	0,2% spent of CoE	1% of CoE annually
Skills are fit for the future work environment: Employer-initiated skills development programmes implemented	SAS programme	Data science programme Business process management programme Leading change and transformation programme Data management and engineering programme Fundamental skills development programme Emerging technologies programme
Employment equity achieved	Women in SMS: 45% Staff with disability: 1,2% Youth: 7,1% (Quarter 3 report 2024/25)	Women in SMS: 50% Staff with disability: 2% Youth: 30% **The CoE allocation is currently inadequate to address the national targets*
Staff satisfaction levels improved	Staff Satisfaction Index: 64% (SOS 2023)	Staff Satisfaction Index improved to 70%
Flexible and adaptive ICT infrastructure and environment	Current ICT infrastructure and platforms are outdated and not conducive to the future work environment	• Adoption of cloud services • Email migration to MS Exchange • Adoption of Open-Source software • Adoption of AI technologies • Enhanced data security controls

8.4 Key strategic risks

The following strategic risks have been identified that might have a negative impact on the execution of the strategy:

Outcome	Strategic risk	Mitigation strategy
Insightful data	Coverage and quality gaps might inhibit the organisation to respond to emerging data needs, impacting on the relevance of Stats SA	Develop the NSDS to guide statistical development and practice to address the data, quality and skills gap in the NSS Invest in alternative data sources Envision a data ecosystem that capitalises on new entrants, methodologies and technology to respond to user demand
Agile operating model	External disruptions impacting negatively on the business operations and sustainability of the organisation	Establish strategic partnerships to capitalise on capabilities in the international statistics community and private sector Invest in innovation and research to advance new and innovative methodologies and technologies Invest in new emerging digital capabilities such as AI and ML
Interconnected statistical system	Slow pace of implementation of the Amendment Act and minimal cooperation by entities in the NSS will lead to fragmentation of the statistical system resulting in a growing data gap	Fast track the implementation of the amended Statistics Act, strengthening statistical coordination and cooperation Invest in establishing strategic partnerships with various role players in the data ecosystem to promote cooperation and collaboration on various aspects in the value chain

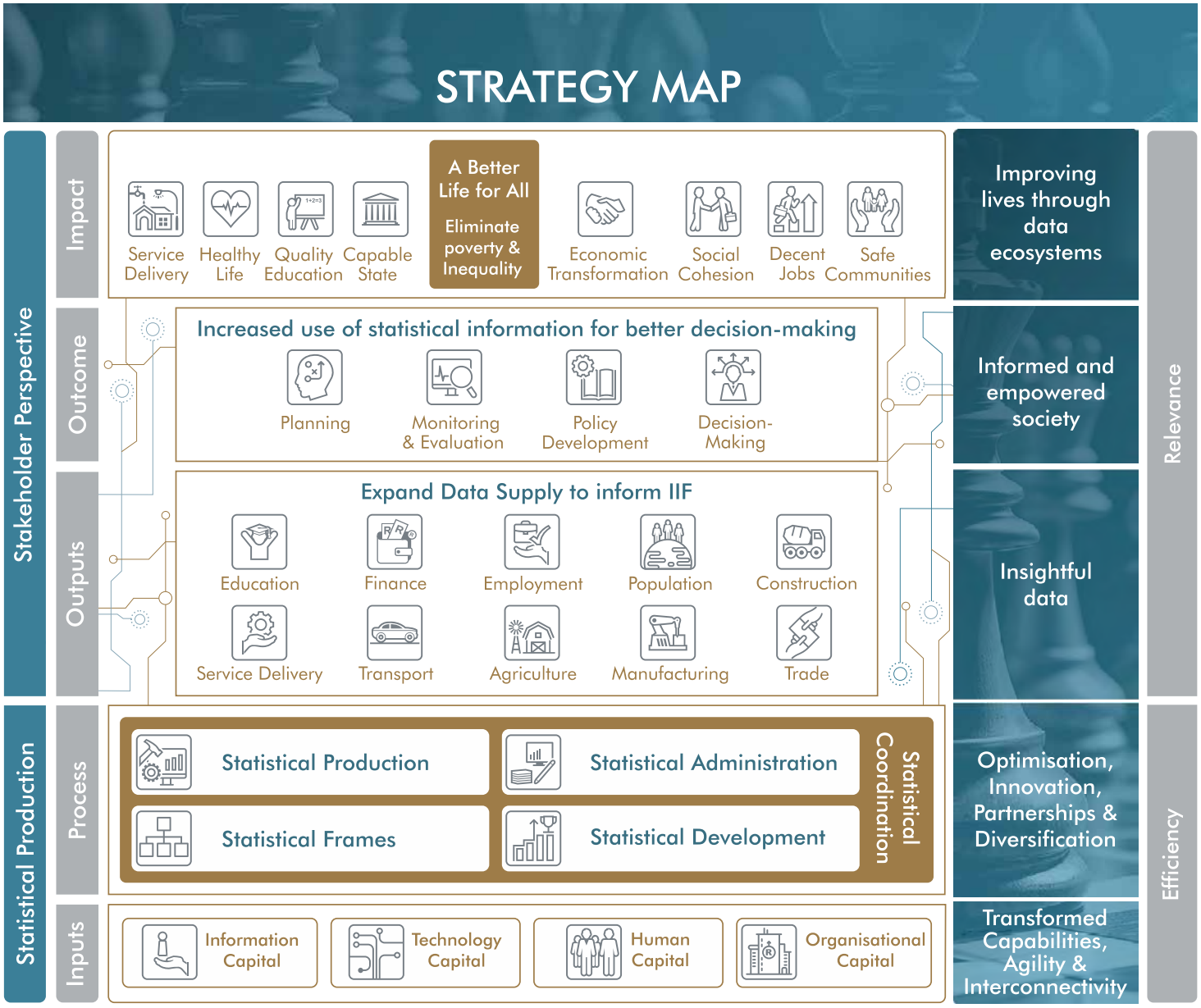
Outcome	Strategic risk	Mitigation strategy
Transformed capability	Financial sustainability of Stats SA	Explore alternative business and funding models for Stats SA
	The transformation and change agenda will introduce new technologies, practices and skills that may lead to redundancy and resistance to change impacting on the implementation of the strategy	Communication of change initiatives Empower management and supervisors to communicate and manage change Redeploy and reskill staff in relevant fields
	The morale and well-being of staff are at risk due to the decline in the resource base, resulting in an increase in workload, and limiting career development and other opportunities, which impacts on the quality of work	Invest in non-monetary incentives to boost staff morale Provide career development to staff through rotation and other opportunities
	Lack of adequate skills and capability within the statistical system to respond and capitalise on the digital economy	Implementation of the skills development strategy



9. Strategy in action

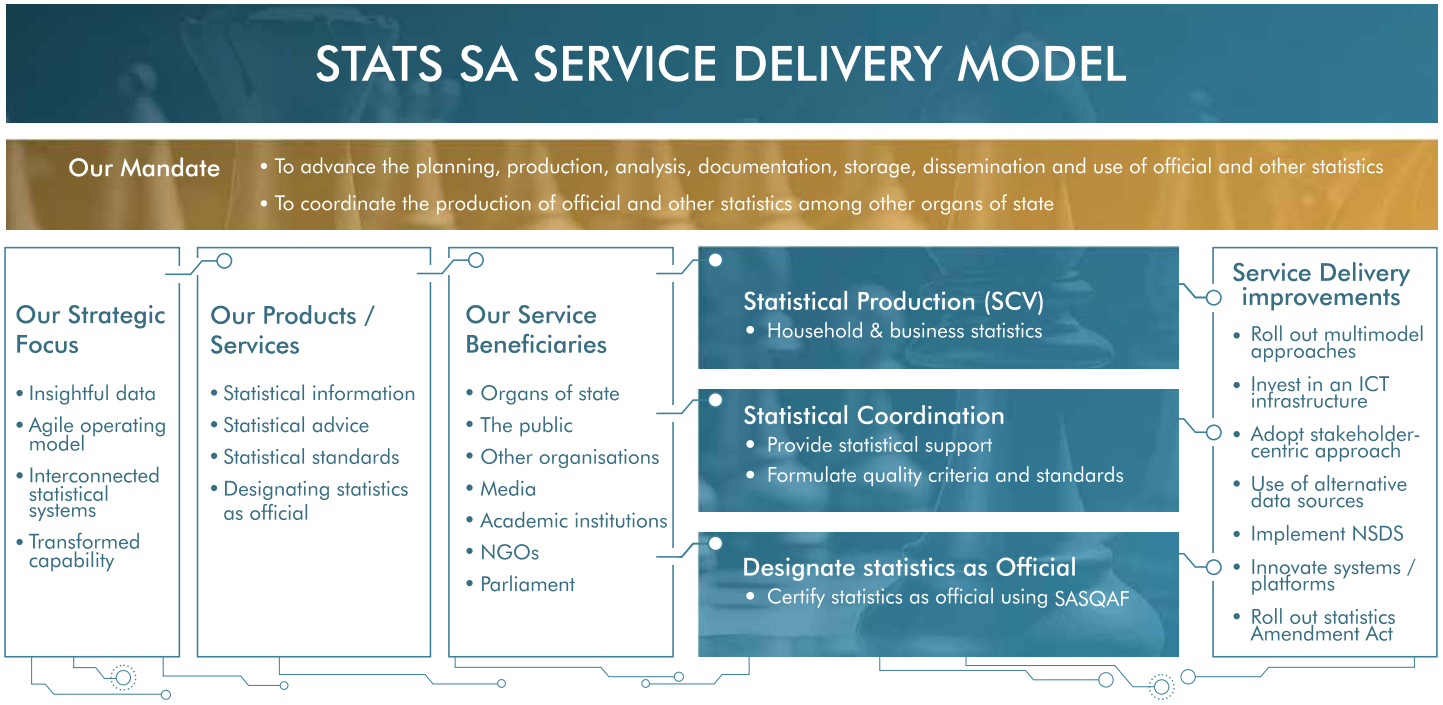
9.1 Defining the strategy

The following strategy map outlines the theory of change in picture format of how Stats SA aims to achieve its vision "*Improving lives through data ecosystems.*"



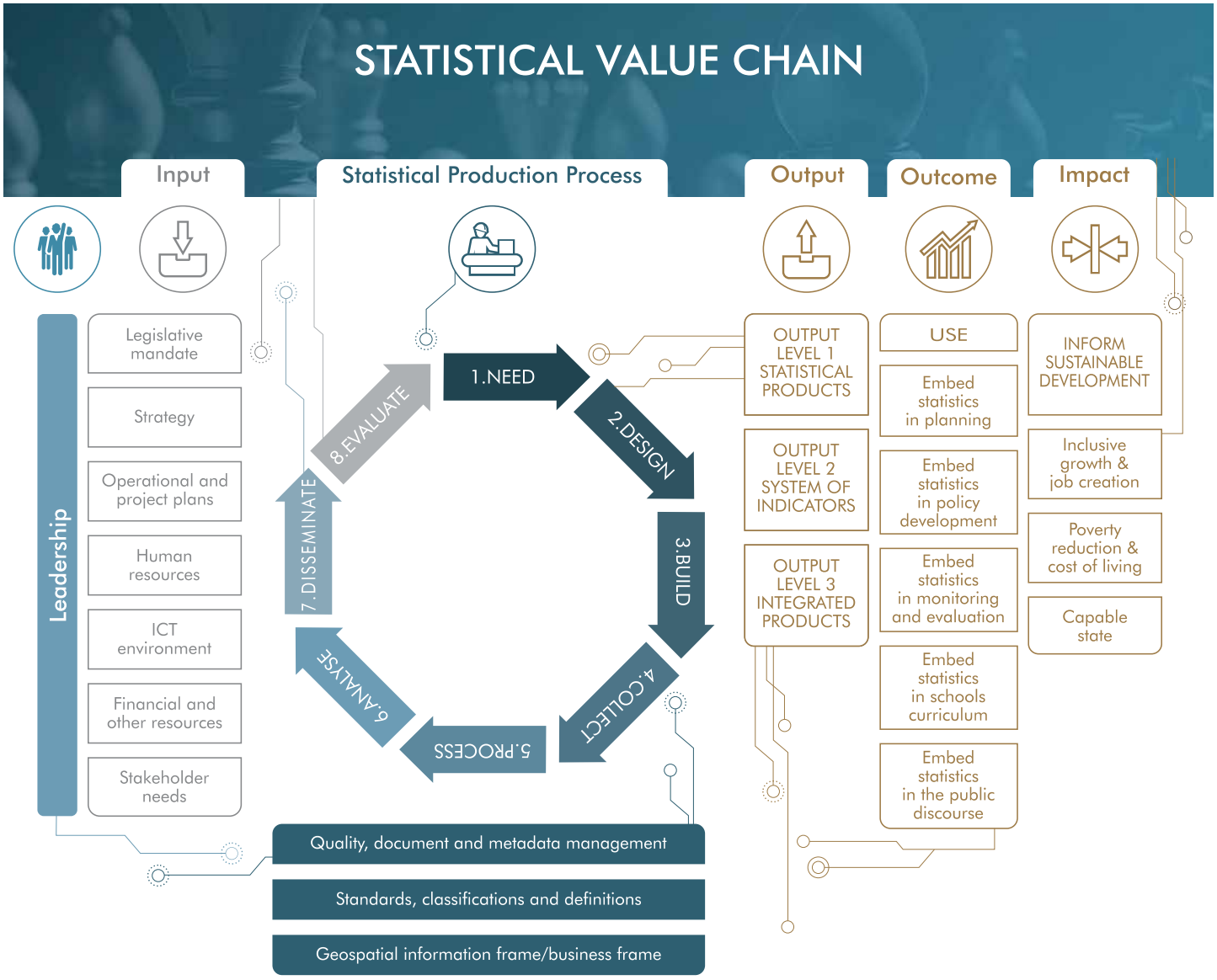
9.2 Defining the Service Delivery Model for Stats SA

The Service Delivery Model (SDM) describes how an organisation will deliver on the services and products that were identified in the strategic plan. The SDM is reviewed annually to ensure the relevance of the model to meet mandated and overall service delivery expectations from SA citizens.



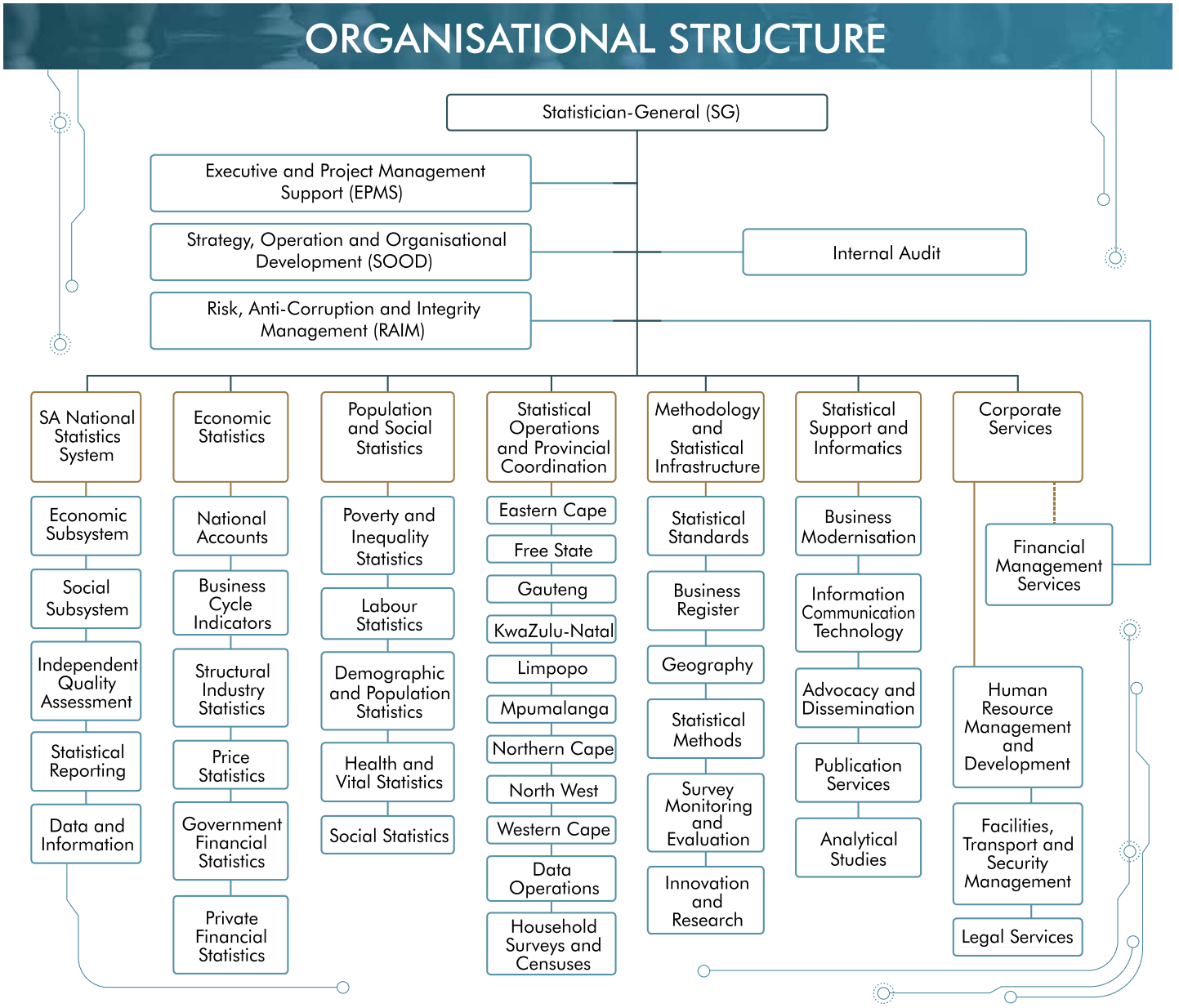
9.3 Defining the method of work (operating model)

Stats SA developed a *statistical value chain* that defines the method of statistical operations at strategic and operational level. The value chain demonstrates how Stats SA operates from a systems and process perspective towards achieving the strategic outcomes. Key strategic focus areas in the strategy revolve around institutionalising quality management across the value chain as well as innovating and modernising the way we do our work. Below is a schematic presentation of the Statistics SA value chain.



9.4 Defining the organisation of work

Stats SA recently reviewed its organisational structure and establishment in order to maximise use of available resources under a constraint environment. The next phase of restructuring will realign the organogram to the new 5-year strategy. Below is a schematic presentation of how Stats SA will organise itself to achieve the vision, mission and strategic outcomes.



Part E: Technical Indicator Descriptions

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic Outcome 1: Insightful data (1)

Indicator title	Production of key statistical indicators to inform decision-making sustained
Definition	Stats SA produces key statistical indicators by publishing statistical releases and reports on the economy, society and the environment in response to the IIF data requirements. The Integrated Indicator Framework (IIF) outlines the key national indicators that are required to inform decision-making for sustainable development. The declining resource base is putting the production of key statistical indicators at risk. Stats SA aims to introduce various strategies over the five years to maintain the statistical outputs. The limited increase in new statistical products over the five years will emanate from the implementation of the Continuous Population Survey.
Source of data	Surveys and alternative data sources
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative – count of statistical releases and reports
Assumptions	Cooperation from other data producers in the data ecosystem
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Statistical indicators on society are disaggreted according to gender, youth and people living with disability
Spatial Transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable Statistical indicators are disaggregated at provincial level. Some statistical indicators are disaggregated at municipal level
Desired performance	280 official statistical releases and reports publised
Indicator responsibility	Economic Statistics; Population and Social Statistics; and SANSS branches

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic Outcome 1: Insightful data (2)

Indicator title	Statistical products assessed against South African Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF) in the NSS
Definition	A statistical product includes the publication of monthly, quarterly, annual and periodic statistical series. Stats SA developed a SASQAF that is used to independently assess the quality of statistical products to certify statistics as official. The SG is mandated by the Statistics Act to designate statistics as official if they adhere to statistical principles and standards through the SASQAF process. Due to a limited resource base, the quality of statistical series is at risk. SASQAF assessments will assist the organisation to determine the quality gap of statistical series.
Source of data	Surveys and administrative sources
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative – simple count of statistical products assessed
Assumptions	Availability of resources to conduct assessments
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial Transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	20 additional statistical products independently assessed through SASQAF
Indicator responsibility	Economic Statistics; Population and Social Statistics; and SANSS branches

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic Outcome 1: Insightful data (3)

Indicator title	Percentage statistics responding to the IIF
Definition	The Integrated Indicator Framework (IIF) captures performance indicators outlined in the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and NDP. In the future, Stats SA will include indicators from other relevant policy and sectoral frameworks. Stats SA and other producers in the NSS contributes to data requirements in the IIF. Stats SA seeks to increase the number of statistics by partnering with new data producers within the data ecosystem, to enhance the response to the IIF.
Source of data	Surveys, administrative sources and big data
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Cooperation from other data producers in the data ecosystem
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial Transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact area: Not applicable
Desired performance	65% of the indicators are reported in the IIF
Indicator responsibility	Economic Statistics; Population and Social Statistics; and SANSS branches

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic Outcome 1: Insightful data (4)

Indicator title	Use of statistics to inform evidence-based decisions
Definition	Statistics play a crucial role in providing policy makers with clear, objective, and numerical data on various aspects of citizens' lives to inform evidence-based decisions. Assessing the use of official statistics is crucial to understand how frequently and extensively they are utilised. Official statistical products are available on the Stats SA website, where users can download them anytime and anywhere for free.
Source of data	Information is obtained through the Stats SA website, indicating downloads from various platforms
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Users download statistical publications for use
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial Transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	10% increase in the publication downloads over the 5-year period
Indicator responsibility	Statistical Support and Informatics Branch

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic Outcome 1: Insightful data (5)

Indicator title	Social media presence
Definition	Stats SA maintains a presence on social media platforms, specifically Facebook and Twitter. These platforms are used to keep stakeholders informed about current events and news stories. Additionally, Stats SA leverages social media to reach its target audience, enhance brand visibility, and engage directly with stakeholders. Continuous monitoring and interaction on these platforms are essential for staying connected with stakeholders. Measuring the growth in the number of followers on each platform is therefore important to monitor stakeholder interaction and interests.
Source of data	Social media downloads
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Engaged followers Accessible plattforms
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial Transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	10% increase over the 5-year period
Indicator responsibility	Statistical Support and Informatics Branch

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic Outcome 1: Insightful data (6)

Indicator title	User satisfaction levels
Definition	Stats SA conducts the User Satisfaction Survey (USS) annually to assess user needs and gauge their satisfaction levels with our services. The USS measures data users' satisfaction with: • Stats SA's overall performance • Statistical products and service • Stats SA brand (trust, credibility, professionalism, independence) • Stakeholder engagement
Source of data	Respondents to the survey include stakeholders who access or use official statistics and other information available on the website, or through requests made via email, telephone, social media, or in person. USS report
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Acceptable response rate to measure stakeholder satisfaction
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial Transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	80% user satisfaction levels over the 5-year period
Indicator responsibility	Statistical Support and Informatics branch

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 2: Agile operating model (1)

Indicator title	Business operating model optimised
Definition	An optimised business operating model ensures operational efficiency and sustainability, making the organisation competitive and agile. This optimisation will foster a culture that embraces new technologies and methodologies, maintaining high data quality, and achieving continuous improvement to meet current and future needs. Stats SA will be focusing on the following aspects over the next five years to ensure that the business operates efficiently and effectively: • Improving and automation of key business processes in the GSBPM in household and business surveys which include the digitalisation of data collection processes of economic series, the continuous population survey and statistical frames • Merging, down-sizing and integrating accommodation of district offices • Improving and automation of governance processes which include supply chain management, planning and reporting, job design, and human resource management and development
Source of data	Business process mapping system Performance management system
Method of calculation/ assessment	Qualitative
Assumptions	Funding will be available to optimise business operations
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial Transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	• GSBPM modernised in household and business surveys • District offices rationalised • Red tape reduced in governance processes
Indicator responsibility	All branches

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 2: Agile operating model (2)

Indicator title	Digital business transformation programme implemented
Definition	Digital business transformation refers to the process of integrating digital technologies into all areas of a business, fundamentally changing how the business operates and delivers value to customers. This transformation goes beyond simply digitalising existing processes; it involves rethinking and redesigning business models, strategies, and operations to leverage the full potential of digital technologies. Stats SA will develop a digital business transformation strategy to provide a clear roadmap for the organisation.
Source of data	Research documents, international/national frameworks and documents, engagements with other NSOs and experts
Method of calculation/ assessment	Qualitative
Assumptions	Availability of resources
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial Transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	Digital transformation roadmap implemented
Indicator responsibility	Office of the SG and SSI branch

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 3: Interconnected statistical systems (1)

Indicator title	National statistics system reformed
Definition	The Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999), as amended (Act No. 29 of 2024) will be rolled out over the next five years. Stats SA aims to implement a comprehensive set of statistical reforms in South Africa, starting with a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and sector plans. This initiative also involves developing statistical regulations and policies, formulating a data strategy, creating a data governance framework and establishing a statistical clearing house. These steps are designed to drive statistical reform in the country.
Source of data	International/national benchmark documents and frameworks
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Established strategic partners in the NSS Resourced to facilitate the roll-out
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	• NSDS developed and adopted • Sectoral plans developed and adopted • Data strategy developed and adopted for South Africa • Data governance framework developed • Statistical clearing house established
Indicator responsibility	SANSS and SSI branches

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 3: Interconnected statistical systems (2)

Indicator title	Cooperation and collaboration in the data ecosystem enhanced
Definition	Collaborations with strategic partners in the NSS are formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and/or a service level agreement (SLA). The MoU is a framework which outlines the intentions and expectations of the parties involved in a partnership or collaboration whilst an SLA provides a formal contract that defines the level of service one party will provide to another. This ensures all parties clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, fostering a productive and secure data-sharing environment. Additionally, collaboration extends to joint projects and multi-stakeholder initiatives that may not be captured in an MoU or SLA.
Source of data	Strategic partnership agreements
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Cooperation from the partners in the data ecosystem
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	20 additional strategic partnerships established in the data ecosystem
Indicator responsibility	SANSS branch

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 4: Transformed capability (1)

Indicator title	Percentage spent on skills development
Definition	Skills development is the process of acquiring and enhancing abilities needed to perform tasks effectively. It involves various methods such as training and education, on-the-job training, mentorship and coaching, workshops and seminars, and self-study. Investing in skills development is crucial for boosting productivity, retaining employees, fostering career growth, and ensuring the workforce stays relevant. It also helps employees adapt to new technologies and meet future demands effectively. Expenditure on skills development will include spending on bursaries, other employer-initiated training and education initiatives as well as on-the-job training
Source of data	Human Resource Management and Development system Expenditure reports
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Funding will be available for training and development
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	1% of CoE budget spent annually on skills development
Indicator responsibility	Corporate Services branch

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 4: Transformed capability (2)

Indicator title	Skills are fit for the future work environment
Definition	Skills fit for the future refer to the abilities and competencies that are essential for thriving in a rapidly changing and technologically advanced work environment. To address future skills gaps, targeted capacity-building programmes will be developed and implemented. Stats SA has identified priority areas in the skills development strategy which include: • Data science and analytics • Systems development and business process management • Data management and engineering • Leading change and transformation • Emerging technologies In line with the skills development strategy, investment in fundamental skills required for the future work environment will be reported and monitored
Source of data	Human Resource Management and Development system
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Funding will be available for training and development
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	• Data science programme • Business process management programme • Leading change and transformation programme • Data management and engineering programme • Fundamental skills development programme • Emerging technologies programme
Indicator responsibility	Corporate Services branch and Office of the SG

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 4: Transformed capability (3)

Indicator title	Employment Equity (EE) targets achieved
Definition	The Employment Equity Amendment Act of 2022 empowers the Minister of Employment and Labour to set numerical targets for all sectors. These targets are designed to ensure that designated groups (Black people, women, and people with disabilities) are adequately represented in the workforce. Stats SA has not yet achieved the national targets due to financial constraints. If Stats SA is unable to fill vacancies over the next five years, it will hamper the achievement of employment equity targets.
Source of data	Persal reports
Method of calculation/ assessment	Quantitative
Assumptions	Funds will be available to fill vacancies
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Quarterly and annual reports of Stats SA include disaggregation of filled posts according to race, gender, and people living with disabilities
Spatial transformation	Spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	50% of SMS are women 2% of staff are people with disability 30% of staff are youth
Indicator responsibility	Corporate Services branch

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 4: Transformed capability (4)

Indicator title	Staff satisfaction levels
Definition	Staff satisfaction levels are measured using the Staff Satisfaction Index (SSI) to gauge employee well-being and satisfaction. Stats SA conducts a Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) periodically, and the results are used to calculate the SSI. The SOS measures employee engagement and provides valuable feedback to improve the work environment to enhance employee satisfaction and overall staff morale.
Source of data	SOS results
Method of calculation/ assessment	The index is calculated as follows: Sum of all the positive responses (Agree/Strongly agree) for all SOS categories, divided by the total number of statements (n).
Assumptions	Employees participate in the SOS
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	70% overall staff satisfaction levels
Indicator responsibility	Office of the SG

Technical Indicator Description (TID) for Strategic outcome 4: Transformed capability (5)

Indicator title	Flexible and adaptive ICT infrastructure and environment
Definition	A flexible and adaptive ICT infrastructure refers to a dynamic and responsive technology environment that can quickly adjust to changing business needs, user demands, and technological advancements. Stats SA's current ICT infrastructure and environment are dated. The EA platform will track investments in innovative technologies and ICT infrastructure to improve data acquisition, processing, integration, analytics, and visualization within the data ecosystem. Over the next five years the organisation aims to implement various ICT initiatives to ensure the environment is more responsive. These include • Adoption of cloud services • Email migration to MS Exchange • Adoption of Open-Source software • Adoption of AI technologies • Enhanced data security controls
Source of data	Enterprise architecture system
Method of calculation/ assessment	Qualitative
Assumptions	Resource availability
Disaggregation of beneficiaries	Not applicable
Spatial transformation	Contribution to spatial transformation priorities: Not applicable Spatial impact: Not applicable
Desired performance	• Adoption of cloud services • Email migration to MS Exchange • Adoption of Open-Source software • Adoption of AI technologies • Enhanced data security controls
Indicator responsibility	Statistical Support and Informatics branch

Annexure A - The fundamental principles of official statistics

Annexure B - African charter on statistics

Annexure C - List of abbreviations and acronym

Annexure A: Fundamental principles of official statistics

To safeguard official statistics and guide national statistics offices in their work, the United Nations has adopted the following fundamental principles of official statistics:

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

b) *Professional independence:* To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agency needs to decide, according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.

c) *Transparency of methods applied:* To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agency is to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.

d) The statistical agency is entitled to comment *on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics*.

e) *Use the most efficient sources:* Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. The statistical agency is to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden of respondents.

f) *Confidentiality:* Individual data collected by the statistical agency for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

g) *Transparency of laws:* The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical system operates are to be made public.

h) *Cooperation among institutions:* Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.

i) *Adherence to international standards:* The use, by the statistical agency in each country, of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.

j) *International cooperation*: Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of the system of official statistics in all countries.

Annexure B: African Charter on Statistics

The Charter outlines what should be achieved and, in this regard, the African Statistics System (ASS) organisations, African statisticians and all those operating in the field of statistics at the national, regional and continental levels shall respect the principles enshrined in the Resolution on the fundamental principles of official statistics adopted by the United Nations Commission for Statistics in April 1994. They shall also apply the best practices principles hereunder defined:

Principle 1: Professional independence

- Scientific independence: Statistics authorities must be able to carry out their activities according to the principle of scientific independence, particularly vis-à-vis the political authorities or any interest group; this means that the methods, concepts and nomenclatures used in statistical operation shall be selected only by the statistics authorities without any interference whatsoever and in accordance with the rules of ethics and good practice.

- Impartiality: Statistics authorities shall produce, analyse, disseminate, and comment on African statistics in line with the principle of scientific independence, and in an objective, professional and transparent manner.

- Responsibility: Statistics authorities and African statisticians shall employ unambiguous and relevant methods in the collection, processing, analysis and presentation of statistical data. Statistics authorities shall also have the right and duty to make observations on erroneous interpretations and improper use of the statistical information that they disseminate.

- Transparency: To facilitate proper interpretation of data, statistics authorities shall provide information on their sources, methods and procedures that have been used in line with scientific standards. The domestic law governing operation of the statistical systems must be made available to the public.

Principle 2: Quality

- Relevance: African statistics shall meet the needs of users.

- Sustainability: African statistics shall be conserved in as detailed as possible a form to ensure their use by future generations, while preserving the principles of confidentiality and protection of respondents.

- Data sources: Data used for statistical purposes may be collected from diverse sources such as censuses, statistics surveys and/or administrative records. The statistics organisations shall choose their sources in consideration of the quality of data offered by such sources and their topicality, particularly the costs incurred by the respondents and sponsors. The use by statistics authorities of administrative records for statistical purposes shall be guaranteed by domestic law, provided that confidentiality is preserved.

- Accuracy and reliability: African statistics shall be an accurate and reliable reflection of the reality.

- Continuity: Statistics authorities shall ensure continuity and comparability of statistical information over time.

- Coherence and comparability: African statistics shall be internally coherent over time and allow for comparison between regions and countries. To this end, these statistics shall make combined use of related data derived from different sources. They shall employ internationally recognised and accepted concepts, classifications, terminologies and methods.

- Timeliness: African statistics shall be disseminated in good time and as far as possible, according to pre-determined calendar

- Topicality: African statistics shall reflect current and topical events and trends.

- Specificities: Statistical data production and analytical methods shall consider African peculiarities.

- Awareness-building: State parties shall sensitise the public, particularly statistical data providers, on the importance of statistics.

Principle 3: Mandate for data collection and resources

- Mandate: Statistics authorities shall be endowed with a clear legal mandate empowering them to collect data for production of African statistics. At the request of statistics authorities, public administrations, business establishments, households and the general public may be compelled by domestic law to allow access to the data in their possession or provide data for the purpose of compilation of African statistics.

- Resource adequacy: As far as possible, the resources available to statistics authorities shall be adequate and stable to enable them to meet statistics needs at national, regional and continental levels. Governments of state parties shall have the primary responsibility to provide such resources.

- Cost-effectiveness: Statistics authorities shall use the resources so provided effectively and efficiently. This presupposes that operations shall as far as possible, be programmed in an optimal manner. Every effort shall be made to achieve improved production and use of the statistics derived from administrative records, to reduce the costs incurred by respondents and, as far as possible, avoid expensive direct statistical surveys.

Principle 4: Dissemination

- Accessibility: African statistics shall not be made inaccessible in any way whatsoever. This concomitant right of access for all users without restriction shall be guaranteed by domestic law. Micro-data may be made available to users on condition that the pertinent laws and procedures are respected, and confidentiality is maintained.

- Dialogue with users: Mechanisms for consultation with all African statistics users without discrimination shall be put in place with a view to ensuring that the statistical information offered are commensurate with their needs.

- Clarity and understanding: Statistics shall be presented in a clear and comprehensible form. They shall be disseminated in a practical and appropriate manner, be available and accessible to all and accompanied by the requisite metadata and analytical commentaries.

- Simultaneity: African statistics shall be disseminated in a manner that ensures that all users are able to use them simultaneously. Where certain authorities receive advance information under embargo, to allow them time to respond to possible questions, public announcement shall be made indicating the nature of such information, the identity of the recipients and the set timeframe before its public dissemination.

- Correction: Statistics authorities shall correct publications containing significant errors using standard statistical practices or, for very serious cases, suspend dissemination of such statistics. In that event, the users shall be informed in clear terms of the reasons for such corrections or suspension.

Principle 5: Protection of individual data, information sources and respondents

- Confidentiality: National statistics authorities, African statisticians and all those operating in the field of statistics in Africa shall absolutely guarantee the protection of the private life and business secrets of data providers (households, companies, public institutions and other respondents), the confidentiality of the information so provided and the use of such information for strictly statistical purposes.

- Giving assurances to data providers: Persons or entities interviewed during statistical surveys shall be informed of the objective of such interviews and of the measures put in place to protect the data provided.

- Objective: Data concerning individuals or entities collected for statistical purposes shall in no circumstance be used for judicial proceedings or punitive measures or for the purpose of taking administrative decisions against such individuals or entities.

- Rationality: Statistics authorities shall not embark upon statistical surveys except where pertinent information is unavailable from administrative records, or the quality of such information is inadequate in relation to the quality requirements of statistical information.

Principle 6: Coordination and cooperation

- Coordination: Coordination and collaboration amongst statistics authorities in each country are essential in ensuring quality and harmonious statistical information. Similarly, coordination and dialogue amongst all members of the African Statistical System are vital for harmonisation, production and use of African statistics.

- Cooperation: Bilateral and multilateral statistics cooperation shall be encouraged with a view to upgrading African statistics production systems.

Annexure C: List of abbreviations and acronyms

AI	Artificial intelligence
ASS	African Statistics System
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
BRICS+	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa plus Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates
CAPI	Computer-assisted Personal Interview
CAWI	Computer-assisted Web-based Interview
CoE	Compensation of Employees
CPI	Consumer price index
CPS	Continuous Population Survey
CTGAP	Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data
DAFI	Data Governance for Interoperability Framework
DDM	District Development Model
DoJ & CD	Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
DPME	Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation
DTS	Domestic Tourism Survey
EA	Enterprise Architecture
EE	Employment Equity
EG	Endogenous Growth
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHS	General Household Survey
GIF	Geospatial Integrated Framework
GPSJS	Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey
GSBPM	Generic Statistical Business Process Model
GSGF	Global Statistical Geospatial Framework
GSIM	Generic Statistical Information Model
HCD	Human Capacity Development
HDSS	Health and Demographic Surveillance Systems
HLG-MOS	United Nations High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IIF	Integrated Indicator Framework
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
IT	Information Technology
KFD	Key driving force
LLMs	Large language models
ML	Machine learning
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSOs	National Statistics Offices
NSS	National Statistics System

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAPI	Paper-assisted Personal Interview
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
RSDS	Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics
SA	South Africa
SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEEA	System of Environmental Economic Accounting
SG	Statistician-General
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SNA	System of National Accounts
SANSS	South African National Statistics System
SASQAF	South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework
SOOD	Strategy, Operations and Organisational Development
SOS	Staff Opinion Survey
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SSI	Statistical Support and Informatics
SVC	Statistical value chain
TIDs	Technical Indicator Descriptions
UN	United Nations
UNCS	United Nations Commission for Statistics
UNFPOS	United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
USS	User Satisfaction Survey
WP	Work Programme

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